

School culture creates results. If different results are needed, the culture needs to be changed. To get a different result, you have to do something differently...

Help at Hand

Methodological recommendations for support teams of educational institutions, specialists, subject teachers, parents and other interested parties in the field of inclusive education

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CONTENT

content	1
Introduction	2
1. For Educators	4
1.1. Causal Effects of Behavior Problems (Sensory Processing Disorder)	4
1.2. Disruptive behavior - what to do?	8
1.3. Tips for working with children with learning disabilities/difficulties	11
1.4. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - what (not) to do?	15
1.5. Change of mindset	20
2 Support for parents	21
2.1. Child Development	21
2.2. Children's social-emotional learning	26
2.3. Understanding of child behavior problem solving	32
3. Resources	35

INTRODUCTION

The idea of the application for the project was launched at the end of 2021 when the 1st project competition for submitting applications for the Central Baltic Sea region project was announced. The project "Breaking Barriers" (CB0200036) was implemented from March 1, 2023, to August 31, 2024. Project partners: Ventspils Education Board (Latvia), Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (Finland), and Narva Language Lyceum (Estonia).

In the Education Development Guidelines for 2021-2027 "Future Skills for the Future Society" personalized education is defined as one of the priority strategic directions of the near term in Latvia, and one of the main priorities in general education is the development and availability of inclusive education at all levels of education.

The current situation in our city and the country gave us the impetus to start finding ways to implement real changes in inclusive education, looking for opportunities and cooperation partners from abroad.

Unfortunately, there is still a stigma in a part of society: it is safer and more valuable for society to isolate the DIFFERENT or "uncomfortable child". There are different public opinions about "uncomfortable children": some believe that they do not know how to behave and that they lack discipline. Others think they are so-called "code children" and such children can be trained individually either in a special program or in a class/group/center rather than included in the general class. We cannot pretend we do not have such children. The number is increasing. Children grow and develop differently, so their needs are also different.

On the way to an inclusive school and inclusive education, it is essential:

- focus on teaching **all** children;
- assume that students' abilities are not fixed;
- not to accept the view that some children hinder the growth of others;
- interpret what is happening in the classroom as a challenge, as a pedagogical growth opportunity.

Diversity is a resource. Our society is diverse - people speak different languages and have different families, interests, abilities, and opportunities. This diversity is found in the school, where opportunities to receive quality education, to be with peers, and to experience friendly, supportive mutual relations should be provided to everyone.

Diversity is a value. Encountering diversity, people learn to listen, notice, help, support, trust, and take responsibility. In such a society, everyone fits in and gains self-confidence. Different students, by accepting each other, learning together, and finding compromises, create a tolerant society where everyone is accepted.

An inclusive school - a school for every child means supporting everyone's learning - participation and achievement of learning goals. It is not focused only on the special needs child, but on everyone, emphasizing the unique characteristics, strengths, and their importance in each student's learning process. Such a school is formed when the entire school community cooperates, especially in providing support to educators.

In every educational institution, it is essential to consciously build a system - a community of professionals who regularly analyze the inclusive practices implemented in the school's everyday life and support cooperation. Important in this process are regular, purposeful professional mutual conversations, which strengthen the skills of pedagogues to work with every student.

As a result of the project, guidelines have been developed, the purpose of which is to create a unified approach to the implementation of inclusive education and improve the accessibility and quality of inclusive education in our project's partner countries. The guidelines summarize practical advice and solutions, what and how to do (or not to do), how to recognize the problem and how to help both the teacher and the child, and also the parents; how to move towards an inclusive school to be able to talk about an inclusive society in the future.

Parental engagement in education can positively influence children's well-being and enhance their academic performance, therefore it is important to overcome probable common barriers. A strong school-home connection benefits all learners, but it is significant for children with special educational needs and children of migrant and refugee families.

All parties must work together to achieve the ultimate goal of improving access to quality inclusive education for all.

Vesma Laurecka
Project "Breaking Barriers"
Content Manager, Ventspils Education Board,
Principal of Ventspils Parventa Elementary School

1. FOR EDUCATORS

1.1. CAUSAL EFFECTS OF BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS (SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER)

The behavior of each student reflects his/her current emotional state at that moment (or a short time before). It sends signals that we, educators, should understand and respond adequately to existing needs. By understanding the causal relationships of behavior problems, it is possible to include these students in the learning process in the classroom, responding accordingly and adapting the learning environment to them. Will we be able to include 100% of all students - not. You have to look very individually and understand the needs of each student who has behavioral problems and follow the action algorithm.

The child perceives the surrounding world through all senses: sight, smell, hearing, touch, taste, and movement. A child's behavior is influenced by several interrelated factors: the child's temperament, the child's skills, the family, the environment, the diagnosis (if identified)/sensory needs, as well as the skills of the educator/specialist.

We have to accept children as they are now. Otherwise, we will be starting from the wrong point. There are children with specific characteristics of world perception and concentration abilities. If the child reacts strongly to any of the environmental stimuli, then he has increased sensory sensitivity, while if he does not react to any of the stimuli, then he has decreased sensory sensitivity. Most children have increased (hypersensitivity) or decreased (hyposensitivity) sensory sensitivity. This creates risks in educational institutions. The higher the child's stress level, the harder it is for the child to understand verbal instructions. If the child cannot express his/her feelings in words, behavioral problems arise. In such cases, you should ask him/her to express his feelings in words so that you can understand what is driving him/her crazy. Sensory sensitivity is not always associated with a specific diagnosis. There may also be increased or decreased sensitivity of one sense.

Sensory/physical sensitivity		
<p>Sensory overload - very often the cause of behavioral problems is altered sensory sensitivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay attention to the environment in which this child is. • Think about what can be changed. • Warn about expected sensory irritations. • Use creatively pleasurable sensory experiences. • Teach calming skills and strategies. • Teach to understand emotions and emotional reactions. • Teach impulse control skills. • Teach problem-solving skills. • Train to perceive sensory irritations healthily. • A break is needed exactly when the child needs it and one that will give him/her relief. • Allow excess clothing to be removed if possible. • Relaxing toys, things, objects. • Chewing gum. 	
Touch		
Problem	What to look for/how it gets	How to help
Increased tactile sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touch can cause pain and discomfort, so children may not like being touched. • Dislikes when something touches the legs or hands (may 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warn about touching - for these students, a hug can be more painful than pleasant. • Allow and teach himself/herself to take care of himself/herself.

	<p>not like clothes, or shoes; does not like when hands are wet or dirty).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes a certain type of clothes or material. • Protest against the school uniform (if any), sportswear, holiday clothes during celebrations, etc. • Difficulty switching between winter and summer clothes. • Difficulty trying on new clothes - wears the same clothes. • Refusal to wear certain clothes. • Wear tight clothing. • Avoid touching. • Difficulty combing or washing hair due to sensitive scalp. • Avoid using different textures in work assignments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually introduce different textures and materials. • Provide recreation opportunities. • Allow wearing specific clothes. • View and try on next season's clothing; agree that these clothes will be worn when a certain air temperature is reached. • Allow play with sensory toys. • Provide a list of alternative classes.
Decreased tactile sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to grab things (or other people) tightly before any sense of touch occurs. • Have a high pain threshold, and may not notice their injuries. • He/she can hurt himself/herself. • Likes to label himself/herself. • Likes heavy objects (e.g. heavy blankets, something to hide under). • Not feeling his/her body fully. • Desire to touch a specific place or person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carefully consider the location of the children. • Give a sensory ball and sensory toys. • Give the student directions with places to relax during free moments and breaks.
Hearing		
Increased hearing sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise is amplified and sounds become distorted and jumbled. • There may be a special sensitivity to sounds, conversations can be heard from a long distance. • If there is noise around, it is difficult to concentrate and distinguish the sounds you need. • Sounds may not be recognized. • Certain sounds can even cause physical pain. • Swings, and stares at one point for a long time. • Run or circle the room. • Refuses to enter certain premises. • Press your ears shut with your hands. • Pronounced cardinal opposite evaluations within one subject (jump). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose his/her seat carefully. • Close doors and windows to reduce outside noise. • Eliminate internal redundant noises. • Allow the use of headphones during independent work. • Place soft pads on the chair legs. • Agree on communication signals to gain attention. • Warn about expected noises. • A separate room for tests. • Rethink consultation times. • Allow relaxing in a quieter place (library, walks outside). • Possibilities to take a walk and move around during breaks. • Play music that covers the distracting noise of children. • Do not raise your voice. YELLING DOES NOT HELP.
Decreased hearing sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sounds can only be heard in one ear, the other ear has only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use visual support along with verbal information.

	<p>partial hearing or no hearing at all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain sounds may not be recognized. • May like crowded, noisy places, doors swinging and noises made by objects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose his/her seat carefully.
Vision		
Increased visual sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distorted visual perception: bright, dazzling light can make objects appear to be bouncing around. • Images may be fragmented. • It is easier and more pleasant to look at the details than at the big picture. • Bright lamps. • Reflections. • Bright colors. • Poor spatial orientation. • Tendency to pay attention to details. • Poor depth perception. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce fluorescent, flickering, or flashing lights. • Wear sunglasses (if possible). • Wear a cap. • Use blackout curtains. • Create a workspace with high walls or fencing that isolates from distracting stimuli. • Avoid unnecessary reflections, and lights, if necessary, turn off the light. • Find a place in the classroom where there are no visual distractions.
Decreased visual sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objects seem quite dark; it is difficult to perceive any of their features. • Central vision is blurred, but peripheral vision is relatively sharp. • The central subject is exaggerated, but things in the periphery are blurred. • Poor depth perception, which can cause problems with throwing and catching, as well as clumsiness in movement. • Desire to turn on/off the light switch. • It is difficult to focus on details and to see the whole picture. • Sees small details, the pattern of a leaf, the pattern of a wooden table, and dirt on the floor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the use of visual support: visualize timetable, course of lessons, and day plan; visualize rules of conduct. • Use special colored paper, and experiment with tones, lines, and distances.
Smell		
Increased sensitivity to smells	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong aversion to specific smells. • Special interest in specific smells (glue, rubber). • Too sharp perception of smells. • Refusal to visit the dining hall and toilet. • Refusal to change in gym changing room. • Making comments. • Dislikes people who wear strong perfumes. • Dislikes strong-smelling flowers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use pleasant-smelling items (to distract from the unpleasant). • Ventilate the rooms. • Talk about the communication style, and teach to observe the elementary norms of politeness.

Decreased sensitivity to smells	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty or inability to smell. • Licking, and chewing objects to smell them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about the communication style, and teach to observe the elementary norms of politeness.
Taste		
Sensitivity to taste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of taste (eating inedible objects). • Problems with food consistency. • Refusal to eat mixed foods (for example, pasta with meat, rice with sauce, stews, etc.). • Can eat only one type of food, does not like trying new things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow chewing on a properly fitted/manufactured pencil/pen nib. • Allow chewing gum. • A fine straw in a water bottle. • Flavored straws (e.g. chocolate, corn, etc.). • Place the food ingredients separately on the plate. • Be tolerant of food choices. • Do not impose variety on the menu. • Indicate and explain why he/she should not eat, or chew various objects. • Offer different alternatives. • Allow to eat from his/her food box. • Use the same container. • Eat sooner or later, not with everyone.

Sensory physical sensitivity does not go away on its own. As the child grows, the senses can be adapted and the child can learn to live with it and get used to it, the ways of expression can also change, and already learn to regulate themselves.

1.2. DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR - WHAT TO DO?

When a student performs a “behavior”, he/she is exhibiting a reaction to and expression about something around him/her. It is important to note that society determines some unspoken rules as to what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

Effective prevention

Establishing common rules, norms, and boundaries helps prevent disruptive behavior and allows the teacher to respond effectively at the moment. In addition to the implementation of the educational program by learning the required subject matter, it should also be used to determine the requirements for behavior in the classroom. Factors that influence desirable and disruptive behavior often depend on the age of the student, the classroom team, and the professionalism and skills of the educator.

It is important to note that having any disability does not exclude a student from following the rules of the school and classroom. We cannot make exceptions for aggressive behavior.

Please remember the following guidelines for your lesson:

- Identify both supportive and disruptive behaviors.
- Classroom rules and expectations should be clearly posted in an area easily viewed by all students.
- Discuss the expected behavior from your students.
- Outline how disruptive behavior will be addressed and explain the student's responsibility.
- Communicate the consequences for persistent disruptive behavior.
- During the first meeting, clearly communicate the classroom rules and expectations for behavior, including both desired and unacceptable behaviors.

How to respond to a disruption, at the moment

Direct intervention will work in most cases, although there may be some cases where the situation is likely to persist and additional steps will be needed to resolve the disruptive situation. The procedures developed by the school for such cases must be followed. It is important to remember that if this disruptive behavior threatens someone's safety and life, seek help immediately.

- Be objective.
- Consider the student's developmental level.
- Think about the student's environment.
- Could the student be sick? Any co-morbid conditions?
- Is there an emotion that the child cannot verbalize, but is conveying through behavior?
- Are there speech and language or auditory processing delays?
- What accommodations are in place to support the student's behavior?

What to do

- Remain calm and listen to the student causing the behavior - identifying the disruption can help you deal with the situation at the moment.
- Remain/be calm, consistent, and firm.
- Recognize the feelings of the student/individual.
- Remember that disruptive behavior is often caused by stress or frustration.
- Eliminate disruptions individually, directly, and immediately.
- Be specific about disruptive behavior and set limits.
- Exclude the student from this lesson if the student does not follow your instructions. If the student does not comply with the request of the support specialist and does not leave the room with him/her, ask for help from the administration.
- Invite the student to stay after class to discuss the causes of such behavior, prevent disruptions, and discuss appropriate behavior in the future.
- Pay attention to warning signals so that the situation does not escalate to violence.
- Understand your capabilities, and to what extent the teacher can cope without the involvement of support staff or administration.

What to avoid

- Do not allow the behavior to continue.
- Avoid making it a class issue – address only the student causing the disruption.
- Do not argue or shout, do not raise your voice. It won't help.
- Do not blame or ridicule the student, or use sarcasm.
- Do not touch the student physically (unless the situation requires such intervention).

Suggestions for intervening in a disruption (for example)

- Focus on the student. Create very clear and easy-to-understand rules that apply directly to him.
- Establish clear procedures. If a student speaks out of turn, reprimand. Teach impulse control.
- Calm down the situation at the outset. If... then...
- Determine the limit, when it is violated, it is better to allow studying outside the classroom and return after a certain time.
- Stress is often the cause of disorders. It is important to recognize the stress while addressing the behavior.

What to do following a disruption

Knowing the specific learning styles of the students you are teaching is a first step toward working with their behavior. While many disruptions are minor and can be managed at the moment, it can be beneficial both to document the incident and follow up with the student. Documenting what you experienced and the steps you took will be helpful if you need to pursue a violation of the student behavior code. Clear communication with the student helps to set expectations and prevent further disruption. The following suggestions are to consider following an incident:

- Document the details about the incident, including the time/date/location, the behavior of the student, the actions you took, and how the situation was resolved at the moment.
- For minor disruptions, an email can serve as both a tool to remedy behavior and to document the incident. In the email, you should include the observed behavior, your expectations for class how they differ from the observed behavior, and the consequences of continued disruption.
- If the disruption is more serious or the unacceptable behavior continues, the steps stated in the school's internal policy should be followed, and the support team should be involved to take appropriate follow-up measures. It is recommended to proactively inform the social pedagogue and the support team about the behavior that causes concern.
- In some cases, a meeting with the student is required to discuss the behavior in more depth, explore appropriate solutions, and set clear guidelines and consequences. Often, you can find support for these meetings within your School Support Team.
- The correction of the child's behavior must take place through the cooperation of the school, parents, and specialists.
- ABC (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence) plan.

1.3. TIPS FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES/DIFFICULTIES

There are children with learning disabilities and there are children with learning difficulties. A learning difficulty could be temporary after a specific period of support, while a learning disability could last a lifetime. Learning disabilities in themselves do not indicate a child's reduced intellectual abilities, but the fact that the child may have difficulties in various learning-related processes due to congenital or acquired health disorders.

10 steps for a teacher

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Action/requirement - to be followed</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1) The teachers themselves must believe that every student is able	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate behavior requirements for everyone in the class; • high work ethic requirements for everyone in the class; • equal requirements for all students – those with difficulties and those with high performance; • joint action policy in the school, dealing with students' inappropriate behavior; • no compromise on behavior or work ethics. 	Teachers should discuss their requirements with students, remind them, and stick to them. The main thing to focus on is to get every student to participate, work, and strive to the best of their ability. Even hard work does not always mean that there will be a good result right away. However, appropriate behavior and work ethics are the first step and a prerequisite for learning to take place at all.
2) The same work process every lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan what will be the daily regular work process in the classroom and tell it to the students at the first meeting; • take time to practice following this work process together with the students; • make sure that everyone understands what needs to be done, and that everyone tries to do it. Practice until all students know a regular work process and know how to follow it. 	<p>The teacher explains exactly what the students have to do, explains the sequence of tasks/activities, and the process, and the students practice until the task succeeds.</p> <p>Before the lesson, it is recommended to introduce students with learning disabilities/difficulties to what awaits them. A constant work process, the same activities every time, which changes sequentially after short periods, helps students to concentrate on work and keep their attention. When students are familiar with and understand the work process, they can pay all their attention and effort to learning the content.</p> <p>If we start working with a new class, we must first introduce the students to the daily routine and spend more time so that the students learn the steps of the work process. The first steps students take when entering the classroom are especially important: greeting, preparing for the lesson, organizing learning materials, etc.</p>

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Action/requirement - to be followed</i>	<i>Comments</i>
3) Strengthening the student's confidence in his/her abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set achievable results for each student; • to strengthen students' ability to give positive feedback to each other; • show students how much they have done; • show students that effort and difficulty are a natural part of learning; • notice and highlight each student's success. 	<p>Preferably, every lesson should have something that every student understands and can succeed. For everyone to receive affirmation - "I can." Everyone is within his/her abilities.</p>
4) Focusing on the positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not only correct students' mistakes and stop inappropriate actions but also focus on noticing and reinforcing positive actions: praise correct answers, appropriate behavior, positive emotional response, and honest behavior. • it is important for the teacher to be positive towards himself/herself as well. After the lesson, do not blame yourself if something did not work out, but notice and reflect on the positive moments of the lesson, and what worked. Reflect accordingly. 	<p>Working with students with learning disabilities/difficulties tends to involve a lot of failure, both for the students and for the teacher. We focus on the strength of what works.</p>
5) Provide support for the acquisition of basic skills on which the further learning process depends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • start the lesson with a warm-up task, which is placed on the student's desks before the lesson, and it is the very first thing the students do in the lesson; • formulate the most important information students should know in short, simple language; • <i>fill-in-the-gaps</i> tasks. 	<p>Students may struggle not with the mathematical content they are learning, but with other skills such as reading. Students must not spend a lot of time and concentration performing mechanical actions unrelated to the material being learned (for example, rewriting an exercise from the blackboard). In this case, formulate tasks so students do not have to read a lot or write at length, and also allow the use of calculators when children are not practicing skills that need to be learned without a calculator.</p>
6) Start with the basics (back to basics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teach what students need to know to move on from where each of them is now; • regularly find out what students know about the subject they will start learning, and adapt the teaching process to their real knowledge and skills; • regularly assess what students know; • teach students the basic skills they need right now. 	<p>There are times when the teacher has to cast aside the already created thematic plan or usual teaching schemes (plans A, B, and sometimes even C). <i>You cannot build a house without a foundation.</i></p>

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Action/requirement - to be followed</i>	<i>Comments</i>
7) Assessment of basic skills (formative assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • various oral and written tasks, and activities to check what each student has learned; • warm-up tasks at the beginning of each lesson about what was learned in the previous lesson. Check them together with the students, conclude whether the students have learned it, understood it; • small tests at the end of each sub-topic to check students' level of understanding. 	<p>The teacher can use short tests, or small tasks, such as exit tickets (a task given by the teacher at the end of the lesson, which the student must complete to be able to leave the classroom), to find out how far each student has progressed towards the achievable results.</p>
8) Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quick questions in different parts of the lesson; • small tasks, the answers of which students write on white sheets of paper and show everyone at the same time; • small tasks with multiple choice answers; • students can show their chosen answer with their thumbs (or other agreed signals); • use the screen to show solutions to the most common problems. 	<p>The teacher needs to provide immediate feedback on what the students are doing. Students with reading difficulties may find it difficult to understand and use written feedback, so oral feedback is preferable. For students to take the feedback into account, it is important to provide it during or immediately after the task and to continue with the task, which allows using the received feedback meaningfully. Immediate feedback during the lesson is more effective for the student and the teacher. It is focused on growth to improve his/her performance. On the other hand, if the teacher has already provided feedback to everyone during the lesson, it is not necessary to collect and correct the student's work after the lesson.</p>
9) Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the student has the opportunity to choose a task according to the level at which he/she feels safe; • the same task for all students, but with a different level of difficulty; • open questions, as a challenge for those who can do more. 	<p>Even if the class is divided into levels, the student's knowledge, skills, and pace of learning will never be identical. The teacher needs to accept this. When planning the lesson, think about what exactly should be differentiated. Some students need more support and structure to facilitate the thinking process, while others need more challenges.</p>
10) GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH STUDENTS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what interests and motivates the student? • what talents, and skills does the student have? 	<p>It is worth getting to know your students, learning about their interests, and why they find learning a particular subject difficult. Topics of interest to students can be used to create assignments.</p>

A change of mindset for the educator is essential. Build on the student's strengths. We can promote development only in this way.

The following self-control questions for teachers' reflection after the lesson are offered ("I" - means the pedagogue):

- Could I find some positive things to note during correcting his/her work?
- Was my offered support in class sufficient?

- Did I break the teaching material into smaller units?
- Did I match the material I was teaching to what I had taught before?
- Was the pace of teaching appropriate for each learner?
- Could the learner see and hear me?
- Did the learner have enough learning resources/learning aids to learn the new topic?
- Did each learner understand the objective of the lesson?
- Did I allow the learner to write in a way appropriate for him/her or did he/she have to write too much?
- Did I offer the learner enough reminders and images so he could understand the topic of the lesson, be able to complete the given tasks, remember everything, and be able to recall it?
- Did the lesson include visual, auditory, and kinesthetic strategies?
- Was the learner active during the lesson?
- Did I try to repeat a lot and in different ways?

In the educational institution: Common requirements, common goals, and a vision of moving towards it. This increases everyone's responsibility.

1.4. AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) - WHAT (NOT) TO DO?

Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) have communication and interaction difficulties: it is difficult to understand their own and others' emotions, predict the actions of others, understand unwritten rules in communication, and take language literally. They are characterized by unchanging interests, sometimes deep knowledge in the field of their interests, a desire for routine, difficulty in adapting to changes, and unclear situations. Strong anxiety is often observed in situations that are unknown or with high social demands. In adolescence, it often manifests itself in depression. Sensory sensitivity is heightened (sight, hearing, touch, smell), and sensory overload occurs quickly. Clumsy gross and fine motor skills, movement coordination difficulties, and poor imagination could also be characteristics.

Remember, students are children first and their personalities should be considered before their weaknesses are addressed. Use strengths and interests to work on weak areas. Your student will be more motivated and success will follow.

Difficulties and needs

Difficulties	Needs
Language is taken literally	<p><u>The need for direct, accurate communication:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak in short, clear sentences. • Avoid complex instructions. Instructions on the actions to be performed must be given one by one. • Avoid hints, and indirect instructions, and say exactly what needs to be done. • It should be taken into account that the child may not understand facial expressions and body language. • Do not use sarcasm. A child may not understand an ironic tone, and jokes may be taken as literal cues. • Respect that the child may not understand expressions, sayings, or jargon or understand them literally.
What (not) to do?	
Do not take it personally if a student seems too direct, corrects your mistakes, or criticizes you. He/She is not rude; he/she is honest. Avoiding eye contact is not impoliteness, bad conscience, or not listening. Many children with ASD can listen better without eye contact.	
Transition (changes) might be difficult	<p><u>The need for a clear routine:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is desirable to have a clear, defined class agenda. • Introduce a formal beginning to the lesson, and always start in a certain way. This provides structure and discipline, allowing students with ASD to feel more secure. • Explain the goals and progress of the lesson and the times of the activities. • Respect the need for stability, routine, predictability, and a clear daily schedule (what, where, when, how, with whom, and how long we will do it). • All kinds of visual support are recommended: images, photographs, pictograms, and clear

	<p>directions that help to navigate in space, time, agenda, and rules.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisable to place a clock in each room. Use other time management tools such as timers and sand glasses as aids.
What (not) to do?	
<p>Think: <i>How do children expect the beginning of the lesson - in the hallway or the classroom? Are students waiting for permission to sit down? Where are the bags put? Are mobile phones put in a certain place? Does the teacher check and mark who has arrived at the beginning of the lesson?</i></p> <p>Give early warning about changes, if, for example, you have to move to another classroom, to the next lesson, etc.</p> <p>Allow a child with ASD to sit in the same place in the classroom. Maintain order in the room. If possible, make sure books and other methodological materials are organized on the shelves and in the right places. For example, if the glue is in a drawer labeled <i>scissors</i>, that could be a distraction.</p>	
<p>Changed sensory sensitivity</p>	<p><u>The need for a sensorial calm environment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce noise in the classroom. • Make the school bell quieter. Or do without it at all. • Place a screen in the room, which reduces the sensitivity to bright light, and covers the surrounding movements. • Allow writing the test in another room. • Respect the desire for silence, and allow to rest in silence during breaks. • It can be difficult to stay in the gym, toilet, or canteen (due to smells, noises, bustle). Discuss with the child how this could be dealt with. Sound-isolating headphones can help. • Avoid a visually cluttered environment (do not hang the blackboard with drawings, or decorations, so the child can focus his/her eyes on the main thing). • To receive sensory stimuli, it is recommended to give the child a lap weight provided by the parents (weight pillow, weight dog, weight snake, etc.). It will give deep body sensations, and calm the mind.
<p>Difficult to understand other people</p>	<p><u>Need help with group work:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before starting the group work, the teacher organizes a "brainstorm" about the organization of the group work. • It is recommended the teacher to divide into groups. • To reduce misunderstandings, each participant is assigned a specific, clear role. • The teacher carefully monitors what is happening in the group: helps to avoid reserved attitude or ridicule directed at the student with ASD, and also makes sure that the student with ASD does not dictate his/her ideas to others all the time. • There are times when you allow a student to work alone, but this should not become the norm. Keeping in mind this does not only apply to a student with ASD - every student may have the right not to participate in group work now and then, but to do work alone - but this should not happen often.

<p>Difficulty understanding and/or managing his/her feelings</p>	<p><u>Need help managing difficult feelings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • React preventively, not waiting for the situation to escalate. • Respond carefully and in time to signs of stress and the child is upset, suppressed, or maybe even hurt. A child may be unhappy if something happened earlier at home or during recess or on the way to school. • Verbalize the child's emotions: "You are sad/ angry/ scared/ worried. Come, I will hug you, it will be easier for you!" This can be done if the child does not object to being touched. • Pay attention to triggers that cause anxiety - noise, change of room, another teacher, etc. unexpected changes. • Sometimes it is useful to allow the student to leave the classroom, and be alone with/or without any pretext. • Provide positive feedback in situations when the child might experience problematic feelings, for example: "You're good at exercising!" • Try to switch the child's attention from unpleasant emotions to something else. Give them water to drink or ask them to do a little work that will help them forget the unpleasant situation. • It is recommended to agree about the way the child communicates his/her overload. These can be cards labeled "break", or "help".
<p>What (not) to do?</p>	
<p>It is good if such an arrangement is agreed upon before, for example, the child gives a sign, writes, or whispers that he/she needs help to control his/her feelings. So the child can tell about the sadness without doing it out loud for the whole class to hear.</p> <p>If you realize that the student needs to go outside, you can think of a task to have him/her do outside. For example, send to the library or office to complete a task (find a book, print or copy a worksheet, etc.). You can send a message to, for example, the class teacher or another teacher (at the other end of the school).</p>	
<p>Imagination difficulties</p>	<p><u>Need help with creative tasks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before starting a project or larger creative task, discuss the plan and structure with the whole class: where you will start, what information you will collect and how much, how you will collect, and how you will finish. • Can be too passionate about details, collect a lot of information, but not know how to summarize it. It can be hard to stop. • It can be difficult to know where to start - there is a lot of information in the mind, and it is not clear how to present it to other people. • There may be difficulties with creative works (visual art, essays, opinion pieces). If he/she does not understand what a "free topic" is, he/she may not understand at all what is required of them. • It can be very difficult in literature to answer questions related to the ability to empathize with

	<p>another, for example, why did the character in the story act this way? What did the author want to say with this poem?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be very difficult to understand the means of artistic expression - metaphors, phraseology, figurative meaning, and poetry - therefore, literary works can seem meaningless and completely incomprehensible.
What (not) to do?	
<p>Projects can be very favorable if they thematically touch on the strengths of the child with ASD. More often – mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, history. Children with ASD often like doing research and experiments.</p> <p>A child's special interests can be used to encourage them to engage in the classroom.</p> <p><i>Give answers to the free topic (for example, in the drawing "Winter joys" you can draw a winter landscape, an activity when there is snow, or a game that can be played in winter).</i></p> <p>Teach/help to plan opinion pieces and essays.</p> <p>The rest of the class can also benefit from a poster with an essay or essay outline and phrases that can be used in the introduction, point-to-point, and summary.</p>	
<p>Difficulty with coordination of movements</p>	<p><u>Need help in sports, dances, movement games, handicrafts.</u></p> <p><u>Sports can be difficult for many reasons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak coordination of movements, clumsy - therefore unsuccessful. • No one wants to take him/her on their team - therefore unhappy. • If he/she does not understand the purpose, meaning, and rules of team games. • Does not like to change rooms (classroom – changing room – gym), does not like crowds. • Too many sensory stimuli: shouting, noise, whistling, movement, physical contact, dust, all the other noises outside. • Sports equipment or clothing may be too irritating (face guards, knee pads, protective helmets). • Hard to tolerate odors – cleaning products, sweat, deodorants. • Learning takes place in the nearest development zone. If fine motor skills are weak, the child CAN NOT do much physically. You cannot force a child (neither with rewards, nor with punishments, nor with training) to do now what is for him/her in the further development zone. <p>Reduce requirements.</p>
What (not) to do?	
<p>He/she should be allowed to go to the changing room a little earlier to avoid the hustle and bustle. Offer sports in which people with ASD tend to be particularly successful. These are usually individual sports such as running, swimming, orienteering, cycling, and dancing.</p> <p>Perhaps it is better to assign a different role in sports events - to be a referee, teacher's assistant, team photographer, or reporter of the event.</p> <p>Movement games should clearly state the rules.</p> <p>Modify the task (for example, if the child cannot handle finger paints, allow drawing with a brush).</p>	

Relax yourself - nothing will happen if this student does not learn something like knitting or crocheting this year.

For a student with ASD to successfully integrate into school life, in most cases an individual assistant is needed. Although experience has confirmed that the student has successfully integrated and graduated elementary school with high academic achievements. It depends on each child/student individually, as each case is unique.

An assistant or teacher's aide can also provide behavioral correction measures at the same time. He can praise, encourage, or otherwise motivate such a student to focus on the learning process with positive feedback. The assistant should be able to manage situations with anger or anxiety attacks - for example, help the student use calming strategies (deep breathing, counting to 10, positive thinking). In extreme situations, an assistant or teaching assistant may remove the student from the classroom.

The assistant and the teacher can agree that, in certain situations, a student with ASD may be given different tasks than the rest of the class. These tasks can be prepared by an assistant, but always remember the main person in the classroom is the teacher. The teacher is the one who guides the learning process.

An assistant can create visual plans and help the student use them. However, the main educator in the class is the teacher.

The assistant can help with moving around the school premises if this causes anxiety and confusion for the child.

Though, the main goal is to train the child to use calming strategies independently.

The competence of the educator is the ability to distinguish the important from the unimportant. This will also ensure the successful inclusion of a child with ASD in the learning process.

1.5. CHANGE OF MINDSET¹

There is a strong connection between thinking patterns and feedback, both in giving and receiving it.

A growth mindset is the belief that human intelligence and abilities can be developed. (In contrast to the fixed thinking that human intelligence and abilities are fixed and can be changed very little.)

If you have a growth mindset, you see your qualities as a starting point. They can be developed by accepting challenges, working, and striving. The result is perseverance, endurance, and a love of learning, which leads to high achievements. Think about how you learn.

You have to develop yourself. You have to learn from your mistakes. Looking for advice, support, and new strategies. The more we challenge ourselves, the stronger our brains become.

Praise the process (not the person). Gives feedback on challenges, effort, and mistakes. About task, process, and strategy.

Feedback answers three questions: *Why am I learning? How is my progress? What are my next steps?*

Feedback can be given in an environment of trust, respect, and support:

- Confidence: I fit into this class.
- My abilities and competencies grow if I make an effort.
- I can do it.
- This work is important to me.

Reflective questions for the teacher:

- How do you feel when you make mistakes? Why is it?
- How do you think others perceive you when you make mistakes?
- Have you ever learned something new by making mistakes?
- Has a mistake ever made you think more deeply about a problem?
- What do you think when you encounter an obstacle, mistake, or failure in your class - for example, when students don't listen to you or don't seem to be learning? Do you feel incompetent? Are you starting to make excuses?
- How do you react to feedback? Do you get defensive, stay angry, or are you interested in the feedback you're being given?

For example - some growth **mindset phrases**:

- I am the kind of person who likes to learn.
- It didn't work, I need to think about what and how I did it and how to do it better next time.
- It's complicated. I can't YET.
- I will do it, it just takes time.

¹ Carol Dweck "Mindset".

2 SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

Introduction

Every parent cares about their child's well-being (including emotional) and good education. It is a great responsibility of parents, which includes both knowledge of the child's mental and physical development, the importance of emotional education in promoting balanced behavior, and finding out information about educational opportunities so that they are appropriate for their child.

The guidelines will address the mentioned responsibilities to provide support to parents in theoretical and practical examples. Information is necessary so parents can confidently support their children to grow up in a safe and loving family environment.

If the child is physically ill, for example, with an acute cold, then the signs are quickly visible and the next step of action is known to every parent - a visit to the doctor and following the recommended instructions. On the other hand, if there is any deviation from the norm in the child's development, then its observance and subsequent actions are not always quickly noticeable and actions known. Parents' understanding of the child's development and recognition of the child's special needs play an important role.

2.1. CHILD DEVELOPMENT²

Many materials have been collected and society has been provided with knowledge about the development norms of each child's age. However, children's development does not always proceed in the same way. It can be different in terms of pace - earlier for some, later for others. Parents need to know whether any of the observed deviations from the norm are significant and should be taken into account, or on the contrary, there is no reason to worry and it is time to observe the child's further development. Of course, in any case, you should always consult your family doctor (general practitioner) first. The general practitioner, evaluating the parents' observations, will recommend further examinations or visits to other specialists.

The family plays the most important role in promoting the child's development, and possible correction and successful future. How and when the family will understand the needs and abilities of their child? Parents need to realize that early correction in any area is much more effective than late action.

The following tables summarize the average indicators of the most important child and adolescent development, taking into account that the development of each child is individual and different. When evaluating the indicators in the table, it should be taken into account that you should go to a specialist if several indicators match. One positive indicator may simply be a personality trait.

2.1.1. Child development at the age of 1.5-3 years

Movement development	crawls well; climbs/descends the stairs alternately; run; ride a tricycle by pedaling; bends down and picks something up without falling.
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² Translation from VECĀKIEM Informatīvs materiāls par bērna attīstību. Materiālu izstrādāja: VISC Speciālās izglītības nodaļa Atbildīgās par izdevumu: Laima Zommere, Ilze Ābelniece Valsts izglītības satura centra redakcija, 2018

Fine motor skills	<p>draw a circle, a vertical, and a horizontal line with a crayon or pencil;</p> <p>turn pages in a book;</p> <p>builds a tower from at least 6 blocks;</p> <p>opens the bottle's caps.</p>
Language	<p>understands most of what is said;</p> <p>recognizes and can name most of the objects in his/her immediate surroundings;</p> <p>speaks 4 or 5-word sentences;</p> <p>understands the words: to, behind, under, next to;</p> <p>uses words: I, you, we, they, mine, etc.;</p> <p>other people can understand what the child is saying.</p>
Perception and thinking	<p>knows at least 3 colors;</p> <p>can distinguish 3 geometric shapes;</p> <p>a picture can be assembled from 3-4 pieces;</p> <p>an object corresponding to the image can be displayed in the room.</p>
Social development	<p>imitates adults and playmates;</p> <p>shows affection for familiar playmates;</p> <p>can wait their turn in the game.</p>
Emotional development	<p>express affection freely;</p> <p>able to express different emotions.</p>
It would be advisable to consult a specialist if:	<p>the child often falls and cannot learn to climb stairs;</p> <p>the child speaks very indistinctly, and does not refer to his name;</p> <p>the child has increased salivation;</p> <p>the child has marked difficulties in working with small objects;</p> <p>the child cannot draw a circle according to the model, reaching the age of 3;</p> <p>the child does not understand simple instructions;</p> <p>the child is unable to form sentences of a few words;</p> <p>the child does not show interest in other children;</p> <p>the child shows no interest in role-playing;</p> <p>the child often wakes up at night and cries.</p>

2.1.2. Child development at the age of 5

Movement development	<p>jumps and somersaults;</p> <p>swings on a swing, crawl;</p> <p>can stand on one leg for at least 10 seconds.</p>
Fine motor skills	<p>draw triangles and other geometric figures according to the model;</p> <p>can draw a person;</p> <p>can write some printed letters;</p> <p>able to dress and undress independently;</p> <p>eat using a spoon, fork and sometimes a knife;</p> <p>has mastered toilet skills.</p>
Language	<p>can retell part of the story;</p> <p>able to say a sentence consisting of more than 5 words;</p> <p>uses the future form;</p> <p>can tell about his family;</p>

	can tell a story.
Perception and thinking	<p>can count to 5; can name at least 4 colors correctly; understands the concepts: bigger, smaller, more, less; have an understanding of everyday things (such as money, food, and appliances).</p>
Social development	<p>wants to please friends; wants to imitate friends (be like them); likes to sing, dance, and act; shows more independence (for example, can visit neighbors independently).</p>
Emotional development	<p>able to distinguish reality from fantasy; sometimes demanding, and willing to cooperate.</p>
It would be advisable to consult a specialist if:	<p>is excessively shy and fearful; does not speak, characteristic echo speech - echolalia; does not form sentences, has an odd communication; walks on tiptoes when worried; is aggressive towards others, purposefully tries to hurt others, without reason; cannot leave his/her parents without showing enormous protest; unable to concentrate on one activity for more than 5 minutes; does not use fantasy and imagination when playing; looks depressed and unhappy most of the time; avoids many activities; avoids contact with children and adults or behaves inappropriately; has not mastered toilet skills; does not understand simple instructions; does not know how to dress himself/herself, brush his/her teeth, or wash his/her hands; unable to express different emotions; does not tell about the day's events and experiences; cannot hold a pencil or crayon; speaks unclearly, does not pronounce one or more sounds; speaks grammatically incorrectly (does not use the plural, past, and future). about similar observations that your child behaves aggressively, does not speak, or does not like to play with other children.</p>

If your child has difficulty communicating with adults and peers, has poorly developed language, and is excessively aggressive, and has been informed of similar observations by a preschool teacher, then it is advisable to consult your general practitioner and support specialists at the preschool. According to their recommendations, it is highly recommended to visit a physiotherapist, speech therapist, neurologist, child psychiatrist, etc. specialists. The sooner the causes and the child's characteristics and individual needs are understood, the more support and better results in all areas your child will have in the future.

2.1.3. Child development at the age of 7

Motor development and coordination abilities	<p>can keep the balance well; has well-developed hand-eye coordination, which allows you to draw from a pattern and write letters; likes to participate in group/team games.</p>
Thinking and perception	<p>knows most letters; understands quantities, can count to at least 10; knows the days of the week and seasons; understands the concepts: yesterday, today, tomorrow; can name all four seasons; distinguish right and left sides; can find the common and differences in different subjects.</p>
Concentration abilities	<p>able to concentrate on one task for at least 10-15 minutes; knows how to wait his turn to express his thoughts.</p>
Emotional and social development	<p>independent enough to dress himself/herself, go to the toilet; able to follow the instructions of the teacher/educator; able to control their behavior to a large extent. has learned to lose in games with peers, and adults.</p>
It would be advisable to consult a specialist if	<p>the child's language is unclear when worried, it is difficult to understand what is said; the child has great difficulties in creating a narrative about events and the course of the day; difficulty holding a writing tool for a long time; shows aggression when tidying things up; often loses things; does not understand the concepts of "today, tomorrow, yesterday"; any sound easily distracts; does not want to attend an educational institution, because various pains often appear, e.g. stomach ache, fatigue, headache, etc. reasons.</p>

If you suspect that your child is not yet mature enough to start school, it is recommended to consult a specialist. To evaluate which curriculum is the most suitable for your child, if he/she has any special educational needs, it is recommended to contact the school administration and follow the regulations at your educational institution.

2.1.4. Child development at the age of 7-11 years

Motor development and coordination abilities	<p>motor coordination develops more and more; able to write smaller and smaller letters.</p>
Thinking and perception	<p>reading and writing skills are strengthened (become automatic); learns basic math skills; able to perceive and understand logical connections concerning specific situations.</p>
It would be advisable to consult a specialist if	<p>slurred speech; difficulty building relationships with peers (too fearful, aggressive); difficulty learning basic reading, writing, and math skills; do not like to study; difficulty concentrating during studies;</p>

	often vague fatigue; coordination disorders, pronounced clumsiness; vague fear (of the dark, being alone, etc.); often complains about health problems (pain, increased body temperature, bedwetting at night, etc.).
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Difficulties in language learning often go unnoticed already at preschool and even school age, because these manifestations are not observed and pedagogically corrected in time. It is important to understand that, in particular, the language learning disorder does not go away by itself, it can persist for a long time even until leaving school, and can negatively affect the child's overall development in the future at school and in life.

Prolonged difficulties in learning reading, writing, and mathematics can cause depression and somatization in children (headaches, stomachaches, etc. may start), so it is important to start pedagogical assistance "as early as possible" in order not to experience failures in future schooling.

2.1.5. Adolescent development at the age of 12-16 years

Thinking and perception	reach maturity in thinking, gradually learn to analyze actions and their consequences; develops critical thinking and attitude.
Emotional and social development	peers and friends are very important, but emotional relationships with parents are equally important; forms close friendships; gets involved in peer teen groups, tendency to submit to group rules and values; learns to build relationships with the opposite sex; begins to analyze his/her feelings and emotions, an important opportunity to be alone; often protests against the authority of parents and other adults; wants to become more independent and self-sufficient.
It would be advisable to consult a specialist if	noticeable difficulties in participating in group work, do not like to communicate with other classmates; tendency to avoid reading/writing, doing math problems, and being late for classes; noticeable behavioral problems - truancy, not staying at home; use of addictive substances; sustained depressed mood, sleep disorders, statements about suicide; rapid decline at school; and long-term reluctance to contact peers.

The emotional well-being of teenagers to a large extent depends on their relationship with their parents. If they are good and emotionally supportive, teenagers tend to do better at school, actively engage in after-school activities, and avoid negative influences. On the other hand, those teenagers who have not developed a good relationship with their parents suffer from low self-esteem, and also often engage in risky behavior and the use of addictive substances. In addition to parental influence on adolescent well-being, siblings, teachers, and other positive authority figures also play an important role.

2.2. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Social-emotional learning is a process through which children and adults learn and use knowledge and skills to understand and manage their emotions, and behavior and be able to understand and cooperate with people beside us. Children's social-emotional learning is a prerequisite for learning the desired positive behavior.

Positive relationships in the family and the educational institution are important in how a child develops and learns. Stress and regular dissatisfaction slow down these processes. How can a child develop and learn successfully if there is constant stress at home; he/she does not like the teacher or has no friends in the class; or if he/she is bored and constantly in a bad mood?

A child's positive behavior does not come naturally; it must be taught. It is necessary to learn to accept other people and circumstances. Adequate problem-solving helps the child find the right direction and gives energy to continue development. Children who manage their emotions better and get along with others have a higher sense of belonging to their kindergarten or school, learn better, and have higher grades in school. Later in life, these people are less exposed to the risks of unemployment, delinquency, and addiction.

Therefore, parents and adults must understand that the basis of a child's positive behavior is emotional upbringing in the family, which includes self-regulation of emotions, compassion or empathy for each other, building positive mutual relationships, and the ability to make independent and responsible decisions.

Such skills are important in personal and social life, as they help to build favorable relations with others, effectively resolve conflicts, and provide a basis for learning about others. Successful acquisition of children's socio-emotional skills facilitates the learning process for the child in preschool and elementary school.

List of skills:

1. Recognizing your emotions.
2. Regulation of emotions.
3. Developing empathy.
4. Building positive mutual relations.
5. Making an independent decision.

Parents must take responsibility for the child's daily emotional state, evaluating whether the child receives what he/she needs in the family:

- Positive emotional relationships.
- Appropriate living conditions and material security.
- Regular daily plan, rhythm.
- Sufficient sleep and nutritious diet.
- Parents' expectations are balanced and appropriate to the child's abilities.

But most importantly, there is a personal model and example of parental behavior. If parents teach children the "correct" rules of behavior, but their actions are contradictory, then the result will be insignificant. There should always be continuous positive cooperation with the relevant educational institution.

2.2.1. Steps for recognizing children's emotions

It is the duty of parents and all adults to help the child recognize his/her emotions - joy, sadness, anger, etc. gradually and regularly. Emotions are a very important link in the connection between the child and the surrounding world, forming the basis for relationships with oneself and others.

It is important to teach the child that there are no good or bad emotions, but positive or negative emotions. It is normal to experience all emotions. Emotions and feelings allow a child to understand the difference between good and bad, beautiful and ugly, and learn the ability to regulate his/her behavior.

Steps	Action	Practical examples, recommendations
1. Awareness of emotions	Initially, you should pay attention to the child's awareness of positive and negative emotions - I feel happy or sad, how do others feel?	During a walk observe the dogs and cats encountered on the road. Invite the child to distinguish the emotions of animals, determining them by their behavior. Similarly, observe people and try to determine whether they are happy or sad. A made doll with a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other can be used as a game. When the child experiences some emotions, use the doll to make it easier for the child to express his/her emotions and tell what the doll is sad or happy about at the moment.
2. Naming emotions	It is necessary to verbalize emotions more broadly in everyday life - sad, angry, joyful, happy, etc.	The child should be encouraged to answer the question "How did you do in kindergarten, at school?". Do not settle for the child's answer "Okay!" etc. Look through your photo albums together, focusing on emotions. What emotions does each person in the picture have at the given moment? Before going to bed, you can encourage the child to fill in his/her diary so that he/she can mark the past day with different emoticons. Have the child tell what caused such emotions in him/her, and count which emotions he/she experienced the most during the day.
3. Analyze emotions	Ask the question - how do you feel right now? Try to understand together what caused these emotions. Are they related to a specific situation, person, or event?	Ask the child open-ended questions that motivate them to experience different emotions. For example, what makes you the angriest? What did you like best about the birthday party? etc.

2.2.2. Steps of learning emotion regulation

Emotion regulation is an important skill to learn from childhood. Here are some steps on how to do it:

Steps	Action	Practical examples
1. Feel and express emotions	Allow the child to express his/her emotions and not judge him/her for the feelings at the moment. After verbalizing the emotion teach the child specific actions to use if he/she gets angry, irritated, or, on the contrary, too happy, or excited.	Tell your child everyone has emotions, and expresses them, so it is only normal to cry and feel hurt. Help your child recognize and verbalize his/her emotions so he/she can better understand his/her feelings. Anger can be shown - with hands, feet, facial expressions, voice.
2. Find a solution in an acute moment	Teach the child to identify stressful and depressing situations - learn to relax and calm down.	Quick breathing, deep inhaling and exhaling, and counting to 10 can help the child calm down and control his/her emotions. For example, the game "Flower-candle". One imagines a flower in one hand, the scent of which should be deeply inhaled and smelled, and in the other hand a candle, which should be blown out with a breath.
3 Self-regulation of emotions	Apply a commonly chosen way of regulating emotions and observing them in every similar situation.	Together, you can create a book that shows how to deal with different emotions. For example, when <i>I'm angry</i> , I take a deep breath and play a breathing game, do physical activity, or drink water; when <i>I miss something</i> , I try to find an activity to fill the time, cry, sing, etc.
4. Following the rules	Teach the rules regularly, every day.	The child must have a clear daily routine and limits of what can and cannot be done in specific situations. Rule reminders should be short, even in one word. No need for long justifications, just the word "please". Children know the reasons they can be pronounced after the given action. Focus more on the positive manifestations of the child's behavior and ignore the bad manifestations.

2.2.3. Steps for developing empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand and empathize with other people's emotions and perspectives. By developing empathy in children, they will become better and more intelligent people who can show compassion and care for others. These skills are essential for both personal and social development, so it is important to encourage their development from an early age. Some steps to develop this important skill in children:

Steps	Action	Practical examples
1. Share emotions	Encourage the child to share his/her emotions and talk about his/her feelings. Let children understand it is	The personal example of adults is important. Parents show by their example it is normal to feel different emotions and how to deal with them.

	important to express their emotions and to understand other people's emotions.	Adults should also verbalize their emotions and demonstrate how they are resolved.
2. Act out situations	Create an opportunity for children to develop their empathy, to empathize with other people's situations.	<p>For example, books, movies, or animal stories can improve children's empathic skills. Play emotion rendering games:</p> <p>The adult shows an emotion, but the child must recognize it. When the child has recognized the emotion correctly, switch places - the child will show the emotion that the adult must realize.</p> <p>A game for the whole family - stand in a circle, and one of the family members has a ball in his/her hands. The task is to throw the ball to another person standing in the circle, calling out an emotion. The one who catches the ball must describe the emotion and say in which case it can be felt.</p>
3. Encourage to help	Encourage children to give to other people or help those in need. Such actions help to feel compassion and develop empathy.	Helping older people together - bringing purchases from the store, etc. taking care of a pet, or helping animals in a shelter.
4. Resolve conflicts	Teach children to resolve conflicts in a calm and understanding manner using empathy and compassion.	Conversations and discussions help children understand how to treat and support people in difficult moments. Thus, the transfer of a similar situation to one's feelings and the ability to solve them will occur.

2.2.4. Steps to building positive relationships

Steps	Action	Practical examples
1. Communication	Consistency and building trust - it is important for children to know they will be understood and supported regardless of the situation.	<p>Regular discussions about daily events. Encourage an open and honest dialogue with the child to feel understood and valued.</p> <p>However, it is necessary to allow the child to complain, because complaining is the child's desire to cooperate. This is how the child learns not to be indifferent to what is happening around him/her. Adults in such situations should not think negatively (complainer), on the contrary - this is a moment when you can give positive feedback to the child (thank you</p>

		for noticing, tell me what happened).
2. Activities together	Plan and implement joint activities, and create active traditions.	Sharing a meal, playing games, or going on excursions helps foster bonding and shared interests.
3. Personal example	Inspiring attitude and positive example of parents and adults.	Children learn from adults, so try to be optimistic to promote good relationships, you must demonstrate a positive attitude towards the educational institution and teachers. If there are negative emotions, they should be named to the child, because adults can also have other emotions. The more you work on regulating your emotions, the easier and more successful relationships will be for your children.
4. Involvement in decision-making	Involve children in decision-making - let children participate in choices and decision-making so they feel important and respected.	Involvement in family-time or specific activities, excursion planning, meal preparation, evening fairy tales, and clothing selection. It will be different at every age. In the beginning, 2 options should be offered in the choices, until they can make a decision independently.

Positive behavior is based on mutual empathy and understanding. By taking care of the child's feelings and trying to understand him, the relationship will become respectful and harmonious. It is necessary to teach the child to respect others and take responsibility for his actions.

Continuously create a positive dialogue with the educators and specialists of the child's educational institution, because only a jointly developed child behavior correction strategy will be effective.

2.2.5. Steps of learning independent responsible decision-making for children

Steps	Action	Practical examples
1. Making choices and consequences	Provide the child with information about different options, and what consequences would be if a wrong decision is made, and develop critical thinking. Support his chosen way of implementing the solution.	Discuss together and lead the conversation in the desired direction, so that the child solves the problem himself/herself and comes up with solutions, thus helping him/her to develop self-confidence and self-confidence in his/her decisions. Encourage your child to try new things: teach your child not to be afraid of making mistakes and allow him/her to experiment and learn from his/her experiences. Within the limits of norms, allow

		the child to make mistakes and face the consequences.
2. Self-regulation	<p>Teach critically to evaluate and analyze the consequences after making a decision.</p> <p>Take note of how to act in a similar situation.</p> <p>Following the daily plan or daily ritual.</p> <p>Clear rules.</p>	<p>Be present in conversations and support the child not only the moment when decisions are made but also afterward to help him/her assess the consequences.</p> <p>Praise for independence, both in making decisions and dealing with his/her emotions and various daily complications on his/her own.</p> <p>It should be possible to solve problems between the child and his/her peers without the immediate involvement of adults.</p> <p>When analyzing a situation, the question “why?” should often be asked.</p> <p>A child feels safe if he/she is brought up to a certain daily rhythm from early childhood and there are clear rules that adults must follow, too.</p> <p>Plans and rules can be visualized, and drawn as a reminder to make it easier for the child to understand and remember.</p> <p>Before shopping, agree on how much you can buy, etc.</p> <p>For the child to prepare himself/herself for the upcoming event, is also necessary to prepare the child in advance for changes in the daily plan, thus reducing stress and making it easier.</p>

The child must be involved in decision-making even if the child is unhappy. It must be taught that wishes cannot always be fulfilled, and the opinions of others must be respected. The most important thing is to talk and explain. Decision-making does not mean complete permissiveness. For this freedom to be constructive and harmonious, it is important to find an agreement between the child's wishes, needs, family possibilities, and what is accepted in society.

Although involving children in decision-making requires more time and patience from adults, it is a valuable investment in the future. It promotes active learning from an early age, promotes independence, and creates a basis for public participation and responsibility, too.

A child who has well-developed social-emotional skills has a better personal potential to form positive mutual relationships with peers and adults, including the ability to solve conflicts independently, according to the rules.

2.3. UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD BEHAVIOR PROBLEM SOLVING

With a favorable, daily socio-emotional upbringing in the family and educational institutions, especially from the age of 1,5-10 years, negative behavioral manifestations can be regulated and conflicts can be resolved positively.

2.3.1. Behavioral Problem Correction Steps

Steps	Action	Practical examples
Following a regular daily routine	Adult supervision and encouragement to keep a steady schedule.	A <i>to-do list</i> and <i>going out</i> calendar can be implemented. As a reminder – small notes, reminders, symbols, or drawings. Remind and talk about the plans for the next day.
Rules and clear instructions	The requirement to comply with the rule on the principle of "less" to "more", i.e., if one positive action is automated, then add the next rule.	Introduce children to the rules of behavior and laws. Explain in simple language what is right and wrong, and what consequences of his misbehavior could be. The rules must be short, clear, understandable, discussed in advance, and jointly accepted. You do not have to "moralize" when reprimanding for bad behavior, but it is enough to use a few words like "quiet!" (if behaving loudly), or "hands!" (if someone is offended). Give time to complete the task or divide the work into parts.
Positive reinforcement	It is important to notice and appreciate good behavior and ignore bad behavior whenever possible. Good behavior should not be taken for granted but should be praised.	Some children may need firmer guidance, while others may find the positive reinforcement method more effective. Give children the opportunity to apply the skills they have learned in real life. Notice and support their behavior to encourage positive change, you can even reward and motivate them. Praise children often for positive and desired behavior. Praise behavior, not personality traits.
Discussions and understanding	When talking to your child about his/her behavior, it is important to understand the reasons why the child behaves the way he/she does and to find solutions together.	Teach the child the skill of "substitution", for example, if you want to say "fool", say "....." etc. If you want to hit, clench your fists and shake them. If you want to break things up, say "I'm very angry".

<p>Appropriate reward and punishment</p>	<p>To encourage good behavior, it is important to use appropriate rewards and punishments that help the child understand what is right and wrong.</p>	<p>It is important to focus not on punishment, but on disciplining, which teaches and creates understanding. Good discipline follows immediately after the undesirable behavior is committed, it must be followed so that the child perceives it as "fair" and appropriate to the situation. The punishment must be appropriate to the offense/misbehaving.</p>
<p>An opportunity to improve</p>	<p>The child should be able to correct his/her mistakes by making corrections and learning from them.</p>	<p>The child's behavior should be regularly given feedback - discussions and conclusions. This will help children understand the consequences of their actions and encourage behavior improvement. It is important to make sure that the child has understood the situation, why he/she was punished, what the unwanted behavior was, and how to behave in the future, as well as to give the child a chance to correct himself/herself. As a result, the child must have at least two ideas on how to do things differently.</p>

Adults must be patient, supportive, and loving to build a child's understanding of the importance of better behavior that he/she demonstrates daily. Providing support and supervision helps prevent risky behavior later in adolescence.

Parents and educational institutions must work together to make the desired behavior correction, thus reducing the chance of developing depression, anxiety, and other behavioral problems.

Discipline is setting limits on a child's behavior. It is a framework that, on the one hand, defines acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and on the other hand, gives the child a sense of security, making the child's life predictable and understandable, and helps to prepare for an independent life.

2.3.2. Children with behavioral disorders

Children are different, and it must be remembered that there are no children who do not have any problems. There are just children who have more complications than others usually have.

Children with behavioral issues can show a variety of problems, from nervousness and impulsivity to aggressiveness and inability to follow rules or, conversely, excessive calmness and passivity. These children may have difficulty or even impossible to control their emotions and behavior, even if the steps of positive social-emotional upbringing (see Chapter 2.2) both in the family and in educational institutions are carefully followed and behavior correction steps are taken (see Chapter 2.2) and carried out.

Children with behavior issues are often not born with bad behavior. It is important for parents and educators, working together, to understand whether behavioral disorders are developing under the influence of various life circumstances, or whether they are more complex disorders that require visiting other specialists and receiving recommendations, for example, how to act in a certain situation or even, in particularly severe cases, certain medications used. Medicines act on the causes of certain disorders and give the child the opportunity to control his/her actions, thus his/her best character traits will be manifested and self-regulation of behavior and learning skills will improve.

Medication therapy is prescribed only by the relevant specialists, as these are often minimal brain function disorders.

What things should be considered when visiting specialists, and how to prepare?

Be sure to bring the following documents with you:

- Characteristics of the educational institution, where the educator describes the situation/observations.
- Written evaluation of school support specialists (if necessary - psychologist, speech therapist, special pedagogue, social pedagogue).
- If there is no real clarity about the child's physical health, it is recommended to bring extracts from the child's doctor, specialists, and other examination results.

Proceedings with a specialist:

- In a conversation with the child, his/her parents are asked about their complaints and evaluated their symptoms.
- The doctor examines the submitted documents, examines the child, and draws a conclusion about the child's state of health.
- If necessary, medications are prescribed, and if needed to clarify the diagnosis – referral to other specialists and additional examinations are issued.

A child with a behavioral disorder can experience many difficulties and challenges. But with the right support and care, they can develop the skills to regulate their behavior and improve their learning ability.

3. RESOURCES

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