

*Yu. Shaiko,*  
*Student,*  
*A. Voznyuk,*  
*Professor of the Department of the English Language and Primary ELT*  
*Methodology, Doctor of Sciences (Pedagogy),*  
*Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University*

## **ADAPTATION OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS TO LEARNING IN THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE NEW UKRAINIAN SCHOOL**

**Formulation of the problem.** The beginning of schooling is a new step in a child's life: every preschooler, reaching the age of 6-7, goes to school. And this is due to the need to adapt to new conditions. This process is accompanied by various changes in the functional state and largely affects the psycho-emotional sphere. School maladaptation leads to a decrease in learning motivation, to deformation of interpersonal relationships, to development of deviant behaviour and neurotic states. Psychologists and educators are concerned about the fact that the category of underachieving and lagging behind students often includes successful children who have a fairly high level of mental development and have mastered the skills of reading before entering school. Adaptation to school is a significant and serious problem, as the situation of uncertainty is always exciting, and before school every preschooler expresses an incredible anxiety.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Adaptation is one of the main human qualities covering all kinds of innate and acquired mechanisms of adaptation, which are provided by certain physiological reactions. Scientists, teachers, psychologists, physicians, physiologists, and school hygienists have been and still are dealing with the issue of adaptation to school. Among them are G. Gandzilevska, I. Dubrovina, I. Zagurska, V. Kagan, O. Kulchytska, A. Leskova-Savytska, O. Marinushkina, R. Ovcharova, N. Samoukina, A. Furman and others. The works of L. Bozhovych, L. Wenger, N. Gutkina, V. Davydov, O. Proskura and others are devoted to the problems of social and psychological adaptation.

**The purpose of the article.** Analyzing the results of these studies, we can say that getting used to school is a long individual process. According to statistics, only 50% of children adapt to new conditions and requirements within six months. The second half takes more time. In this article we are to analyse the specifics of the process of adaptation of first-graders to the educational environment of the New Ukrainian School.

**Presentation of the main research material.** From the point of view of physiologists, the child's body while getting used to the new requirements and conditions, goes through several stages:

The first 2-3 weeks of training are called "physiological storms". During this time, the child's body responds to all new phenomena, straining all its systems. Children spend a lot of resources of their body. This explains the fact that many first-graders fall ill in September.

The next level of adaptation is an unstable adaptation. The child's body finds acceptable, almost optimal options for reactions to new conditions. The duration of the child's adaptation to school varies from 2 to 6 months, depending on students' individual characteristics. Children are still far from "living" in new conditions. In the study of G.Chutkina [8, p. 265] three stages of adaptation of children to school are identified (Fig. 1).

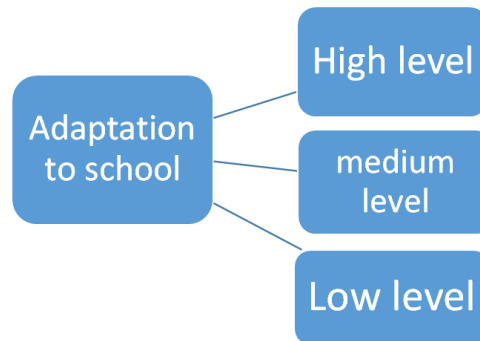


Fig. 1. Stages of adaptation to school

**High level of adaptation** is characterized by the fact that students have positive attitude to school, they perceive the requirements as appropriate. The training material for them is easy to master, they are characterized by deep and complete mastering of software materials. Children solve complex problems, diligently, attentively listen to instructions, explanations of the teacher, and carry out tasks without external control. The first-grader also shows interest in independent study, prepares all lessons, copies with control works. He/she has a high rating in the class.

**Medium level of adaptation.** The first-grader has a positive attitude to school, its visit does not cause any negative emotions; understands the teaching material if the teacher explains it in detail and clearly; focused of studying material and is attentive in performing tasks, follows the instructions of an adult, but only under his control; the child concentrates only when he is doing something interesting.

**Low level of adaptation.** The first grader has a negative attitude towards school or is indifferent to it. His/her complaints of malaise are frequent, the depressed mood prevails. The child has a violation of discipline, fragmentary assimilation of the material, which is explained by the teacher, independent work is difficult, he/she needs constant supervision; there is no interest in solving independent problems in class. Lessons are prepared irregularly, he/she needs systematic support and motivation from teachers and parents. The child is passive. The first-grader has no close friends, he/she knows only some of his/her classmates by names and surnames.

We can identify certain signs indicating adaptation to school being successful. First, the learning process evokes positive emotions in first-graders, they are confident and do not feel fear. Second, the new student copes with the school program. Third, children are independent in doing homework and seek help from mom or dad only after trying to do it on themselves. Fourth, the first-grader is satisfied with his/her relationship with classmates and the teacher. As mentioned above, low self-esteem can occur when attending school, but there can also be another problem, such as overestimation. This problem often occurs when a child

does not go to kindergarten and is still psychologically on the level of preschool development. As long as the child does not go to school, everything it does at home (drawings, postcards, handmade items), are praised by parents, everyone is happy with the child.

But when entering school, the situation changes dramatically, the child begins to be assessed and it perceives the assessment as if it has been a person, not by the results of its work. At the same time, the process of its psychological adaptation to learning is difficult. Children who have been through the crisis for seven years already understand it is not they but the product/results of their work is being evaluated.

Another factor influencing the child's adaptation to school is the correct methods of family upbringing, the absence of conflict situations in the family. Therefore, in-depth psychological counseling based on testing and observation is of great importance in the prevention of adaptation difficulties. Parents need to receive recommendations taking into account the individual characteristics of the child: how to properly prepare it for school, what problems will befall the prospective pupil in learning process, how to overcome the difficulties of the adaptation period.

Properly created educational environment plays an important role in successful adaptation. Methodical recommendations on the organization of the educational space of the New Ukrainian School [4], approved by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of 23.03.2018 №283, orient practitioners to create the following centers in the classrooms of primary school: educational and cognitive; natural; thematic; playing; artistic and creative; recreational; library, etc.

The approximate list of teaching aids and equipment that should be used to equip the centres is approved by relevant order of the Ministry of Education and Science of February 13, 2018. №137. The positions contained in this list may be changed or supplemented by teachers.

According to the Concept of the New Ukrainian School [2], the peculiarities of the organization of the educational environment in primary school presuppose the multifunctionality of the space for various forms of work and the concentration of educational space in the classroom around the centers/cells. For example, the developmental subject environment will be suitable for morning meetings in a circle, work in small and large groups, frontal and individual work in lessons and after school hours.

The subject environment should be comfortable for both teachers and children. It is important to create a balance between:

- the need of the teacher to implement the content of the curriculum, to control the achievements of pupils, to coordinate their activities according to interests;
- interests, needs of children in self-expression, self-development;
- educational activities initiated by the teacher and those that arise at the initiative of children.

In the primary grades, educational and cognitive, research activities become ever more important. This allows one to develop basic skills in reading, writing, math, etc. However, the subject space should not be filled with teaching aids and equipment only for educational and cognitive, natural and variable thematic centers. Their

logical continuation in the classroom should be the centers of recreation, games, art, books. However, due to the lack of free space and furniture, it is not necessary to physically delimit all the recommended cells in the space. Instead, one can create combined centers [5]. For example, at one location one can organically combine leisure, library and nature centers, games and art. It is advisable to place the variable thematic cell on a free part of the wall with the use of a magnetic or cork board or a specially made stand. The exhibition area for demonstration of children's works of art on drawing, application, design, modeling can be placed in the artistic and creative center, combined with variable thematic centres or separated outside the classroom.

With the right organization of the educational space, the teacher can observe the activities of children in all centers, and children have the opportunity to move safely, as well as get a place to store personal belongings. At the beginning of the school year, teachers familiarise the first-graders with the classroom, present to them each center of activity in the classroom, show the equipment, explain the purpose of materials and equipment. During such mini-excursions in the centers, teachers ask children questions about how to use certain materials during training, how to store them, how to handle them safely, and so on.

The teacher familiarises the pupils with the equipment of each cell in more detail during the educational process. He gradually expands information about the cells and engages the pupils in active activities in them.

The order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated 20.08.2018 № 923 approved Methodical recommendations for the adaptation period for first-graders [3], which outlines "five conditions for adaptation of first-graders in the first month of study": 1) acquaintance with school and class; 2) a light briefcase, without heavy accessories and books; 3) learning the safe way from home to school; 4) mastering and accepting the rules of the class; 5) development of algorithms for everyday life at school.

As we know, the main innovation of the educational process in the 1st grade presupposes the structuring of the content of primary education on the basis of an integrative approach to learning, i.e. the integration of educational material from different subjects is carried out: around the object or environmental phenomenon to solving interdisciplinary problems, etc. In view of the above, teachers hold thematic weeks in September, for example, such as [6]:

1. The theme of the first week: "I am a pupil". At the end of the week the pupils know: what it means to be a pupil of the school; why it is important to learn; rules of conduct in class; rules of safe behavior on the way to school and home; pupils are able to: address classmates and teachers by name; listen carefully to each other in direct communication; try to interact in pairs and groups to achieve learning goals; behave in class according to the rules; follow the rules of safe behavior on the way to school and home.

2. Theme of the second week: "My/our class". At the end of the week pupils: know what premises are there in the school building; what content cells are there in the classroom; rights and responsibilities of pupils and teachers; rules of safe behaviour in the classroom; pupils are able to navigate in the school building; voice their own needs and move freely around the classroom; try to listen carefully to each

other in direct communication; interact in pairs and groups to achieve learning goals; follow the rules of safe behavior in the school premises (classroom, dining room, library, etc.).

3. Theme of the third week: "My friends". At the end of the week: pupils know: who is a friend; rules of friendly behavior; rules of caring for animals; pupils are able to use polite words; to keep a dialogue, to communicate politely with peers and adults; listen and hear each other in communication; follow the rules of friendship and establish friendly relations in the class community, among peers; take care of pets.

4. Theme of the fourth week: "My environment". At the end of the week: pupils understand what the environment is; names of plants growing in the school yard; rules of conduct in the environment; why one needs to preserve the environment; pupils are able to recognize the natural and man-made environment; explain the importance of the environment in human life; explore objects with the help of the senses; work in pairs and groups; give examples of respect for the environment; follow the rules of safe work and behavior in the environment.

**Conclusions.** The first weeks of study in the 1st grade are an important stage for creating an atmosphere of acceptance, trust, mutual interest, and desire to listen to each other, to express oneself in the class community. At this stage, the foundations are laid for successful interaction of teachers with pupils and pupils with each other. Creating a favorable environment for the child's adaptation to systematic learning will ensure its further development, successful learning and education.

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