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# CUADERNOS DE SOFÍA EDITORIAL

ISSN 0719-4706 - Volumen 7 / Número 4 / Octubre - Diciembre 2020 pp. 227-243

# PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR PARENTS RAISING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

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Fecha de Recepción: 15 de junio de 2020 – Fecha Revisión: 27 de junio de 2020

Fecha de Aceptación: 24 de septiembre 2020 - Fecha de Publicación: 01 de octubre de 2020

#### **Abstract**

A study of child-parent relations in families with children with ASD (autism spectrum disorder) and the psycho-emotional stress of parents raising children with ASD is presented. The study involved 18 parents raising children with ASD of preschool and primary school age. The technique Express diagnostics of the level of psycho-emotional tension was used to study child-parent relationships and parenting style in the family. It includes 11 scales related to violations of the parenting process, the relationship between the child and the parent. This method allows for a comprehensive approach to assessing a person's psychological and emotional stress and measures its various aspects. The authors found out the following features of the studied indicators: disharmonious in child-parent relations, the use of such styles of interaction with children by parents, such as hyperprotection, insufficient requirements, prohibitions, phobia of losing a child, minimal sanctions, projection on the child of their own undesirable qualities, emotional distance from the child, high significance of the child; a high level of psycho-emotional stress. Also, in the article, the authors present the effectiveness of the author's comprehensive program for working with parents of children with ASD. A comprehensive program of psychological support for parents of children with ASD has been developed and tested. It includes 4 main areas: psychological education, correction, individual counseling, and prevention.

# **Keywords**

ASD (autism spectrum disorder) - families - Emotional tension - Psychological support

# Para Citar este Artículo:

Plyskina, N.; Kokhan. S. T.; Romanova, E. V.; Skaliy, A.; Skaliy, D. T. y Ostrowski, A. Psychological support for parents raising children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Revista Inclusiones Vol: 7 num 4 (2020): 227-243.

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#### Introduction

Psychological support for families raising children with ASD (autism spectrum disorder) is a problem in the Trans-Baikal Territory of the Russian Federation. This is due to the small number of highly qualified specialists who are able to provide timely, efficient and budgetary assistance to such families. Therefore, it is important to take into account the experience of other countries in the field of inclusive education and public policies of other countries<sup>1</sup>.

Official statistics of families raising children with ASD in Russia are not kept, but according to the Ministry of Health of Russia² in 2018, the number of children with autism exceeds 31 thousand people. In the Chita Social Society (social group in Viber) more than 300 parents are registered in 2020 raising children with ASD . There is an increasing trend in the number of children with ASD.

Parents raising children with ASD differ in a number of features, such as anxiety, stress states, feelings of despair, etc. This is due to the fact that raising a child with ASD is not easy and results in the development of the child require a large amount of time and effort<sup>3</sup>.

The most significant stress on parents of autistic children is the unpredictability of the child's behavior and associated problems in social and interpersonal communication<sup>4</sup>.

Isolation from the outside world, a tendency to express affective reactions, the absence or weak attachment of a child with autism to those close to him, inability to agree with the child even on the simplest things, Stereotyping has a significant impact on family relations<sup>5</sup>.

In the Gray study, half of the interviewed mothers reported that their child's autism "does not allow them to work at all or limits their working hours and/or type of employment" 6

M. B. Olsson and C. P. Hwang in their study suggest that the stress state of parents caused by aberrant behavior of the child, combined with restrictions in the parent's personal life, such as social isolation, violation of interpersonal contacts, restrictions in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Monica Cristina Reis dos Santos; Elizabete Barbosa da Silva; Maria Aparecida Barbosa de Souza; Cledir Rocha Pereira, "Educação inclusiva e políticas públicas brasileiras: aspectos históricos e conceituais", Revista Inclusiones Vol: 7 núm Especial julio-septiembre (2020): 42 - 62

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ministry of Health of Russia. Available from: https://www.rosminzdrav.ru (accessed: 04.03.2020).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> L. M. Betker, Psychological and pedagogical support of children with autism spectrum disorder: a teaching tool for teachers and specialists of educational organizations (Khanty-Mansiysk, RIO IRO, 2013) y M. Yu. Vedenina, "The use of behavioral therapy of autistic children for the formation of household adaptation skills", Defectology num 2 (1997): 31–39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> P. Munday y M. Sigman, Specifying the Nature of the Social Impairment of Autism. Ed.by G. Dawson (N.Y. L.; The Guilford press 1989).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Fundamentals of special psychology: a training manual Ed. L.V. Shipova. (Saratov: Information Center Nauka, 2013) y L. M. Betker, Psychological and pedagogical support of children with autism spectrum disorder: a teaching tool for teachers and specialists of educational organizations. (Khanty-Mansiysk, RIO IRO), 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> D. E. Gray, "Lay conceptions of autism: Parents' explanatory models", Medical Anthropology, num 16 (2002): 99-118.

professional activities, and impaired Hobbies, may be one of the factors that contribute to a higher risk of depression in mothers of children with ASD<sup>7</sup>.

It is also believed that there are several factors that explain the emotional stress of parents of children with ASD. These include the uncertainty and confusion associated with the diagnosis of ASD, the stressful nature of autistic symptoms and related behavioral problems, as well as the lack of understanding of society and tolerance for the behavior of children with ASD by people around them<sup>8</sup>.

Inclusive education and public policies of other countries, such as Brazil, are of interest.

- O.S. Nikolskaya notes that mothers sometimes consider themselves to be bad and not attentive enough, because the child does not seek tactile contact or eye contact. Also O.S. Nikolskaya and E.R. Baenskaya in their work «Autistic Child, Ways of Help», note that mothers raising children with autism have low self-esteem, considering that they are poorly performing their maternal role. They have increased anxiety, depression, irritability, emotional exhaustion<sup>9</sup>.
- V. V. Leshin, having analyzed extensive experimental material, revealed that the main conditions that deform the upbringing of a special child are:
- Lack of flexibility in the formation of relations between parents and children; lack of search for the optimal relationship option; adherence to traditional forms of relations in their understanding (for example, we had this); lack of knowledge of the psychology of a child with special needs<sup>10</sup>.

There are studies on the negative impact of parental stress on marital relations. Intensive childcare requirements as well as severe stress and fatigue of parents, which were found to be more common among mothers of children with RAC than among mothers of children with other disabilities, may adversely affect the marriage of the parents of the children with PAC<sup>11</sup>. In the study of Alexandra H. Solomon and Beth Chung parents of children with autism who serve as financial support, noted that when they return home from work, they are eager to reconnect and hear about the past day, especially about how the child with autism felt, behaved, and responded to therapy. But, they face disappointment when a stay-at-home parent who has been talking, thinking and dealing with their child's autism all day leaves. Knowing that they will talk about their respective experiences during their family reunion can mitigate this polarization cycle<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> M. B. Olsson y C. P. Hwang, "Depression in mothers and fathers", Blackwell Science Ltd, Journal of Intellectual Disability Research, 2001.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> D. E. Grey y W. J. Holden, "Psychosocial well-being among parents of children with autism", Australian and new Zealand journal of development issues num 18 (1992): 83–93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> O. S. Nikolskaya, Autistic child. Ways of help (Moscow: Terevinth, 2012) y E. R. Baenskaya, Help in raising children with special emotional development (early age) (Moscow: Terevinf. 2009).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> V. V. Leshin, "Structure of violations of parent-child relations in the family with a somatically ill child", Correctional pedagogy Vol: 37 num 1 (2010): 32–37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Paul R. Benson y Joanne Kersh, Published online: Springer Science+Business (Media, LLC: 2011).

Aleksandr H. Solomon y Beth Chung, "Family Process. Understanding Autism: How Family Therapists Can Support Parents of Children with Autism", Spectrum Disorders num 2 Vol: 51 (2012)

In the same way, stress in parents of children with ASD can increase during the planning and birth of a second child. Parents may fear that their second child will develop a ASD or other disorder<sup>13</sup>.

Negative characteristics of specialists on a child with ASD can also have a negative impact on the emotional state of parents<sup>14</sup>.

The head of a multi-site project aimed at diagnosing disorders in children with ASD and improving care for parents, such children, Rapin, in his research hypothesized that in families where one child suffered from ASD, there is an increased risk that other children will have mental retardation or other intellectual and emotional-volitional disorders.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the relevance of our research is justified by the above-mentioned features of parents raising children with autism.

Having studied various domestic and foreign studies, we have learned that parents bringing up children with PAC have certain characteristics, such as: tendency to depressive states, insulation from the outside world, disharmonious relationships between family members.

In this regard, we assumed that in families raising children with ASD, the child-parent relationship is disrupted due to the psycho-emotional stress of the parents.

# A study of the characteristics of parents raising children with ASD

In 2019, we conducted a study among parents raising children with ASD (autism spectrum disorder).

The purpose of this study was to study the features of emotional stress of such parents and child-parent relations.

The study involved 18 parents raising children with ASD of preschool and primary school age.

We used standardized tests to study emotional stress and child-parent relationships. The social and demographic information required for the study was collected using a questionnaire .

<sup>14</sup> I. Firth y R. Dryer, "The predictors of distress in parents of children with autism spectrum disorder", Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability num 38 (2013): 163-171; H. R. Hall y J. C. Graff, "The relationships among adaptive behaviours of children with autism, family support, parenting stress, and coping", Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing num 34 (2011): 4-25 y S. A. Hayes y S. L. Watson, "The impact of parenting stress: A meta-analysis of studies comparing the experience of parenting stress in parents of children with and without autism spectrum disorder", Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders num 43 (2013): 629-642.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>N. O. Davis; A. S. Carter, "Parenting stress in mothers and fathers of toddlers with autism spectrum disorders: Associations with child characteristics", Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders num 38 (2008): 1278-1291.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> I. Rapin, Autism and Language Disorders Nosology Project. Preschool children with inadequate communication: Developmental language disorder, autism, low IQ (London: MacKeith, 1996).

We used the questionnaire for the analysis of family relationships by E. G. Eidemiller. 16

This technique was used to study child-parent relationships and parenting style in the family. It includes 11 scales related to violations of the parenting process, the relationship between the child and the parent<sup>17</sup>.

Method "Express diagnostics of the level of psycho-emotional tension (PET) O. S. Kopina, E. A. Suslova, E. V. Zaikina (Method of Express diagnostics of the level of psychoemotional tension (PET) and its sources (O. S. Kopina, E. A. Suslova, E. V. Zaikin). This method allows for a comprehensive approach to assessing a person's psychological and emotional stress and measures its various aspects.

The questionnaire includes methods for rapid diagnosis of PES (psycho-emotional stress) and related factors:

- 1) self-assessment of health;
- 2) L. Reeder's psychosocial stress scale<sup>18</sup>:
- 3) the scale of life satisfaction in general by O. S. Kopina (Express diagnostics of 3) the scale of life satisfaction in general by O. S. Kopina (Express diagnostics of the level of psycho-emotional stress and its sources (O. S. kopina, E. A. Suslova, E. V. Zaikin);
- 4) the scale of satisfaction with the living conditions of O. S. Kopina (Express diagnostics of the level of psycho-emotional stress and its sources (O. S. Kopina, E. A. Suslova, E. V. Zaikin);
- 5) the scale of satisfaction of basic life needs of O. S. Kopina (method of rapid diagnostics of the level of psycho-emotional stress (PEN) and its sources (O. S. kopina, E. A. Suslova, E. V. Zaikin)
- 6) questionnaire of the main socio-demographic indicators (gender, age, level of education, social group, marital status).

Questionnaire for parents raising children with ASD (questionnaire developed by the authors of this article)

This questionnaire was used to clarify the socio-demographic characteristics of parents of children with ASD.

1. Mathematical and statistical analysis using the G criterion of signs was used to identify dynamics before and after psychological impact<sup>19</sup>

## Result

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The study involved 18 female parents raising children with ASD of primary school and senior preschool age (from 4 to 11 years).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Questionnaire "Analysis of family relationships" E. G. Eidemiller (DIA methodology). Available from: https://psycabi.net/testy/281-oprosnik-analiz-semejnykh-vzaimootnoshenij-eg-ejdemiller-metodika-asv (accessed date: 2.10.2019)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> E. G. Eidemiller v V. V. Justitsky, Family psychotherapy (Leningrad, Medicine, 1990).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Psychological tests. Ed. A.A. Karelin, Volume 1 (Moscow: Humanity. ed. VLADOS Center, 2000).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> V. A. Kutashov y V. V. Kvasova, "Parent-child relations in families with children with autism spectrum disorders", Young Scientist num 3 (2016): 279-283.

We studied the socio-demographic indicators using a questionnaire consisting of 5 questions. The General characteristics of socio-demographic indicators are given in table 1.

Soci	o-demographic indicators of the study participants	Number	Percentage		
Pare	nt's age				
1.	25-29	13	59		
2.	30-34	4	18		
3.	35-39	2	9		
4.	40-44	1	4		
5.	45 and above	2	9		
Mari	al status				
1.	Married	17	77		
2.	Divorced	3	13		
3.	Lives apart	1	4		
4.	Other	1	4		
Leve	l of education				
1.	Secondary education	17	77		
2.	Higher education	6	27		
Emp	loyment				
1.	Have a paid job	10	45		
2.	Sole trader	1	4		
3.	Learns	4	18		
4.	Unemployed	6	27		
5.	Employer				
6.	Other	1	4		
Num	ber of children with family disabilities				
1.	One child with HIA	18	82		
2.	2 or more children with HIA	4	18		

Table 1
Questionnaire «Socio-demographic indicators»

In order to study child-parent relationships, we used the method "Analysis of family relationships" by E. G. Eidemiller and V. V. Justitskis<sup>20</sup>, this will help us in the future to develop a program of psychological support for parents of children with ASD. Analyzing the data obtained, we have deduced the prevailing scales in family relationships among parents of children with ASD. (table. 2)

Scale	Person Scale	%
Hyperprotection (child in focus)	14 people	77%
Insufficient prohibition requirements (3)	6 people	33%
Minimum sanctions (C)	5 people	27%
Female Attributes Preference Scale (WVC)	3 people	16%
Child Loss Phobia (FS)	5 people	27%
Self-esteem projection (NCP)	3 people	16%

Table 2

«Analysis of family relationships» Ed. Eidemiller, V. V. And Justices

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> E. G. Eidemiller y V. V. Justitsky, Family psychotherapy (Leningrad, Medicine, 1990).
PH. D. N. PLYASKINA / PH. D. S. T. KOKHAN / P. H. E. V. ROMANOVA / PH. D. A. SKALIY / PH. D. T. SKALIY
PH. D. A. OSTROWSKI

According to the data obtained (table.2), it was found that 77% of the study participants have "hyperprotection" in the educational process. Such parents devote an excessive amount of time to their child, put him in the center of attention, the upbringing of the child is the central business of parents, 33% of the study participants make insufficient demands and prohibitions for a child with ASD. Such parents are unwilling or unable to set rules and boundaries for their child's behavior. We can assume that this is due to the child's deviations from the ASD, but this behavior does not allow the child to develop in terms of socialization (norms and rules). 27% of parents do not apply penalties to a child with ASD, and believe that incentives are more effective in interacting with a child with ASD. 27% experience a phobia of losing a child. Such parents are always afraid to make mistakes, exaggerate the idea of the "fragility " of the child, and try to fulfill his every desire. 16% of participants project their own negative qualities on the child. These parents see in their child those traits that they feel they have in themselves, but do not recognize. This attitude can lead to rejection and abuse of the child. In 16% of the study participants. there is an unconscious rejection of male attributes in the son, and female attributes in the daughter. In this regard, an emotional rejection of the child can be formed. According to the results of diagnostics using the method "Analysis of family relationships", we can note that the following features dominate in child-parent relationships in families with children with ASD: hyperprotection, lack of requirements, prohibitions, phobia of losing a child, minimality of sanctions, projection of their own undesirable qualities on the child, emotional distance from the child, high significance of the child. Thus, most parents have violated the child-parent relationship and there are disharmonious styles of interaction with the child. These results confirm the similarity with the hypothesis of Munday P., Sigman M. 1989 that parents of autistic children experience the most significant stress from the unpredictability of the child's behavior and related problems in social and interpersonal communication<sup>21</sup>.( Munday P., Sigman M, 1989)

# Results of diagnostics of psycho-emotional tension

In order to study the psycho-emotional stress of parents of children with ASD and identify the need for correction, we used the method of "Express diagnostics of the level of psycho-emotional stress (PES) by O. S. Kopina, E. A. Suslova, E. V. Zaikina (Method of Express diagnostics of the level of psycho-emotional stress (PES) and its sources (O. S. kopina, E. A. Suslova, E. V. Zaikin), the results of which are described in table.3.

Level	Self- assessment of health		Psychosocial stress scale of L. Reader;		Life satisfaction scale of O.S. Copina;		Life Satisfaction Scale O.S. Copina		Basic Needs Satisfaction Scale O.S. Copina	
High	11	61%	12	66%	6	33%	5	28%	5	28%
Medium	2	11%	3	16%	5	28%	6	33%	8	44%
Low	5	28%	3	16%	7	38%	7	38%	5	28%

Table 3

Methodology of «Rapid Diagnosis of the Level of Psycho-emotional Tension (PET) O.S. Kopina, E.A. Suslova, E.V. Zaikin»

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> P. Munday and M. Sigman, Specifying the Nature of the Social Impairment of Autism. Ed.by G. Dawson (N.Y. L.; The Guilford press, 1989).

After analyzing the data in table 3, we found that 61% of participants rated their health at a high level, 28% - at a low level, and only 11% - 2 people consider their health to be average. 66% of participants have a high level of psycho-emotional stress, 16% - are in a borderline state and also experience some emotional stress. 16% do not have a pronounced stress, due to an optimistic mood, and, as was noted during the conversation, due to the financial ability to travel and take the child to various classes regularly. As well as actively communicating with other parents of children with ASD and specialists, such parents get enough personal resources. On the life satisfaction scale, we see that 33% are completely satisfied, 28% are not satisfied enough, and 38% are completely dissatisfied with life. 28% are satisfied with their living conditions, 33% are not satisfied enough, and 38% are not satisfied. In total, 28% of parents have met their basic life needs, 44% are not satisfied enough, and 28% are not satisfied.

Thus, we found that the majority of parents (66 %) have psycho-emotional stress on the L. Reeder scale<sup>22</sup>. And also, child-parent relationships in families raising children with ASD are violated. Therefore, such indicators require immediate impact, in order to relieve the psycho-emotional stress of parents and correct child-parent relations. In this case, the development of a child with ASD can give a positive dynamic. Thus, emotional stress is present in families that raise children with autism, this is due to disharmonious child-parent relationships in such families. A similar causal relationship was noted by O. Nikolskaya in her works, saying that mothers of children with autism make many demands on themselves when they do not see the result of their work, lose further meaning and go into a position of self-flagellation and despair. Due to the lack of emotional responsiveness from the child, the parent feels bad, detached, resulting in depressive States<sup>23</sup>.

In the literature we have studied, we have not found any similar studies using the methods which we have chosen.

Support services and programs to help families raising children with ASD should be comprehensive, aimed at finding resources and developing strategies for managing their own emotions<sup>24</sup>. Based on the results of the study, having obtained results that require psychological impact, we developed an author's program of psychological support for parents raising children with ASD. Based on practical material and methodological recommendations for working with children with ASD, the center for therapeutic pedagogy<sup>25</sup> and the Federal resource center for the organization of comprehensive support for children with ASD (https://autism-frc.ru/), we have developed an author's comprehensive program of psychological support for parents raising children with ASD. This program includes fragments borrowed from correctional work with mothers of children with ASD Tkacheva V. V.<sup>26</sup>

The purpose of the programme is to provide comprehensive psychological assistance to families raising children with ASD.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Psychological tests. Ed. A.A. Karelin, Volume 1 (Moscow: Humanity. VLADOS Center, 2000).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> O. S. Nikolskaya, Autistic child. Ways of help (Moscow: Terevinth).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> E. K. Cridland; S. C. Jones; C. A. Magee and P. Caputi, "Family-focused autism spectrum disorder research: A review of the utility of family systems approaches", Autism num 18 (2014): 213-222.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Special child. Research and help experience: scientific-practical Ed. M.S. Dimenstein (2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> V. V. Tkacheva, Psychocorrectional work with mothers raising children with developmental disabilities: a workshop on the formation of adequate relationships (Moscow: Gnome Press, 1999).

## Program objective:

- psychological education of families about favorable ways to interact with children with ASD, ways to independently relieve emotional stress:
  - correction of psycho-emotional stress, child-parent relations;
- psychological individual counseling of parents raising children with ASD, aimed at finding internal resources, relieving emotional stress;
- prevention of psycho-emotional tension and emotional distance between parent and child.

The program lasts for 1 academic year, 1 lesson per week.

The first block of the program is aimed at psychological education of parents about favorable ways to interact with children with ASD, ways to independently relieve emotional stress. Form of education-training seminar "Ways to preserve your own emotional wellbeing and harmony in the family". The time limit is 1.5-2 hours. 2 times a month, for one month.<sup>27</sup>

The second block of the program-correctional and developmental, aimed at correcting psycho-emotional tension, emotional distance between parent and child, search for internal resources of parents. This block is designed for 3 months, one lesson per week. The form of classes is group: parent-child group-5 classes of 40 minutes; parent group-5 classes of 90 minutes.

The third block of the program is individual psychological counseling, the purpose of which is to search for internal resources, relieve emotional stress, as well as work on the client's request. Per parent-about 1 hour, depending on the situation, repeated consultations are possible.

The fourth block is psychological prevention of psycho-emotional tension and emotional distance between parent and child. This block was implemented by distributing booklets, memos, and recommendations.

The program was attended by 18 parents raising children with ASD.

At the end of the program, we conducted a repeated study of psycho-emotional stress and child-parent relationships, in order to identify the dynamics.

We studied the child-parent relationship using the E. G. method. Eidemiller, V. V. Justitskis<sup>28</sup> (DIA method)<sup>29</sup>, the results are presented in table.4

Scale	Person Scale	%
Hyperprotection(child in the center of attention)	14 people	77%
Inadequacy of requirements-prohibitions (3-)	4 people	22%
Minimality of sanctions (C−)	5 people	27%
Scale of preference for female/ male qualities (PUF)	1 person	6%

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> I. S. Grishanova, Family and child support service: innovative experience. Methodical collection (Vladimir, 2010).

<sup>29</sup> E. G. Eidemiller v V. V. and Justitsky, Family psychotherapy (Leningrad, Medicine, 1990).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Questionnaire "Analysis of family relationships" E. G. Eidemiller (DIA methodology).

Phobia of losing a child (FU)	3 people	17%
Projection on the child's own qualities (NPC)	0 people	0%

Table 4

Results of diagnostics "Analysis of family relationships" Ed. Eidemiller, V. V. and Justickis after psychological impact

Analyzing the results of repeated diagnostics, we found out the dynamics on the scales: insufficient requirements-prohibitions (up to 33%, after 22%); the scale of preference for female/ male qualities (up to 16%, after 6%); phobia of losing a child (up to 27%, after 17%); projection on the child's own qualities (up to 16%, after 0%).

In the child-parent relationship, we see positive dynamics.

Psycho-emotional stress was re-examined using the method of rapid diagnostics of psycho-emotional stress of PES (Method of rapid diagnostics of the level of psycho-emotional stress (PES) and its sources (O. S. Kopina, E. A. Suslova, E. V. Zaikin). The diagnostic results are shown in table 5.

Level		Self- assessment of health		Psychosoci al stress scale of L. Reader;		Life satisfaction scale of O.S. Copina;		Life Satisfaction Scale O.S. Copina		Basic Needs Satisfactio n Scale O.S. Copina	
High	11	61,5%	0	0	4	23%		6	33%	5	28%
Medium	5	28%	5	28 %	14	77%		7	39%	9	50%
Low	3	16%	13	72 %	0	0		5	28%	4	22%

Table 5

Results of diagnostics of psycho-emotional tension after psychological impact. PES (Kopina, Suslova, Zaikin)

According to table 5, the parents' self-assessment of health remained the same, since there was no impact on health, the level of psycho-emotional stress significantly decreased, there were only 5 people (28 %) with an average level of stress, the remaining 13 people (72%) have a low level of psycho-emotional stress. The remaining indicators remained almost unchanged, as there was no impact on the level of satisfaction with life and its conditions.

In order for the remaining 28% of parents to reduce their stress level to a low level, it is necessary to regularly work with them to relieve emotional stress.

We also used mathematical and statistical analysis, the G-sign criterion, to identify the dynamics of the work.

The critical value of the G-sign criterion for levels of statistical dependence p≤0.05.

H1-the predominance of the typical direction of the shift towards a decrease in psycho-emotional stress after psychological exposure is not accidental.

The predominance of the typical shift is significant, since, g-empirical is lower than or equal to G 0.05.

G criterion is characterized by a decrease in the value of psycho-emotional stress in 12 people, which confirms the positive dynamics of psychological impact.

In the course of classes included the correction block of the program, we had the following observations: some parents, within the parent group, expanded the circle of likeminded people, began to communicate with each other outside the group, to provide each other with emotional support. Parents of children with ASD, within the child-parent group, saw that their child can be successful in interacting with peers, learned ways to independently relieve stress in children.

Thus, there is a positive dynamics of child-parent relations, the level of psychoemotional stress has decreased to medium and low in 66% of parents raising children with ASD, they have become more positive about their life, the level of emotional distance between a parent and a child with ASD has decreased.

There are also static indicators of child-parent relationships, this can be facilitated by various factors, such as: parents' employment, inability to regularly attend classes of psychological support programs, the type of temperament of parents, lack of internal motivation, etc.

28 % of parents have an average level of psycho-emotional stress, this may be due to insufficient development of child-parent relationships, daily difficulties that cause emotional stress, not regularly attending classes in the program.

Thus, we see the effectiveness of a comprehensive program of psychological support for parents raising children with ASD, harmonizing child-parent relations, the emotional state of parents is stabilized.

# **Discussion**

The relevance of the study of emotional stress and child-parent relationships of parents raising children with autism in Russia is due to the trend of rapid growth in the number of children with ASD; insufficient number of qualified specialists able to provide effective assistance to parents of such children. In working with parents and children, the role of a pedagogical psychologist is important, who would professionally provide assistance in difficult psychological situations<sup>30</sup>. The presence of disharmonious relationships within the family raising a child with autism, leads to a possible family breakdown, regression in the development of a child with autism.

As a result of an empirical study, it was found that the following features dominate in child-parent relationships in families with children with ASD: hyperprotection, insufficient requirements, prohibitions, phobia of losing a child, minimality of sanctions, projection of their own undesirable qualities on the child, emotional distance with the child, high significance of the child, which is consistent with research Lapshina et al<sup>31</sup>. Analyzing the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> M. G. Sergeeva, S. V. Dmitrichenkova, T. V. Kirillova, D. V. Lukashenko y A. S. Sokolova, "The development of an educational psychologist in professional activity", Revista Inclusiones Vol: 7 núm Especial julio-septiembre (2020): 113 - 124

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> L. Lapshina; E. Romanova; S. Kokhan; A. Skaliy; T. Skaliy and V. Kowalsk, "Neurophysiological basis of disorders concerning intellectual developm ent of sc hool-age children", Revista Dilemas Contemporбneos: Educaciyn, Polнtica y Valores. Diciembre num VII (2019) Article 112.

data more specifically, we found that most parents have difficulties in child-parent relationships. These results confirm the similarity with the hypothesis of Munday P. and Sigman M.<sup>32</sup> that the most significant stress parents of autistic children experience from the unpredictability of the child's behavior and related problems in social and interpersonal communication.

According to the L. Reeder scale "psycho-emotional stress", 66% of the subjects had a high level of psycho-emotional stress, and 16 % had an average level.

In connection with the obtained data, the author developed a comprehensive program of support for parents raising children with ASD.

## Conclusion

Within the framework of this program, the following directions were implemented:

- psychological education of families about favorable ways to interact with children with ASD, ways to independently relieve emotional stress in the form of a seminar for parents;
- correction of psycho-emotional stress, child-parent relations, in the parent and child-parent groups;
- psychological individual counseling of parents raising children with ASD, aimed at finding internal resources, relieving emotional stress;
- prevention of psycho-emotional tension and emotional distance between parent and child by distributing memos, booklets, motivational videos.

After restudying the child-parent relationship, we got the dynamics on the scales: insufficient requirements-prohibitions (up to 33%, after 22%); the scale of preference for female/ male qualities (up to 16%, after 6%); phobia of losing a child (up to 27%, after 17%); projection on the child's own qualities (up to 16%, after 0%).

With the re-diagnosis mental and emotional stress, we obtained the following indicators: self-reported health of subjects remained the same, the level of psychoemotional stress has dropped significantly, only 5 (28 %) with an average stress level, the remaining 13 patients (72%) have low level of mental and emotional stress. The remaining indicators remained almost unchanged, as there was no impact on the level of satisfaction with life and its conditions.

There are also static indicators of child-parent relationships, this can be facilitated by various factors, such as: parents' employment, inability to regularly attend classes of psychological support programs, the type of temperament of parents, lack of internal motivation, etc.

28 % of parents have an average level of psychoemotional stress, this may be due to insufficient development of child-parent relationships, daily difficulties that cause emotional stress, not regularly attending classes in the program.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> P. Munday and M. Sigman, Specifying the Nature of the Social Impairment of Autism. Ed.by G. Dawson. (N.Y. L.: The Guilford press, 1989).

Thus, emotional stress is present in families raising children with autism, it is associated with disharmonious child-parent relationships in such families. A similar causal relationship was noted by O. Nikolskaya<sup>33</sup> in her works, saying that mothers of children with autism make a lot of demands on themselves when they do not see the result of their work, lose further meaning and go into a position of self-flagellation and despair. Due to the lack of emotional responsiveness from the child, the parent feels bad, detached, resulting in depressive states.

The novelty of our work on psychological support for parents of children with ASD is that for the first time a causal relationship between disharmonious child-parent relationships and the psycho-emotional stress of parents of children with ASD has been established. A comprehensive program of psychological support for parents of children with ASD has been developed and tested. It includes 4 main areas: psychological education, correction, individual counseling, and prevention.

With families raising children with ASD, complex work is necessary, including different directions and forms of work. The effectiveness of the program was confirmed.

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