

# THEORETICAL AND APPLIED MODEL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE TO PRESCHOOLERS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION

**Elena E. Dmitrieva<sup>1</sup>, Elena Yu. Medvedeva<sup>2</sup>, Elena A. Olkhina<sup>3</sup>, Svetlana N. Kashtanova<sup>4</sup>, Svetlana E. Uromova<sup>5</sup>, Marina Z. Gazieva<sup>6</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>Doctor of Psychological Sciences, Professor of the Department of Special Pedagogy and Psychology, Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University Named after Kozma Minin (Minin University), Nizhny Novgorod, Russia.*

*E-mail: [dmitrievaele@gmail.com](mailto:dmitrievaele@gmail.com) ORCID: [0000-0002-8279-7767](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8279-7767)*

*<sup>2</sup>PhD of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Special Pedagogy and Psychology, Nizhny Novgorod state pedagogical university named after Kozma Minin (Minin University), Nizhny Novgorod, Russia.*

*E-mail: [medvedeva4278@yandex.ru](mailto:medvedeva4278@yandex.ru) ORCID: [0000-0003-4144-2721](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4144-2721)*

*<sup>3</sup>PhD of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Special Pedagogy and Psychology, Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin (Minin University), Nizhny Novgorod, Russia.*

*E-mail: [olkhina.e@yandex.ru](mailto:olkhina.e@yandex.ru) ORCID: [0000-0002-3755-9938](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3755-9938)*

*<sup>4</sup>PhD of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Special Pedagogy and Psychology, Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin (Minin University), Nizhny Novgorod, Russia.*

*E-mail: [kaslana@yandex.ru](mailto:kaslana@yandex.ru) ORCID: [0000-0003-2050-345X](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2050-345X)*

*<sup>5</sup>Senior Lecturer of the Department of Special Pedagogy and Psychology, Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin (Minin University), Nizhny Novgorod, Russia.*

*E-mail: [somur76@mail.ru](mailto:somur76@mail.ru) ORCID: [0000-0002-3104-4204](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3104-4204)*

*<sup>6</sup> PhD of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Special Pedagogy and Psychology, Chechen state Pedagogical University, Grozny, Russia.*

*E-mail: [marina-gazieva@yandex.ru](mailto:marina-gazieva@yandex.ru) ORCID: [0000-0002-7515-1407](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7515-1407)*

*\*corresponding author email: [medvedeva4278@yandex.ru](mailto:medvedeva4278@yandex.ru)*

## **Abstract:**

The relevance of the research is determined by the need to develop a theoretical and applied model of psychological assistance to preschoolers with mental retardation in an inclusive education. The article is aimed at implementing the methodology of the communicative approach in the study and comprehensive support of children with mental retardation at the stage of preschool childhood. The presented research uses a communicative approach to the study of older preschoolers with mental retardation and the organization of psychological assistance to those children in the context of educational integration. The methodological platform of the research is a subject-activity approach to the diagnosis of the communicative development of children, their subjective characteristics in interaction with society, to the creation of an event child-adult community. The theoretical analysis of the problem has made it possible to state the current contradiction between the real need to optimize the communicative development of children with mental retardation on the threshold of school education and the insufficiently developed systematic approach to understanding the mechanisms of their socialization, the search for technologies for their communicative development. The experimental research data indicate the generality of the patterns of the communicative development of preschoolers under conditions of normative development and with mental retardation, and the qualitative uniqueness of the subjective characteristics of the communicative sphere of preschoolers with mental retardation. The implementation of the psychological assistance programme based on the

methodology of the communicative approach has made it possible to state positive changes in the communicative development of older preschoolers with mental retardation, in the activation of their adaptive capabilities during the transition to school education. In the research the socio-cultural (personal) approach to the implementation of psychological assistance to children with mental retardation at the stage of preschool childhood has been used.

**Keywords:** human, children with disabilities, mental retardation, subject of communicative development, communicative abilities, “event community”, subject-activity approach.

## Introduction

The most important trend at the current stage of development of the Russian education is the transition from the defectological to the sociocultural paradigm of the implementation of the system of special psychological assistance to children with disabilities (Malofeev, 2010). The transition to the socio-cultural substantiation of the system of special assistance to children with disabilities is aimed at implementing the idea of L.S. Vygotsky (1983) about the orientation not towards a disorder, but towards potential capabilities of a child with psychophysical disabilities, who is a part of society (Derzhavina et al., 2021). With the development of the processes of inclusive education in Russia, the problem of socio-psychological adaptation of children with disabilities in an inclusive educational space and the activation of adaptive capabilities when interacting with society and with subjects of social space has acquired particular relevance (Krasnopevtseva, Filchenkova & Vinokurova, 2020; Slepovich & Polyakov, 2020; Baranova et al., 2020; Moroz et al., 2021).

According to the monitoring data of the municipal education system of Nizhny Novgorod in 2019, 21.64% of the children with disabilities study in separate classes at the secondary education level, and 10.12% – in the forms of joint education (Final Report on the Results, 2019).

The category of children with mental retardation (MR) is not only the most numerous group in comparison with other categories of children with disabilities, but also the most represented in the structures of inclusive education. According to the Statistical Bulletin “Education in Russia-2015” there are 187.900 children with mental retardation out of 449.500 schoolchildren with special needs and disabilities. 95.700 children with MR study in an inclusive education environment (Education

in Russia-2015, 2016). According to the final report on the development of the education system in Nizhny Novgorod for 2019, the studies of 32.97% of the children with MR are based on the adaptive programme.

According to researchers, the system of inclusive education, expanding the boundaries of communication between children with disabilities and their families with society, faces a number of problems, one of which is insufficient socio-personal and communicative readiness of different categories of children with disabilities to learn in conditions of inclusion. Unfortunately, the issues of socio-personal and communicative development of children with disabilities, which are significant for understanding the patterns of their socialization and successful integration into the public and educational space, have not been sufficiently studied in the defectological literature. The successful implementation of inclusive education actualizes a number of scientific, organizational and methodological problems of studying the patterns of socialization of children with disabilities, determining its conditions, the development and implementation of personality-oriented diagnostic, correctional, developmental and preventive programmes into practice (Babkina, 2017; Dmitrieva & Dvurechenskaya, 2017; Akhmadieva et al., 2018; Sorokoumova, 2011; Ulyenkova, Dmitrieva & Shutova, 2012; Stukalova et al., 2018; Dmitrieva et al., 2018; Zheltukhina et al., 2020; Tanabashi, 2021; Chistyakov et al., 2021).

The implementation of inclusive practice makes high demands on the communicative development of children with mental retardation, which is the most important component of successful socialization, a necessary element of their socio-personal development. The tendency to consider a person through the prism of his interaction with the environment was laid down in the

theoretical works of L.S. Vygotsky (1983). He believed that a key aspect of the socialization of children with psychophysiological developmental disorders is the experience of their communication in different social groups. He put the task of overcoming social isolation among the priority tasks of curative pedagogy (Dmitrieva & Dvurechenskaya, 2017).

Since the end of the 1990s, a communicative trend has been clearly traced in the defectological literature; there has been a shift in scientific interests from the cognitive sphere to the socio-communicative aspects of the development of children with disabilities (the study of communication skills and abilities, interpersonal interaction with others, personality traits that are significant for productive interaction) (Dmitrieva, 2013; Tastan & Davoudi, 2019; Volkovskaya & Levchenko, 2020; Gatan, Yangco & Monterola, 2021; Goncharov et al., 2021).

Today, the socio-communicative development of children occupies a leading place among the educational areas included in the federal state standard for preschool education (On the Approval of the Federal State Standard for Preschool Education, 2013), the federal state standard for primary general education of students with disabilities (On the Approval of the Federal State Educational Standard for Primary General Education, 2014), and communicative methodology is becoming one of the key theoretical guidelines for the modern system of special care for children with disabilities.

Modern studies of children with mental retardation and other categories of children with impaired psychophysical development testify to their communicative immaturity, the difficulties of their communicative adaptation in conditions of inclusion, the importance of developing their communicative characteristics as a condition for optimizing their adaptive abilities to interact with society (Dmitrieva et al., 2020). Despite the obvious relevance and the social significance the problem of communicative development of children with mental retardation remains insufficiently studied. In the special literature, there are not enough systemic scientific data on the patterns of communicative development or the formation of communication activities in them; the subject-activity characteristics of their

communication (motivating ideas, experiences, meanings) and the role of the subjective community in the communicative development of children remain unexplored. The early stages of development of a child with mental retardation, when the foundations of his communication with the surrounding society are laid, remain insufficiently studied (Babkina, 2020; Butko, Suvorova & Sorokoumova, 2019; Maksimova, 2015; Nikishina, 2003; Ryabova & Terletskaia, 2018; Trigger, 2008; Salame & Makki, 2021).

These starting points have made it possible to identify a scientific and applied problem and formulate the purpose and objectives of the theoretical and experimental research.

### **Purpose and objectives of the research**

The purpose of the research we have undertaken is to implement the methodology of the communicative approach in the study and comprehensive support of children with mental retardation at the stage of preschool childhood.

Objectives of the research:

- Development of a diagnostic programme for studying the development of communicative activity, subject-activity characteristics of the communicative development of older preschoolers with mental retardation in the field of communication with adults and peers.
- Identification of specific features of the development of older preschoolers with mental retardation as subjects of communication in comparison with preschoolers with normal mental development (NMD).
- Implementation of the methodology of the communicative approach to the organization of psychological assistance to older preschoolers with mental retardation.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the development programme for older preschoolers with mental retardation as subjects of communication when assessing their communicative adaptation in an inclusive school space.

– Determination of the psychological conditions for the activation of the subjective characteristics of the communicative development of older preschoolers with mental retardation.

The experiment involved 60 senior preschoolers with MR (30 children with MR are pupils of groups of compensating orientation, 30 children with MR are pupils of groups of combined orientation) and 60 older preschoolers of groups of general developmental orientation (children with NMD). Basic educational institutions of N. Novgorod, where the research has been carried out, are the municipal budgetary preschool educational institution “Kindergarten №36” and the municipal autonomous educational institution “School №176”.

## Materials and Methods

The methodology of our research is defined in the context of the cultural-historical paradigm, the key idea of which is the commonality of the laws of mental development in onto- and dysontogenesis (Vygotsky, 1983). In our study, these are the patterns of communicative development during mental retardation and in conditions of normative development.

The most important conceptual provision of the research organization is the implementation of the subject-activity approach to the study and assessment of the communicative development of older preschoolers. The child’s subjective activity in communicative interaction reveals itself in the content of their need-motivational attitudes and the means used to solve communicative tasks, in the readiness to have communication on the basis of motivating ideas, regardless of the situation and the content of the activity being implemented.

The most important methodological setting of our research is the implementation of the event approach (as one of the aspects of the activity approach) to the creation of a child-adult community, to the organization of interaction between the subjects of the educational space. The basis for the formation of such a community is joint activity, the presence in a child’s life of emotionally rich affairs, joint experiences, interaction of participants, which presupposes equality of positions.

Let us present the substantive and organizational aspects of the first stage of the research. The diagnostic programme for the communicative development of older preschoolers is aimed at studying the subjective characteristics of communicative activity in a situation of communication with different partners (adults and peers): motivational attitudes, communicative qualities, means of communication with a partner, and skills necessary for communication.

In order to diagnose the development of communicative activity, we have used the technique of modelling communicative situations in communication with an adult and a peer and a system of scale-point and level assessments (Lisina, 1997; Dmitrieva, 2013). In communication with an adult, situations of subject-game interaction and situations of theoretical cooperation have been simulated (conversations on cognitive and personal topics); in communication with a peer – emotionally-coloured fun games and situations of practical partnership. These situations have made it possible to actualize the age characteristics of the development of communicative activity (needs, motives, and means). The criteria for assessing communicative achievements are the following: initiative in communication, sensitivity to the influences of a partner, the prevailing emotional background of communication, the nature of the dominant motivational attitudes towards communicating with a partner, the nature of speech statements (by topic, form, function, and content). The point scores of the criteria have been correlated with the levels of communication development (high, medium or low).

In order to assess the communicative qualities of the personality of preschoolers and the level of development of their communicative skills, we have used the “Card of observations of the manifestation of communicative abilities in preschoolers”. The use of scores by the experts (teachers, parents) has made it possible to assess the level of expression of communicative qualities of a child’s personality (empathy, benevolence, authenticity, confrontation, etc.) and communicative actions and skills (organizational, perceptual, operational). The number of points scored by a child has

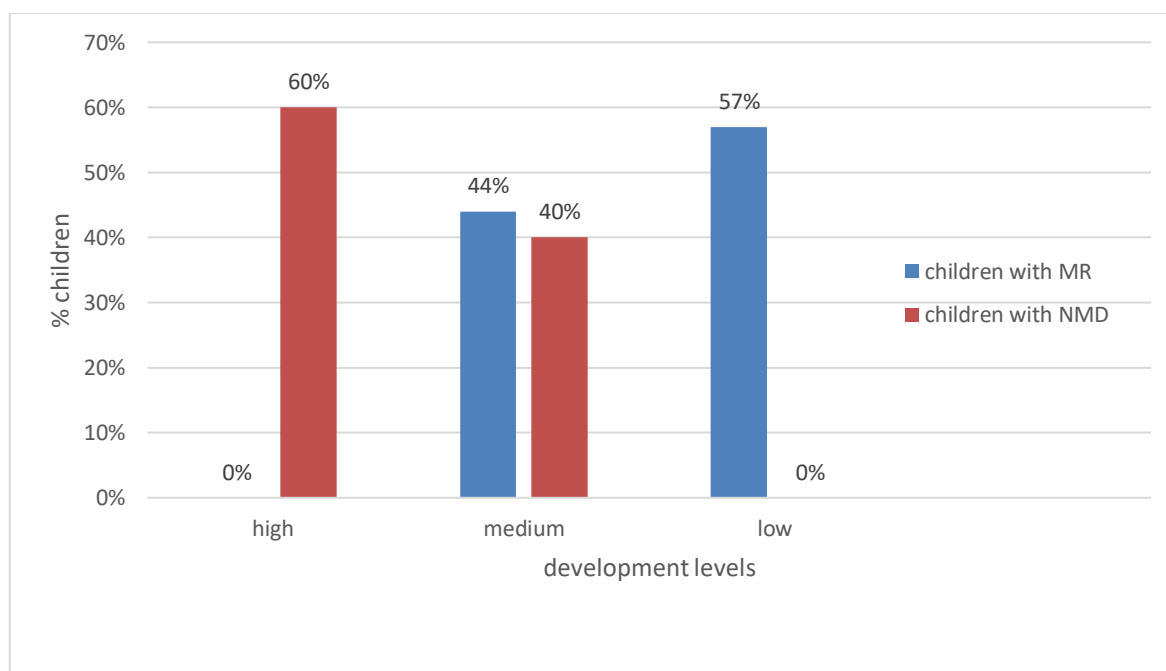
correlated with the level characteristics of the development of communicative abilities (very high, high, medium or low).

Thus, the diagnostic programme has made it possible to obtain some empirical data in the development of two areas of communicative activity: motivational (dominant motives in communicating with a partner, the development of communicative qualities) and operational

(levels of development of communication means and communicative skills).

## Results

The level characteristics of the development of the activity of communication with an adult are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Levels of development of communicative activity in communication with an adult.

A low level of communication with an adult (characteristics of all parameters are weakly expressed) was shown by 57% of the children with MR; it was not observed in the children with NMD. Children did not show initiative in relation to an adult, there was a neutral emotional background in relationships, and a weakly expressed sensitivity to the influence of a partner in all situations modelled by an adult. The child often did not notice the adult's initiative, ignored his requests or suggestions. The need for subject-game interaction was dominant. The repertoire of speech means of communication was poor in composition: situational, non-social and ascertaining statements or requests for help prevailed.

The medium level of communication with an adult (most of the parameters of communication had average values) dominated

in 43% of the children with MR and in 40% of the children with NMD. The children occasionally showed initiative in communicating with an adult, a positive emotional background of communication prevailed, sensitivity to the actions of a partner was observed while their own initiative was insufficient. The children showed interest in object-game interaction or in cognitive communication with an adult. Speech utterances were marked for greater variability: situational or non-social utterances prevailed, by function it was requests or cognitive questions, the content was dominated by ascertaining and classification statements.

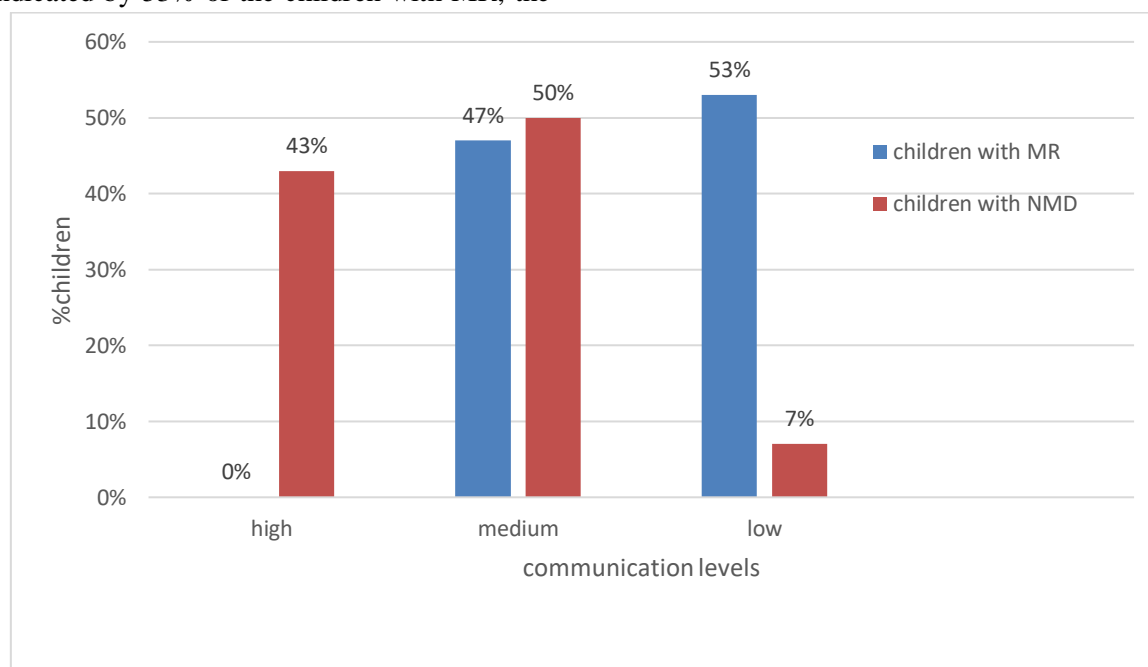
We have observed a high level of development of communication with an adult in 60% of the children with MR. The children showed a pronounced activity in communication in all

situations proposed by an adult. Positive mood prevailed. The children showed high indicators of initiative, which were harmoniously combined with a high level of sensitivity, variability of a child's motivational aspirations for communication (readiness to communicate in situations of practical cooperation, cognitive and personal communication), and a rich repertoire of verbal and non-verbal communication means. Speech means such as situational or social statements were dominant; by function it was questions, messages or judgements; the content was dominated by classification and evaluative statements.

A low level of communication with a peer (low indicators for all observed parameters) was indicated by 53% of the children with MR, the

low level was observed in 7% of the children with NMD. The children showed a low level of initiative in communication, lack of sensitivity to the behaviour of a partner. In situations of emotional-practical interaction, which those children prefer, a high level of emotional "charge" was observed. The children did not show sustained interest or desire for practical interaction with a partner. The repertoire of speech means used in communication with a partner was poor in composition: there were emotional exclamations or situational speech utterances.

Figure 2 shows the level characteristics of preschoolers in communication with a peer.



**Figure 2.** Levels of the development of communicative activity in communication with a peer.

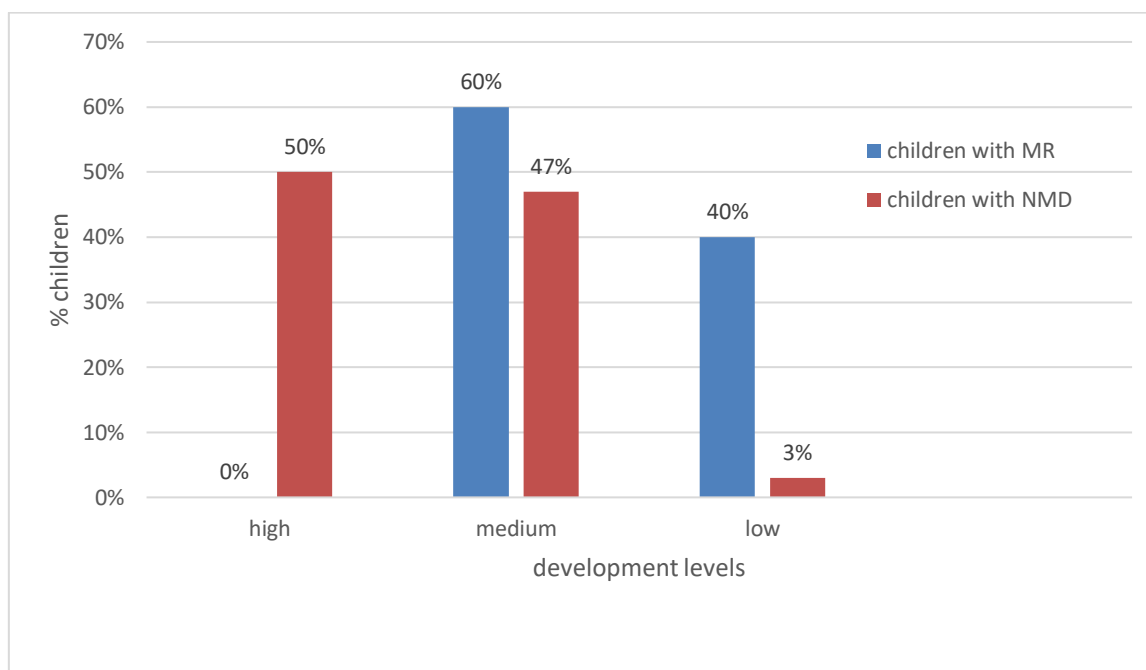
In the children with MR (47%) and in the children with NMD (50%), the average level of communication with a peer partner dominated. There was an insufficient level of initiative in communication, a neutral emotional background of communication, a pronounced sensitivity to a partner and his actions. The dominant interest was in practical interaction with the partner, in the procedural side of actions. The children did not show sensitivity to the partner's feelings, did not emotionally get attached to the partner, and found it difficult to coordinate actions with him. Situational

statements prevailed: it was requests or assessments of actions. The children did not show a desire for communication outside the situation of practical interaction.

A high level of communication with peers was shown by 43% of the preschoolers with NMD. The children were distinguished by a high level of initiative in communication, a positive emotional attitude towards interaction, and a pronounced sensitivity to the actions and statements of a partner. Motivational attitudes towards communicating with a peer partner were varied: it was both the desire for practical

(business) interaction, and the readiness to communicate on non-situational cognitive and personal topics (about events, impressions, new knowledge, successes, achievements, etc.). Speech statements were diverse: social and non-social, evaluative, classification statements, requests, suggestions or questions.

The results of studying the levels of development of communicative abilities, communicative actions and skills are presented in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Levels of development of communication skills in preschoolers.

We have observed a low level of the development of communication skills in 40% of the children with MR and in 3% of the children with NMD. The children, according to the experts, did not show readiness to communicate with an adult or a peer, rarely expressed sympathy and a benevolent attitude towards a partner, they conflicted, and did not know how to respond to the feelings and experiences of a partner. The children did not listen to their partner, did not know how to interact with him when solving a practical problem. Communication skills (organizational or perceptual) were poorly developed. They had insufficient verbal communication, they often expressed negative emotions.

In the preschoolers with MR (60%) and in the children with NMD (47%), the average level of development of communication skills prevailed. According to the experts, the children showed a readiness to communicate with various partners, they demonstrated initiative only in certain situations; they did not

always know how to show an emotional response to the feelings of a partner or to agree on interaction with him. The children possessed verbal and non-verbal means of communication and certain skills of communicative behavior, but they did not always show goodwill towards a partner, sometimes they conflicted with a peer.

The children with NMD (50%) showed a high level of the development of communication skills. The preschoolers actively expressed their willingness to communicate with different partners (adults or peers), demonstrated initiative and supported the partner's one, they knew how to listen or negotiate with a partner in a situation of cooperation; the children possessed the skills of communicative behavior, showed goodwill in communication, understood the needs of a partner, responded to his experiences, knew how to give in, defended their position reasonably, accepted help with gratitude. They were good at verbal and expressive communication.

Thus, the experimental data indicate an insufficient level of development of the motivational and operational components of communication with different partners (with an adult and a peer) in older preschoolers with MR. Medium-low values dominate in the development of all subjective characteristics of communicative activity (activity, initiative in communication, sensitivity to a partner, the nature of motivational attitudes, development of communication means, communicative qualities and skills).

### **Purpose, objectives, content of the programme of psychological assistance to preschoolers**

When defining the goals and objectives of the psychological assistance programme, we have relied on the position of L.S. Vygotsky (1983) about personality development as the main component of pedagogical and correctional development work. The goal of the programme is to harmonize the development of the personality of older preschoolers with mental retardation, and normalize their social contacts.

Programme objectives:

- Development of a child as a subject of communication (development and enrichment of need-motivational communicative attitudes, development of means of solving communication problems, development of motivating ideas and overcoming situational awareness in communication with different partners).
- Development of personal and communicative qualities which optimize the social adaptation of children with MR (empathy, friendliness, openness, etc.).
- Development of interpersonal skills in an event child-adult community.
- Increase in the psychological and pedagogical competence of teachers and parents, optimization of communication between teachers, parents and children.
- Organization of interaction of specialists in the implementation of the programme of psychological assistance to preschoolers within the framework of the implemented functional duties.

### **The main strategic directions for the implementation of the communicative methodology of psychological assistance:**

- Formation of an “event community” of subjects of the educational space, expanding the social space of children and their inclusion in the system of subject-subject relations with communicative partners (Slobodchikov & Isaev, 2013).
- Creation of conditions in a preschool educational organization for the fulfillment of tasks of communicative development in all types of children’s activities and forms of organization of the pedagogical and correctional-developmental process.

The psychological assistance programme included various correctional and developmental programmes for the communicative development of the subjects of the educational space. It was implemented during the academic year in groups of compensation, combined and general developmental orientation.

Let us present the content of the main blocks of the psychological assistance programme.

**The 1<sup>st</sup> block:** increase in the psychological and pedagogical competence of teachers and parents, mastering the techniques of psychological support for a child, methods of effective communication with children (techniques of reflective listening, “I-am messages”, etc.).

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> block:** inclusion of all subjects of the educational space (teachers, parents and children) into a single eventful space based on the subject-subject relations of children and adults. The tasks of this block of the programme were solved within the framework of the organization of project activities. The implementation of the two social projects called “The History of Good Deeds” and “About Friendship and Friends” made it possible to unite all the subjects of the educational space in solving social and personal problems; a collective activity, various forms of its organization (collection of information, discussions, presentations, etc.) allowed children to express themselves in different types of role-playing activities, to feel the commonality of the experiences of interacting subjects, to establish friendly



relationships with the subjects of interaction. Parents acquired the skills of interacting with the child, parents and teachers: it was the experience of partnership in organizing the life of children.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> block of the programme:** development of older preschoolers as subjects of communicative development. To achieve this, the programme for the communicative development of preschoolers was implemented in the work with children (Dmitrieva, 2013). The goal of the programme was to expand knowledge about the world of physical and social phenomena, to develop a cognitive activity, to enrich the motivational and need-based sphere of communication and the means used in communication. For this purpose, some problematic communicative situations were simulated, which allowed children to solve various communication problems, to test the means of communication adequate for their solution.

**The 4<sup>th</sup> block of the programme:** development of communicative qualities and skills, overcoming negative forms of communicative behavior (conflict, shyness, demonstrativeness, etc.). For this purpose, the programme of E.O. Smirnova (2003) was implemented. It is a system of communicative games that allows to vary the tasks of communicative development and interpersonal interaction of children. The priority task in the implementation of all partial programmes is overcoming the child's internal isolation, the formation of an orientation towards the other, the ability to understand a partner, and readiness for prosocial behavior based on empathy and compassion for the communication partner.

## Discussions

According to the results of the diagnostic test at the end of the school year (its participants are senior preschoolers with MR), we have noted positive dynamics in the development of the communicative activity of children with MR.

The activity in communication with a partner has increased, the number of proactive communicative contacts, the ability for subject-subject partnership interaction, and the variability of verbal contacts with partners have

also grown in number. 60% of the children showed the ability to non-situational communication with adults on cognitive and personal topics; 50% of the children had the ability to non-situational and business communication with a peer partner.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the psychological assistance programme implemented in the work of the preschool educational organization, we have conducted a survey (28 parents, 12 teachers and specialists). The survey results were the following: 100% of the teachers and 54% of the parents stated that as a result of the implementation of the programme, it was possible to create a space for productive communication and cooperation between children and adults; 92% of the teachers and 83% of the parents stated an increase in psychological and pedagogical competence; 92% of the teachers and 75% of the parents noted positive changes in the communicative development of the children (in the development of communicative skills and qualities, in the reduction of negative forms of behavior). 75% of the teachers noted that they managed to include parents of the children with MR in the pedagogical process as subjects.

An important indicator of the effectiveness of developmental assistance to children is an increase in their adaptive capabilities. In the control experiment, we have assessed the adaptive capabilities of children with MR during the transition to the school level of education.

The control experiment has involved 30 first-graders with MR, integrated into the mass educational space (15 children with MR, which were the participants of the psychological assistance programme, belonged to the experimental group; 15 children with MR – to the control group; there were also 15 children with NMD).

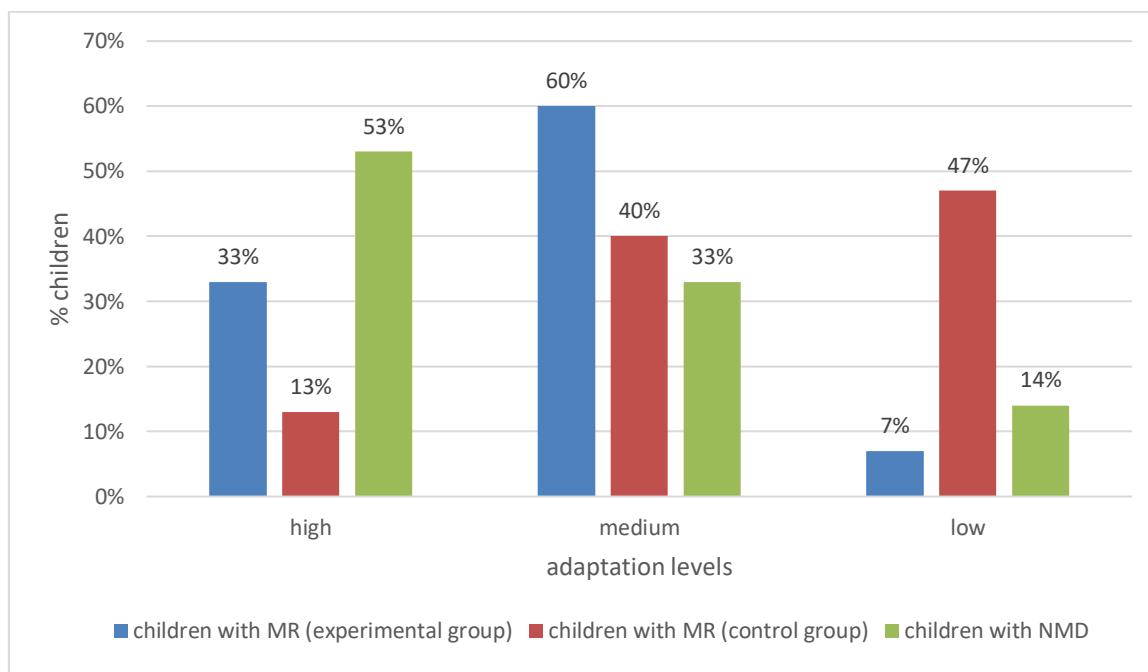
To assess the socio-psychological adaptation of the children with MR, we have used the methodology called "Experimental Assessment of a Child's Adaptability to School". The study scheme included a set of behavioral and socio-psychological characteristics which made it possible to assess the adaptability of the children to school: the effectiveness of educational activities, the assimilation of school norms of behavior, the success of social

contacts, and emotional well-being. Criteria-based scale-point assessments enabled to estimate the levels of social and psychological adaptability of the children:

- zone of normal adaptation;
- zone of incomplete adaptation;

– zone of maladaptation.

Let us present the results of the assessment of the adaptation levels of first-graders (fig. 4).



**Figure 4.** Levels of adaptation of first-graders with MR and NMD.

A normal level of adaptation was shown by 33% of the first-graders with MR (experimental group), 13% of the children with MR (control group), and 53% of the children with NMD. The children of that group were actively involved in educational activities, there was a positive tendency in learning educational material, in submission to a teacher's requirements. The children participated in team games, and did not avoid other children. The experts recorded the success of social contacts of the children: there was ease in making contacts, initiative in improving them, and manifestation of friendliness to classmates. In relation to the teacher, the children showed friendliness, communicated with him, and asked for help. A calm emotional state was dominant.

Incomplete adaptation, according to the experts, was shown by 60% of the children with MR (experimental group), 40% of the children with MR (control group) and 33% of

the children with NMD. The children showed a fairly high educational activity; however, they did not always complete the educational tasks unmistakably and neatly, they overcame difficulties in mastering individual programme tasks with the help of an adult. The children did not always fulfill the teacher's requirements. The sphere of their communication was limited: they came into contact only with some children, but they knew how to listen to their partner and coordinate their actions with him. They were interested in contacts with the teacher; if necessary, they turned to him for help. A neutral emotional state was dominant.

7% of the children with MR (experimental group), 47% of the children with MR (control group) and 14% of the children with NMD were in the zone of maladjustment. The children found it difficult to get involved in the educational process. Their activity was of a short-term nature, they did not always fulfill the teacher's requirements, and experienced

difficulties in assimilating the programme tasks. The children could not find something to do during the breaks, they bullied and offended their peers. The children did not have meaningful contacts with classmates, and experienced discomfort from social interaction. The teacher's requirements were fulfilled formally, they were not interested in communicating with him.

To sum up, the analysis of the empirical data indicates positive trends in the communicative and personal development of the children with MR, who were the participants of the programme of psychological support for communicative development; it also shows potentially higher adaptive indicators of their development.

## Conclusion

The results of theoretical and experimental research can lead to the following conclusions:

1. Older preschoolers with MR reflect the age-level stages of the development of communicative activity in the conditions of ontogenesis (from situational to non-situational communication, from business to cognitive and personal communication), but lag behind in its development.
2. Qualitative features of the formation of children as subjects of communicative development are the following: a low level of subjective activity and sensitivity to the subjective characteristics of a communication partner, poverty of need-motivational aspirations, situationality of motivational attitudes to communication with a partner, a low level of development of speech means of communication.
3. In preschoolers with MR, there is an insufficient expression of communicative qualities (empathy, friendliness, openness, etc.), a low level of development of communication skills (understanding of a partner, the ability to cooperate, etc.), which complicates their partner interaction with subjects of social space.
4. Modelling communicative situations and the inclusion of a child with MR in solving various communication tasks optimize the development of his communicative needs and

motives, and create conditions for the development of motivating representations and the construction of various types of communicative statements.

5. An important condition for the development of a child's subjective activity in communication is the expansion of social space and the establishment of subject-subject relationships with an interaction partner. Subject-subject interaction allows the child to master cultural signs of understanding and expression of subjectivity (experiences, states, intentions, relationships, etc.), to assimilate the standards of communicative behavior and to transfer the learned forms of subject-subject interaction to communication with different partners.

6. Implementation of the programme of psychological assistance in the communicative development of older preschoolers with MR optimizes their adaptive development opportunities in an inclusive educational environment.

Based on the results of the study, we believe that the implementation of the communicative approach in the modern methodology of psychological assistance to preschoolers with MR allows us to understand the mechanisms of the formation of a child with MR as a subject of social development and to substantiate the conditions for his effective socialization already at the stage of preschool childhood.

## References

- [1] Akhmadieva, R.S., Mikhaylovsky, M.N., Simonova, M.M., Nizamutdinova, S.M., Prokopyev, A.I., & Ostanina, S.S. (2021). Public relations in organizations in sportsman students view: Development of management tools or healthy and friendly relations formation. *Journal of Human Sport and Exercise*, 16(3proc), 1272-1279. <https://doi.org/10.14198/jhse.2021.16.Proc.3.43>
- [2] Akhmadieva, R.S., Yakusheva, I.P., Fabrikov, M.S., Kryukova, N.I., Perkova, E.P., Ibraeva, G.R., Platonova, E.V., & Gallyamova, O.N. (2018). Mastering of Student Valeological Socio-Cultural Etalons in Pedagogically Organized Environment of College and University.

- Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, 8(9), 175-184.
- [3] Babkina, N.V. (2017). Life Competencies as an Integral Part of the Education of Children with Mental Retardation. *Clinical and special psychology*, 6(6-1), 138-156.
- [4] Babkina, N.V. (2020). *Psychological Support of a Child with Developmental Delay*. Moscow: Science.
- [5] Baranova, E.A., Zheltukhina, M.R., Shnaider, A.A., Zelenskaya, L.L., Shestak, L.A., Redkozubova, E.A., & Zdanovskaya, L.B. (2020). New Media Business Philosophy in Conditions of Mass Media Convergence. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, 10(4), e202021. <https://doi.org/10.30935/ojcm/8387>
- [6] Butko, G.A., Suvorova, O.V. & Sorokoumova, S.N. (2019). Study of the Motor Sphere of Preschoolers with Mental Retardation. *Vestnik of Minin University*, 7(3). URL: <https://vestnik.mininuniver.ru/jour/article/view/1008>. <https://doi.org/10.26795/2307-1281-2019-7-3-6>.
- [7] Chistyakov, A.A., Mashkin, N.A., Ishmuradova, I.I., Ruchkina, G.F., Babieva, N.S., & Shaidullina, A.R. (2021). System management and labour relations transformation in relation with talented, healthy and sportsman staff. *Journal of Human Sport and Exercise*, 16(3proc), 1323-1329. <https://doi.org/10.14198/jhse.2021.16.Proc.3.47>
- [8] Derzhavina, V.V., Nikitina, A.A., Makarov, A.L., Piralova, O.F., Korzhanova, A.A., Gruver, N.V., & Mashkin, N.A. (2021). Inclusive Education Importance and Problems for Students Social Integration. *Propósitos y Representaciones*, 9(SPE3), e1130. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20511/pyr2021.v9nSPE3.1130>
- [9] Dmitrieva, E.E. & Dvurechenskaya, O.N. (2017). *Psychological Features of Socialisation of Preschool and Primary School Children with Disabilities*. Moscow: Flinta.
- [10] Dmitrieva, E.E. (2013). *Development of Social Competence in Preschoolers with Disabilities*. Nizhny Novgorod: Nizhny Novgorod state pedagogical university.
- [11] Dmitrieva, E.E., Kashtanova, S.N., Medvedeva, E.Y., Olkhina, E.A. & Kudryavtsev, V.A. (2018). Tolerant Consciousness of Educational and Multicultural Space Subjects. *Espacios*, 39(38), 9-17.
- [12] Dmitrieva, E.E., Medvedeva, E.Yu., Olkhina, E.A., Uromova, S.E. & Kashtanova, S.N. (2020). The Development of Social Competence in Preschoolers with Disabilities as the Condition for Their Successful Educational Integration. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(7), 3244-3250.
- [13] Education in Russia-2015. (2016). *Statistical Bulletin*. Moscow: MIREA.
- [14] Final Report on the Results. (2019). *Final Report on the Results of the Analysis and Prospects for the Development of the Education System of the City of Nizhny Novgorod for 2019*. URL: <https://admgor.nnov.ru/uploads/editor/10/bf/%D0%98%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B2%D1%8B%D0%B9%20%D0%BE%D1%82%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%82%20%D0%9C%D0%9C%D0%A1%D0%9E%202019%20%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4.pdf>
- [15] Gatan, P.R.G., Yangco, R., & Monterola, S.L. (2021). Relationships among Environmental Literacy, Locus of Control, and Future Orientation of STEM Students in the Philippines. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, 17(4), e2250. <https://doi.org/10.21601/ijese/10984>
- [16] Goncharov, V.V., Zheltukhina, M.R., Slyshkin, G.G., Khachmafova, Z.R., & Makerova, S.R. (2021). Color semantics in Vladimir Mayakovsky's poetics. *Laplace Em Revista*, 7 (Extra-B), 88-96. <https://doi.org/10.24115/S2446-622020217Extra-B887p.88-96>
- [17] Krasnopevtseva, T.F., Filchenkova, I.F. & Vinokurova, I.V. (2020). To the Question of the Readiness of the University Research and Teaching Staff for the Implementation of Inclusive Education. *Vestnik of Minin University*, 8(1). URL: <https://vestnik.mininuniver.ru/jour/article/view/1061>. <https://doi.org/10.26795/2307-1281-2020-8-1-5>.
- [18] Lisina, M.I. (1997). *Communication, Personality and Psyche of a Child*.

- Moscow: Institute of Practical Psychology. Voronezh: NPO MODEK.
- [19] Maksimova, S.Yu. (2015). *Features of the Psychophysical State of Preschool Children with Mental Retardation*. Volgograd: Federal State Educational Budget Institution of Higher Education "Volgograd State Physical Education Academy".
- [20] Malofeev, N.N. (2010). Changes in the Social School – an Inevitable Global Process. *Nizhny Novgorod education*, 3, 4-9.
- [21] Moroz, V.V., Markelova, Y.V., Kharisova, R.R., Lisitsyna, T.B., Kartushina, I.G., Minkova, E.S., & Prokopyev, A.I. (2021). Digital Ethics: Features and Problems of Communication in Online Sales. *Journal of Gender and Interdisciplinarity*, 2(01), 238-249.
- [22] Nikishina, V.B. (2003). *Practical Psychology in Working with Children with Mental Retardation: A guide for psychologists and educators*. Moscow: VLADOS.
- [23] On the Approval of the Federal State Educational Standard for Primary General Education. (2014). *On the Approval of the Federal State Educational Standard for Primary General Education of Students with Disabilities: Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of December 19, 2014 No.1598*. URL: <https://docs.edu.gov.ru/document/b903f8ab3dee1dc5e0835ee9f10b59a9>.
- [24] On the Approval of the Federal State Standard for Preschool Education. (2013). *Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of October 17, 2013, no. 1155 / rev. (January 21, 2019)*. URL: <http://www.edu.ru/documents/view/57648/>.
- [25] Ryabova, N.V. & Terletskaya, O.V. (2018). The Experience of Forming Communicative Universal Educational Actions of Primary Schoolchildren. *Vestnik of Minin University*, 2(19), 1-12. URL: <https://vestnik.mininuniver.ru/jour/article/view/813>. <https://doi.org/10.26795/2307-1281-2018-6-2-10>.
- [26] Salame, I. I., & Makki, J. (2021). Examining the Use of PhET Simulations on Students' Attitudes and Learning in General Chemistry II. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, 17(4), e2247. <https://doi.org/10.21601/ijese/10966>
- [27] Slepovich, V.S. & Polyakov, A.M. (2020). Interaction with a Child with Disabilities in Psychophysical Development as the Basis for Providing him with Psychological Assistance. *Defectology*, 2, 34-41.
- [28] Slobodchikov, V.I. & Isaev, E.I. (2013). *Psychology of Human Development: Development of Subjective Reality in Ontogenesis*. Moscow: St. Tikhon's orthodox university.
- [29] Smirnova, E.O. (2003). *Interpersonal Relationships of Preschoolers. Diagnostics, Problems, Correction*. Moscow: VLADOS.
- [30] Sorokoumova, S.N. (2011). *Psychological Support of Inclusive Education of Preschoolers with Disabilities*: Abstract of PhD Thesis. Nizhny Novgorod: Nizhny Novgorod State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering.
- [31] Stukalova, O.V., Akhmadieva, R.S., Khasyanov, O.R., Faleeva, L.V., Ashrafullina, G.S., Fortova, L.K., Kochneva, L.V., & Kryukova, N.I. (2018). Modern Trends in Educational Institutions Education Quality Assessment. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, 8(9), 197-208.
- [32] Tanabashi, S. (2021). STEAM Education Using Sericulture Ukiyo-e: Object-Based Learning through Original Artworks Collected at a Science University Museum in Japan. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, 17(4), e2248. <https://doi.org/10.21601/ijese/10962>
- [33] Tastan, SB & Davoudi, SMM. (2019). The relationship between socially responsible leadership and organisational ethical climate: in search for the role of leader's relational transparency .Int. J. Business Governance and Ethics, 13(3): 275-299.
- [34] Trigger, R.D. (2008). *Psychological Features of Socialisation of Children with Mental Retardation*. Saint-Petersburg: Peter.
- [35] Ulyenkova, U.V., Dmitrieva, E.E. & Shutova, N.V. (2012). An Applied-

- theoretical Model of Psychological Assistance to Children with Mental Retardation. *Higher education in Russia*, 2, 105-109.
- [36] Volkovskaya, T.N. & Levchenko I.Yu. (2020). Communicative Approach in the Context of Modern Methodology of Psychological and Pedagogical Assistance to Children with Speech Disabilities. *Defectology*, 3, 17-21.
- [37] Vygotsky, L.S. (1983). *Collected works in 6 volumes*: vol. 5. Moscow: Pedagogy.
- [38] Zheltukhina, M.R., Slyshkin, G.G., Gumovskaya, G.N., Baranova, E.A., Sklyarova, N. G., Vorkina, K. S., & Donskova, L. A. (2020). Verbal Features of Film Reviews in the Modern American Media Discourse. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, 10(3), e202020. <https://doi.org/10.30935/ojcmmt/8386>