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THE CHILD’S ADAPTATION TO AND INTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY AS A PRESSING PROBLEM OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION THEORY

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Abstract. Drawing on a theoretical-analytical study, the article examines the adaptation and integration of the child into society as a pressing problem of preschool education theory. The aim is to clarify the boundaries of the concepts of socialisation, adaptation and integration, to reveal their interrelation and to substantiate the conditions for the transition from adaptation to integration in preschool settings. The study applies a systematised literature review, conceptual analysis, the comparative-typological method, modelling and content analysis of legal documents. Adaptation is distinguished as a one-way process in which the child adjusts to the demands of the environment, while integration is defined as a two-way process of mutual adjustment between the child and the group community. Three stages of the adaptation period and its typical dynamics are described; four criteria of integration are identified — participation in activity, acceptance by peers, the ability to influence group rules, and acting on one’s own initiative. A system of factors that impede adaptation and integration together with compensating pedagogical conditions is proposed.

Keywords: *socialisation, adaptation, integration, individualisation, preschool education, peer community, social competence, stages of adaptation, acceptance,*

participation, inclusion, pedagogical conditions, resilience.

Annotatsiya. Maqolada bolaning jamiyatga moslashuvi va integratsiyalashuvi maktabgacha ta’lim nazariyasining dolzarb muammosi sifatida nazariy-analitik tahlil asosida o‘rganiladi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi — «ijtimoiylashuv», «moslashuv» va «integratsiyalashuv» tushunchalarining chegaralarini aniqlashtirish, ularning o‘zaro munosabatini ochib berish hamda maktabgacha ta’lim sharoitida moslashuvdan integratsiyaga o‘tish shartlarini asoslashdan iborat. Tadqiqotda tizimlashtirilgan adabiyot sharhi, konseptual tahlil, qiyosiy-tipologik usul, modellashtirish va me’yoriy hujjatlarni mazmuniy tahlil qilish usullari qo‘llanildi. Natijada moslashuv bolaning muhit talablariga ko‘nikishini anglatuvchi bir tomonlama jarayon, integratsiya esa bola va guruh jamoasining o‘zaro moslashuvini anglatuvchi ikki tomonlama jarayon sifatida farqlandi. Moslashuv davrining uch bosqichi va uning tipik dinamikasi tavsiflandi; integratsiyaning to‘rtta mezoni — faoliyatda ishtirok, tengdoshlar tomonidan qabul qilinish, guruh qoidalariga ta’sir qila olish va o‘z tashabbusi bilan harakat qilish — ajratildi. Moslashuv va integratsiyani qiyinlashtiruvchi omillar hamda ularni qoplovchi pedagogik shartlar tizimi taklif etildi.

Kalit so‘zlar: *ijtimoiylashuv, moslashuv, integratsiyalashuv, individuallashuv, maktabgacha ta’lim, tengdoshlar jamoasi, ijtimoiy kompetensiya, moslashuv bosqichlari, qabul qilinganlik, ishtirok, inklyuziya, pedagogik shartlar, bardoshlilik.*

Аннотация. В статье на основе теоретико-аналитического исследования рассматриваются адаптация и интеграция ребёнка в общество как актуальная проблема теории дошкольного образования. Цель исследования — уточнить границы понятий «социализация», «адаптация» и «интеграция», раскрыть их соотношение и обосновать условия перехода от адаптации к интеграции в условиях дошкольного образования. Использованы систематизированный обзор

литературы, концептуальный анализ, сравнительно-типологический метод, моделирование и содержательный анализ нормативных документов. Разграничены адаптация как односторонний процесс приспособления ребёнка к требованиям среды и интеграция как двусторонний процесс взаимного приспособления ребёнка и группового сообщества. Описаны три этапа адаптационного периода и его типичная динамика; выделены четыре критерия интеграции — участие в деятельности, принятие сверстниками, возможность влиять на правила группы и действие по собственной инициативе. Предложена система факторов, затрудняющих адаптацию и интеграцию, и компенсирующих их педагогических условий.

Ключевые слова: *социализация, адаптация, интеграция, индивидуализация, дошкольное образование, сообщество сверстников, социальная компетенция, этапы адаптации, принятие, участие, инклюзия, педагогические условия, жизнестойкость.*

INTRODUCTION. The child’s entry into society begins at preschool age: it is precisely in this period that they first step beyond the family circle, enter a community of peers they have not chosen, and learn to live by its rules. The question of adaptation and integration is therefore regarded as one of the central problems of preschool education theory.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan «On Preschool Education and Upbringing» establishes the child’s formation as a personality as the aim of preschool education[1, Article 3]. The Law «On Guarantees of the Rights of the Child», for its part, consolidates every child’s right to receive education without discrimination and

to take part in the life of society[2]. The «Social and emotional development» domain of the «Ilk qadam» state curriculum translates these requirements into the language of the child's expected outcomes[3]. The national documents thus require not only that the child settle into the environment but also that they take an equal part in the life of the community.

In practice, however, the two concepts are often used interchangeably. The period of entering a preschool institution is called the «adaptation period», and the matter is considered closed as soon as the child stops crying and settles into the routine. Yet the absence of crying does not mean that the child is taking part in the life of the group: they may sit and watch from the side all day and play with no one. Such a state of affairs is formally recorded as «successful adaptation», whereas in reality integration has not taken place.

In international research, the child's development is interpreted as a process within a system of environmental levels[4]; cultural-historical theory, for its part, shows that social experience is mastered through the mediation of an adult[5]. The influence of the quality of peer relations on subsequent social and academic adjustment has been substantiated in longitudinal research[6]. These works illuminate different facets of the problem, yet they do not provide a coherent system of criteria that distinguishes adaptation from integration and is designed for preschool education practice.

MATERIALS AND METHODS. The study is theoretical and analytical in character and has been carried out in the design of a systematised literature review and conceptual analysis. This design corresponds to the aim of the article: it envisages not the collection of new empirical data but the generalisation of existing evidence within a single explanatory system.

Thematic line	Number of sources	Function in the analysis
Socialisation and the ecological approach	10	Establishing the boundaries of the concepts
The adaptation period and its dynamics	12	Substantiating the stages and indicators
Acceptance by peers	11	Distinguishing the criteria of integration
Resilience and risk factors	8	Identifying the impeding factors
Social competence theory and assessment	7	Establishing the criterion of effectiveness
Legal documents and state programmes	6	Checking correspondence with national requirements
Total	54	—

Table 1. Thematic distribution of the sources included in the in-depth analysis.

The study applied the methods of systematic-analytical review, conceptual analysis, the comparative-typological method, modelling, content analysis of legal documents, and pedagogical interpretation.

RESULTS. The analysis showed that the principal source of the problem is the conflation of the terms. Socialisation is the general process by which the child masters the experience of society, and adaptation and integration are two stages within it. Adaptation means the child's settling into the demands of the environment and has a one-way character: the party that changes is the child. Integration, by contrast, is two-way: the child joins the life of the group, and the group accepts them and partially changes its own rules.

A third concept — individualisation — is the necessary counterweight to integration. If the child dissolves entirely into the group's demands, this is not integration but conformity. The interrelation of the concepts is presented in Figure

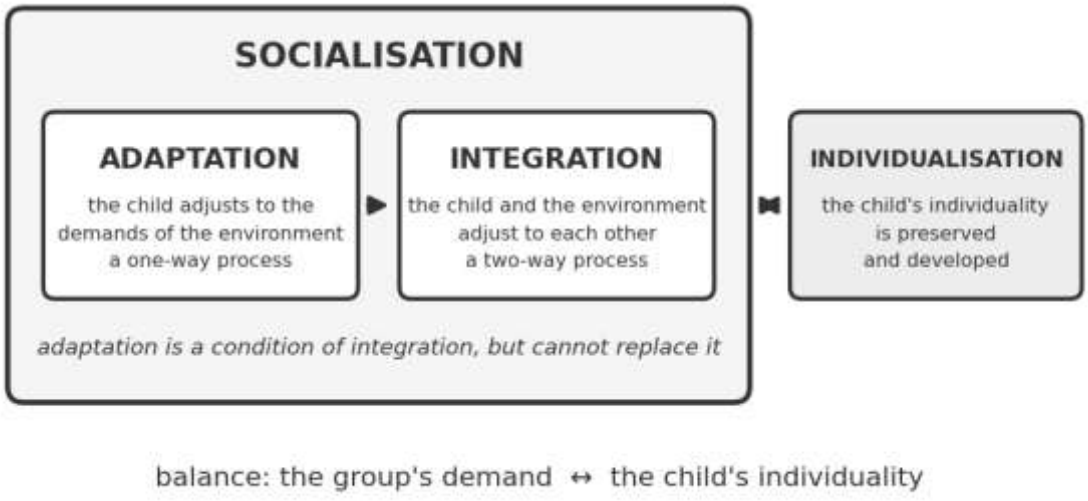


Figure 1.

The relationship between socialisation, adaptation, integration and individualisation.

Feature	**Adaptation**	**Integration**
Direction of the process	One-way: the child adjusts to the environment	Two-way: the child and the community adjust to each other
Central question	«Has the child settled in?»	«Is the child a member of the

Feature	Adaptation	Integration
		community?»
Leading indicator	Emotional state, settling into the routine, frequency of illness	Participation in activity, being chosen, initiative
Duration	Usually 3–8 weeks	Continuous, lasting throughout the academic year
Risk	Treating outward compliance as the outcome	Sacrificing the child's individuality to the group's demands

Table 2. Comparative description of adaptation and integration.

The analysis made it possible to distinguish three stages of the adaptation period. In the acute stage the child experiences emotional strain: crying, disturbed sleep and appetite, and reduced activity are observed. In the unstable stage the state improves, but relapses occur. In the stable stage the child's emotional state evens out and they join in activity. A description of the stages is given in Table 3, and the typical dynamics are presented in Figure 2.

Stage	Approximate duration	Observable signs	Pedagogical measure
Acute stage	1–2 weeks	Crying, disturbed sleep and appetite,	A shortened day, a familiar object brought from home, a

Stage	Approximate duration	Observable signs	Pedagogical measure
		reduced activity	permanent educator
Unstable stage	3–4 weeks	The state improves, but there are relapses	A predictable daily routine, tasks in pairs, daily contact with parents
Stable stage	5–8 weeks	The emotional state evens out, the child joins in activity	Full involvement in group activity, moving on to the criteria of integration

Table 3. The stages of the adaptation period and the corresponding pedagogical measures.

As the chart shows, in a case of severe adaptation the child does not reach the expected level even in the eighth week. Such a state of affairs should be regarded not as an assessment error but as a situation requiring specific pedagogical support.

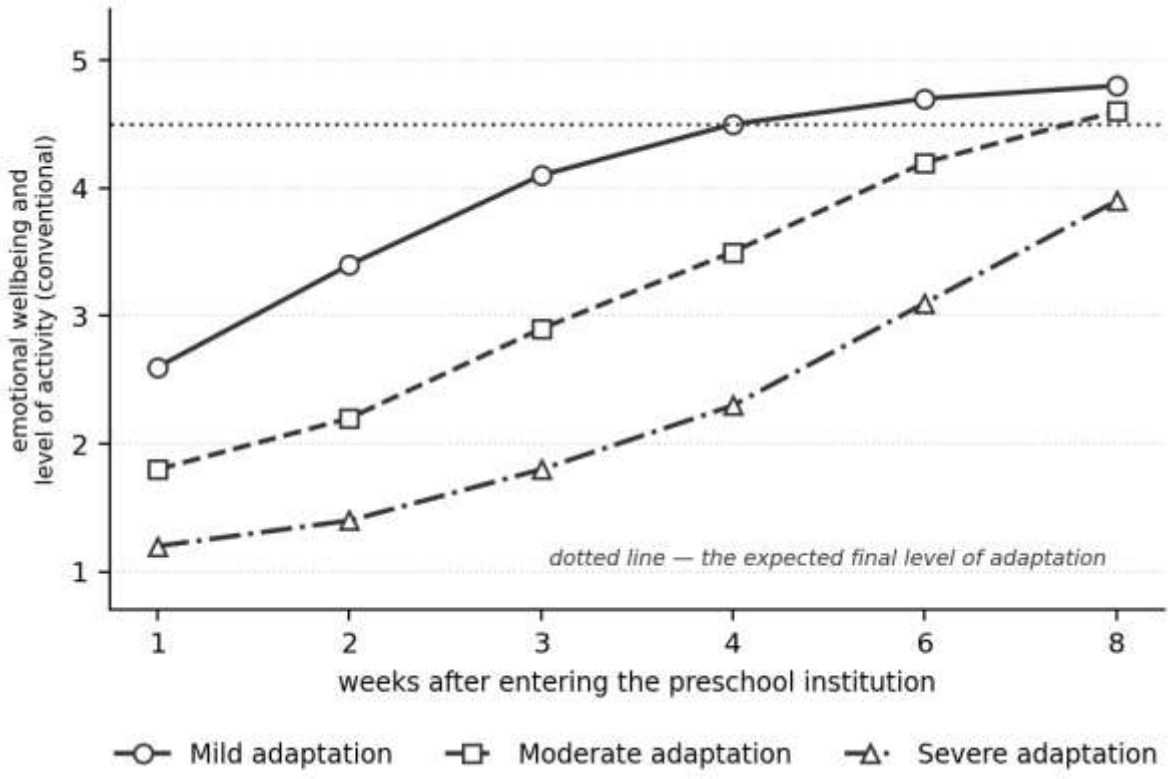


Figure 2. The typical dynamics of the adaptation period.

Once adaptation is complete, pedagogical attention must shift to the criteria of integration. As a result of the analysis, four criteria were distinguished: (a) participation in activity — the child is a full participant in joint activity; (b) acceptance by peers — they are invited into play and chosen; (c) the ability to influence group rules — their suggestion is heard; (d) acting on their own initiative — they begin an activity themselves. These criteria measure not the child's compliance but their standing within the community. The transition from adaptation to integration is modelled in Figure 3.

Interpreting social competence through the effectiveness of relationships[7] and

distinguishing social and emotional competence as an independent indicator of school readiness[8] constitute the theoretical foundation of this system of criteria.

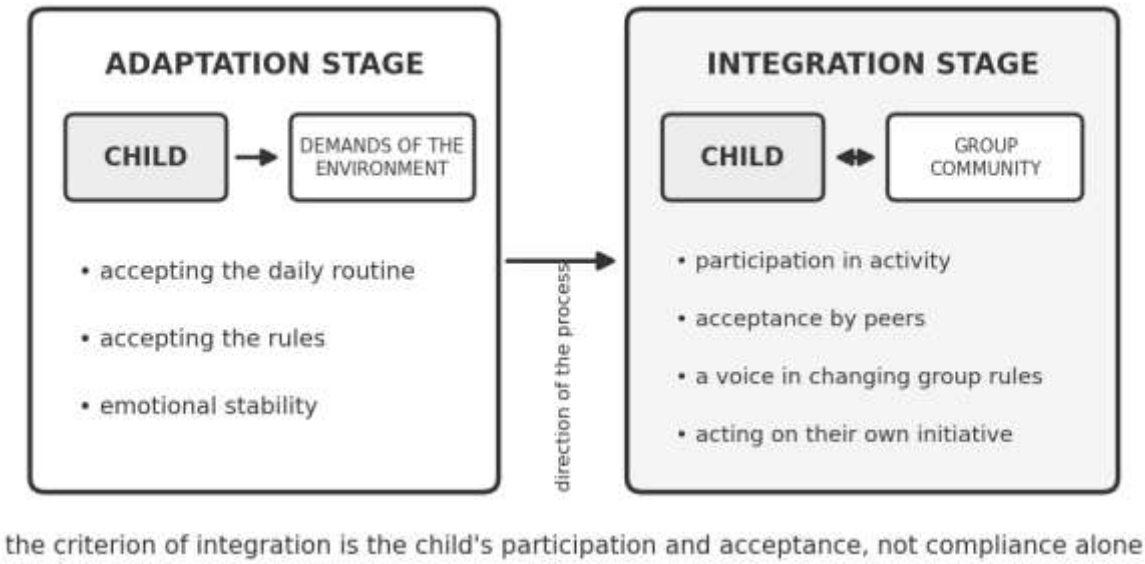


Figure 3. The transition from the adaptation stage to the integration stage.

The factors that impede adaptation and integration were divided into four groups: the child's individual characteristics, family circumstances, the group environment, and organisational conditions. They do not automatically lead to a negative outcome: research on resilience demonstrates the decisive role of protective mechanisms in children's development[9] — a stable adult relationship and the experience of success appreciably compensate for the effect of risk factors (Table 4).

Group of factors	**How it appears**	**Compensating pedagogical condition**

Group of factors	How it appears	Compensating pedagogical condition
The child's individual characteristics	Slow to engage, difficulty with speech, quick fatigue	Gradual entry, models of how to address others, adjusting the routine
Family circumstances	Difficulty with separation, inconsistent demands, changes within the family	Daily contact with parents, a single list of requirements
The group environment	Rejection, the closedness of small subgroups	Tasks in pairs, rotating roles, publicly acknowledging success
Organisational conditions	Overcrowded groups, frequent changes of educator	A permanent educator, a predictable daily routine, an adaptation schedule

Table 4. Impeding factors and the conditions that compensate for them.

On the basis of the analysis, five pedagogical conditions were distinguished. Together they ensure the transition from adaptation to integration (Table 5). The effectiveness of targeted social and emotional programmes has been confirmed in meta-analyses[10], which indicates that the system of conditions is organisationally feasible.

Condition	Content	Outcome indicator
Predictability	A stable daily routine and familiar rituals	The child can say in advance what comes next in the day

Condition	Content	Outcome indicator
A stable adult relationship	A permanent educator, individual attention	The child turns to an adult when in difficulty
Situations of cooperation	Tasks in pairs and small groups	The child takes part in joint activity
An environment of acceptance	Rotating roles, acknowledging each child's contribution	The child is chosen by peers
Unity with the family	Shared requirements and daily exchange of information	The child follows the same rule at home and in the group

Table 5. Conditions for the transition from adaptation to integration.

DISCUSSION. The practically most important conclusion of the analysis is the error of treating the completion of adaptation as integration. The stabilisation of the emotional state is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. Appraisal that rests on emotional indicators alone records a child who is left on the sidelines of the group, yet «calm», as presenting no problem. The four-criterion system is precisely what makes such a situation visible.

The concept of integration acquires particular significance in relation to children with special needs. National legislation guarantees every child's right to receive education and to participate without discrimination; this requires that integration be

appraised at the level of real participation rather than organisational placement. The child may be present in the group yet take no part in its activity — such a state of affairs is not regarded as integration.

During the adaptation period, inconsistency between the demands of the family and those of the institution intensifies the child's strain. Cooperation should therefore be directed away from educational meetings and towards agreeing a single list of requirements. This condition is considered one of the most effective organisational means of shortening the adaptation period.

CONCLUSION. The analysis conducted has led to the following conclusions.

First, adaptation and integration are not two names for one process: adaptation is a one-way process denoting the child's settling into the demands of the environment, while integration is a two-way process denoting the mutual adjustment of the child and the group community.

Second, the adaptation period consists of three stages — acute, unstable and stable — and each stage has its own indicators and pedagogical measures.

Third, integration is appraised against four criteria — participation in activity, acceptance by peers, the ability to influence group rules, and acting on one's own initiative; compliance is not an indicator of integration.

Fourth, the factors that impede the process do not automatically lead to a negative outcome: a stable adult relationship and the experience of success compensate for their effect.

Fifth, the transition from adaptation to integration is ensured through a system of five pedagogical conditions — predictability, a stable adult relationship, situations of cooperation, an environment of acceptance, and unity with the family.

Practical recommendations: to include the criteria of integration alongside the emotional indicators in the adaptation record sheet; to define the completion of adaptation by the indicator of participation rather than by the end of the acute stage; to conduct sociometric observation in the group each month in order to identify children left on the sidelines; to direct work with parents towards agreeing shared requirements; and to include the module «From adaptation to integration: criteria and conditions» in the retraining programme for educators.

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