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## The psychological and pedagogical aspect of the life quality of citizens with disabilities

Психолого-педагогічне забезпечення якості життя осіб з обмеженими можливостями здоров'я

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### Abstract

Today, with the existing trends of society's humanization and democratization, there is a need to find ways to improve the life quality of people with disabilities for their full and harmonious development. Furthermore, in the current conditions of a challenging economic, social, and political world situation, it is crucial to effectively organize the process of psycho-pedagogical support for the social and psychological development of people, including children, with disabilities.

Nowadays, state and public authorities all over the world try to direct their social policy and public activity toward the creation of a complex of legal, economic, psychological, educational, medical, rehabilitation, and other measures aimed at improvement of the quality of services, social adaptation and return to a full-quality life of people with disabilities.

The article aims to reveal the main tendencies of scientific works in psychological and pedagogical support for the life quality of people with disabilities. Also, we should clarify practical aspects and perspectives of

### Анотація

Сьогодні, за існуючих тенденцій гуманізації та демократизації суспільства, постає потреба у пошуку шляхів підвищення якості життя людей з обмеженими можливостями здоров'я для їх всебічного та гармонійного розвитку. За сучасних умов складної економіко-соціальної та політичної ситуації в світі дуже важливо ефективно організувати процес психолого-педагогічного забезпечення соціально-психологічного розвитку осіб, в тому числі і дітей, з обмеженими можливостями.

Державні органи та громадські структури у всьому світі в наш час намагаються послідовно спрямовувати свою соціальну політику та суспільну діяльність на створення комплексу правових, економічних, психологічних, виховних, медичних, реабілітаційних та інших заходів, основною метою яких є підвищення якості надання послуг, соціальна адаптація та повернення до повноцінного життя людей з обмеженими можливостями.

Мета статті – виявити основні тенденції наукових напрацювань у сфері психолого-педагогічного забезпечення якості життя осіб з

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psychological and pedagogical support for this category of people, including, during extreme situations, martial law.

**Methodology.** To write the article, we analyzed the works of scientists carrying out theoretical and practical research on the effectiveness of work with disabled persons. Also, we studied the results of a questionnaire poll of specialists in social services and disabled persons.

**Results.**

According to the research results, the tendencies of modern teachers and scientists studying the psychological and pedagogical support of the life quality of people with disabilities, as well as the results of the questionnaire survey on the factors influencing the success of psychological and pedagogical work to improve the life quality of persons with disabilities are traced and outlined promising work directions with these people.

**Keywords:** psycho-pedagogical support, inclusive education, people with disabilities, people with special needs, barrier-free environment, emergencies, martial law.

## Introduction

Socio-psychological problems of people with disabilities concern all progressive humanity today. The unstable economic and political situation and the environmental crisis have led to a mass deterioration of people's health worldwide. There is a growing number of children with disorders of psychophysical development of genetic and other origins. Scientists and practicing teachers have begun to pay great attention to studying the effectiveness of individual adaptation mechanisms for persons with disabilities to live in society.

For example, the growing number of children with Down syndrome, considered the most common among genetic disorders, has recently attracted more and more scientific attention. The worldwide prevalence of this syndrome is heterogeneous. The Center for Medical Statistics of the Ukrainian Ministry of Health annually registers 400 to 450 newborns with Down syndrome. At the same time, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention the world provides the following data: in Great Britain - the

обмеженими можливостями здоров'я та з'ясувати практичні аспекти та перспективи розвитку психолого-педагогічної допомоги даній категорії осіб, в тому числі під час надзвичайних ситуацій та воєнного стану.

**Методологія.** Для написання статті проаналізовано роботи науковців, що здійснюють теоретичні та практичні дослідження ефективності роботи з особами, що мають обмежені можливості здоров'я, а також вивчено результати анкетного опитування фахівців соціальних служб та осіб з обмеженими можливостями.

**Результати.**

За результатами дослідження прослідковано тенденції щодо вивчення сучасними педагогами та науковцями психолого-педагогічного забезпечення якості життя осіб з обмеженими можливостями здоров'я, а також отримано результати анкетування стосовно факторів, що впливають на успішність психолого-педагогічної роботи для підвищення якості життя осіб з обмеженими можливостями та окреслено перспективні напрямки роботи з такими особами.

**Ключові слова:** психолого-педагогічне забезпечення, інклюзивне навчання, особи з обмеженими можливостями здоров'я, особи з особливими потребами, безбар'єрне середовище, надзвичайні ситуації, воєнний стан.

birth rate of children of this nosological group reaches 900 people per year; Europe registers more than 9000 children with this genetic anomaly every year; the USA - about 5500 children with Down syndrome are born every year; respectively, the total statistical figure reaches 220 thousand newborns with Down syndrome every year (Saienko, 2021).

The psychological and pedagogical support of students with special educational needs under integrated and inclusive education conditions is determinant. Therefore, it is essential to analyze the experience of joint education of children with special needs and their healthy peers since providing psychological and educational support to children with disabilities is a critical difference in special education, especially in emergency and martial law conditions.

## Literature Review

At its current development stage, society is trying to ensure the highest possible life quality for

people with mental, physical, and intellectual disabilities. Today, the medical model of work with this category of people is being replaced by a new one – social (Edwards, Alschuler, Ehde, Battalio & Jensen, 2017).

According to E. Avramidis, A. Toulia, C. Tsihouridis, and V. Strogilos, in this new model, the problem of a person's physical, emotional or mental limitations is seen primarily as requiring social measures leading to a new rehabilitative philosophy, which consists in turning public consciousness toward a "culture of universal utility". The culture of "dignity," which emerged in the second half of the XX century, considers a person with disabilities, regardless of their abilities and usefulness to society, the object of social policy aimed at creating the conditions for the whole activity of all persons to maximize their potential skills and maximize their integration into society. At the same time, a person with disabilities is seen as an object of special education, rehabilitation measures, and social work and as an active subject of public life, where this person's future is shaped (Avramidis, Toulia, Tsihouridis & Strogilos, 2019).

As noted by M. Nikolic, psychological and educational work involves creating the necessary conditions so that a child with special needs does not feel isolated among healthy peers. First of all, these are specially adapted classrooms, in particular eliminating architectural barriers and creating the corresponding learning environment that would facilitate contact of children both in a lesson and in extracurricular work (Nikolic, 2021).

One of the main foundations of normative regulation of the educational sphere is to ensure the rights of children who require physical and/or mental development correction to be integrated into society, to create conditions for unhindered access to quality education following their inclinations, abilities, individual features and intellectual capabilities. For this purpose, such children's social, physical, and cultural needs are met. At the same time, this activity should contribute to the effective organization of psychological and educational support for children with special needs and the implementation of systematic psychological and educational measures to compensate for lost functions (Pérez-Garín, Recio, Silván-Ferrero, Nouvilas & Fuster-Ruiz de Apodaca, 2019).

During inclusion, all students are full members of the children's collective and receive care and

medical, social-psychological, and pedagogical help (Babkina & Kochetova, 2022).

According to P. Silván-Ferrero, P. Recio, F. Molero, and E. Nouvilas, inclusive education, unlike integration, is a flexible, individualized educational system with psychological and educational support for children and teenagers with special needs in psycho-physical development (Silván-Ferrero, Recio, Molero & Nouvilas, 2020).

The experience analysis of teaching children with special needs in European countries shows that in the vast majority of them, though with slight differences, the reform of special education in the direction of joint, inclusive education is currently being implemented (Sisto, Pérez, Gázquez & Molero, 2021).

The provision of psycho-pedagogical support for integrated and inclusive education is carried out by specialists who can serve as employees of extracurricular services or as full-time employees of schools (Morgun, 2016; Morgun, 2021). In most countries, specialized workers (speech therapists, physical therapists, rehabilitation therapists, etc.) represent public services that deal with children with special educational needs. In countries with well-developed social protection, such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany, special schools support students and teachers engaged in integrated and inclusive education. This support manifests itself in direct work with children with special needs and counseling teachers and parents of such children. In most countries, students with special educational needs can receive exceptional support in the school where they study. The details of provision depend on the individual needs of each student (Dirth & Branscombe, 2018).

Today, significant attention in worldwide researches is paid to the psychological preparation of teachers, namely the formation of teachers' psychological readiness for inclusive education of children with special educational needs, which is considered as an integrated quality of a specialist and includes a system of motives, states, knowledge, abilities, personal qualities that ensure the successful educational activities of this academic applicant category (Gallego-Ortega & Fuentes, 2021), (Sharma, Aiello, Pace, Round & Subban, 2018).

Let us note that teachers receive special training and have the skills to provide comprehensive educational, informational, and counseling

services to families raising children, including those with developmental disabilities when implementing an emergency and military state. Therefore, such families should establish contact with other participants in the educational process at all times. In combat conditions, communication systems with children, their parents, families, and teachers become extremely important, as they allow rapid exchange of information and effective feedback. In addition, during the organization of communication between the participants of the educational process, the workers of educational institutions should provide information and pedagogical advice to families with such children, representatives of the community working with them to create a safe social and educational space, adaptation of the educational process to the conditions of war taking into account the peculiarities of the situation, selection of forms and methods of interaction between the participants of the educational process per the particular situation and study (Bohdan, 2020).

### Aims

This study aims to examine the practical aspects of psychological and pedagogical support for the life quality of people with disabilities and to identify important future directions for the

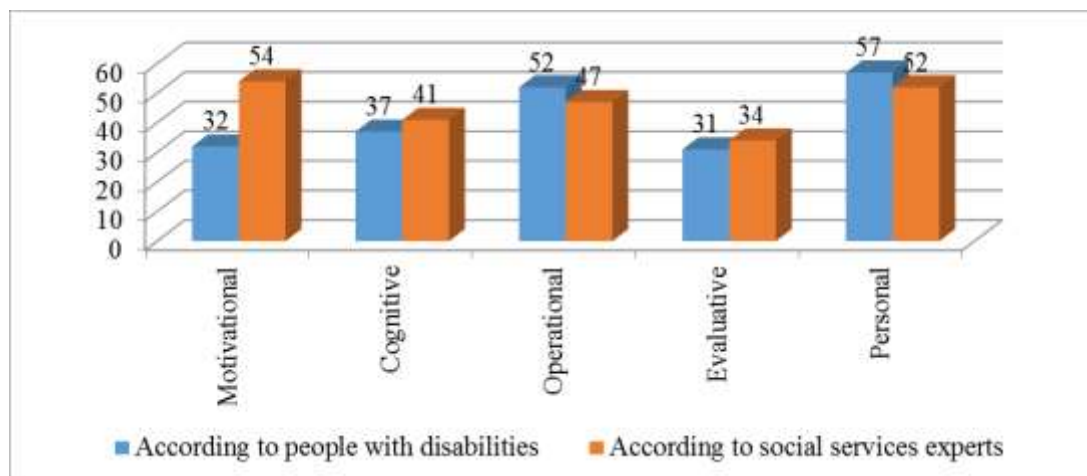
development of this work component with this category of citizens.

### Materials and methods

We studied the results of a questionnaire survey of 42 persons with disabilities to analyze the specifics of psychological and pedagogical support in the life quality of people with special needs. These people will receive assistance in public and private social assistance institutions in the Kyiv and Chernihiv regions of Ukraine, affected by active military operations in 2022, and 52 specialists of the Kyiv and Chernihiv region's departments of state social services working in the field of assistance. While processing the respondents' answers, the average values of the answers indices per 1 person were calculated.

### Results

We selected the most essential components of psychological assurance of personal life quality from a practical point of view: motivational, cognitive, operational, evaluative, and personal. Then, we asked respondents to assess the highest priority areas, and most require the attention of special psychological services (Figure 1).

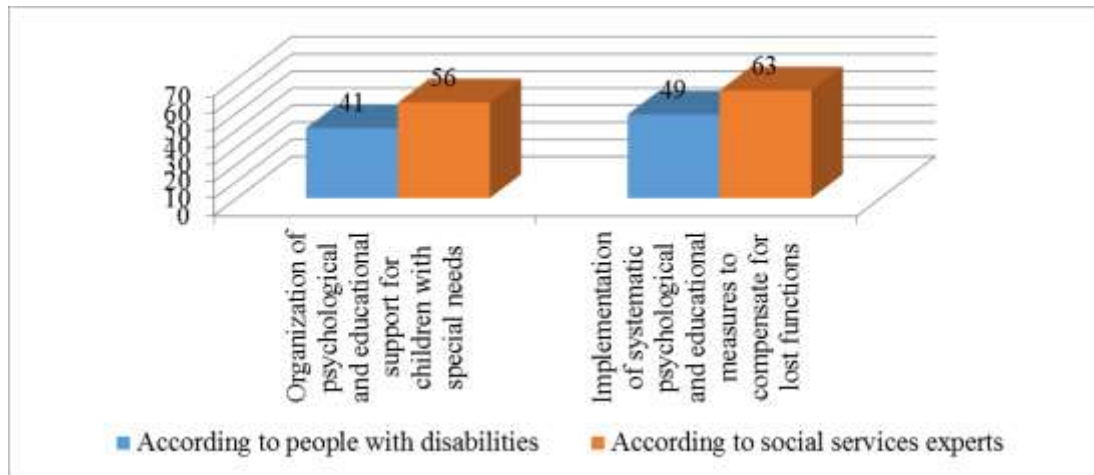


**Figure 1.** Percentage of the individual's psychological life quality components in terms of the need for assistance from state and specialized public institutions to support their development, %.

Source: developed by the authors.

As Figure 1 shows, motivational, operational, and personal were identified by the respondents as the most important out of the five functionally related and interrelated components that make up the structure of psychological assurance of a person's life quality.

We compared the respondents' answers regarding these two main directions to examine their relevance to the human right to integrate into society, including for children who require physical and mental developmental correction (Figure 2).

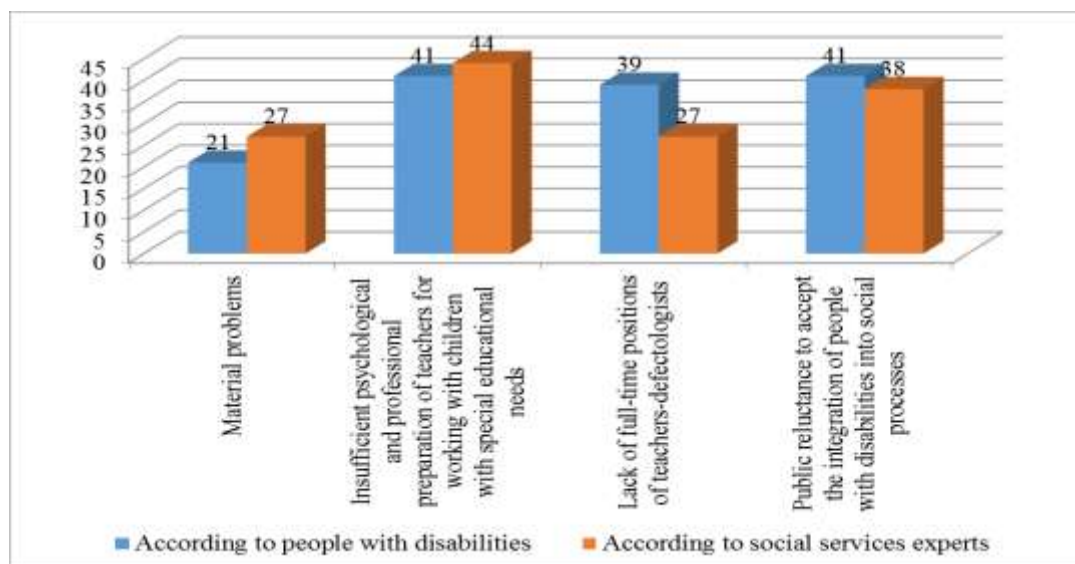


**Figure 2.** Comparison of the main strategic directions' importance for improving the life quality of people with disabilities, %.

Source: developed by the authors.

As we can see from Figure 2, there is an opinion of both specialists in social services and persons with disabilities that implementing systematic psychological and educational measures to compensate for lost functions is more effective because it better contributes to the creation of conditions for unimpeded access to services. And for children, quality education follows their inclinations, abilities, individual, mental and physical characteristics, and cultural needs. At the same time, it will facilitate psychological and educational support for children with special needs.

Analyzing the problems arising in the way of work to improve the life quality of children with disabilities, we found that, in contrast to the most common opinion regarding problems of material nature as one of the most tangible for this category of persons, the insufficient psychological and professional training of teachers to work with such children, the lack of full-time positions of teachers-defectologists, the reluctance of society to accept the idea of joint training were most appreciated by respondents (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** External barriers to adequate life quality assurance for children with disabilities, %.

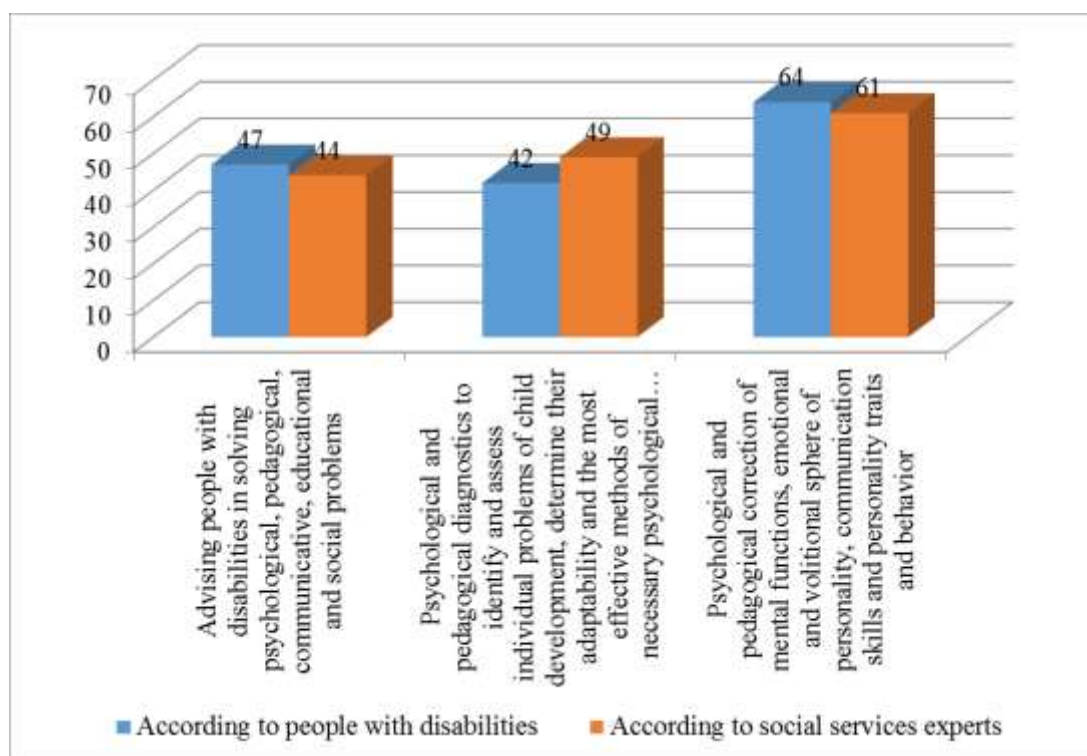
Source: developed by the authors.

However, as respondents noted in comments to this question, these difficulties can be overcome by improving the physical security of modern schools, training specialists to work in inclusive

classrooms, organizing specialists' teams to provide the necessary qualifications, and creating a favorable democratic policy in society for children with developmental disabilities.

According to the research of scientists engaged in the study of the effectiveness of government and public assistance to the categories of people with disabilities, as well as according to the respondents' answers, the psychological and

pedagogical correction of mental functions is the most relevant during the emergency and military state of the direction of work with persons with disabilities (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** The most relevant work directions with disabled persons during emergencies and military law, %.

Source: developed by the authors.

Figure 4 shows that the need for counseling persons with developmental disabilities to address psychological, pedagogical, communicative, educational, and social problems is considered highly relevant, according to survey participants, besides the direction of psycho-pedagogical correction of mental functions. It also includes the psychological and pedagogical diagnostics to identify and assess individual development problems, determine their adaptability, and determine the most effective methods of necessary psychological and pedagogical rehabilitation.

### Discussion

The analysis of the scientific literature has proved that the effective organization of inclusive education implies psychological and pedagogical support of the educational process for children with special needs in institutions of general education. We should note that in modern psychological and pedagogical literature, the concept of "psychological and

pedagogical support" is considered widely enough, using terms identical to such as "cooperation," "assistance," and "support," sometimes accompanied by a medical or social component of this process (Molero, Recio, García-Ael & Pérez-Garín, 2019).

At the same time, modern scientific and pedagogical developments prove that this type of social service should be considered much broader to increase the effectiveness of measures of psychological and pedagogical nature. According to Post, Pardeller, FranjoApor, Kemmler et al. (2018), and Morgun (1996), psychological and pedagogical support in inclusive education is a mutually coordinated complex activity of a multidisciplinary team of specialists and the child's parents aimed at creating the necessary conditions for personal development, formation of knowledge, skills for successful adaptation of the child, ensuring his rehabilitation, self-realization and full integration into society.

The following measures are advisable for streamlining and increasing the effectiveness of psychological and pedagogical support:

- to provide parents of children with special needs with timely access to information and counseling, support from specialists and other parents;
- to support the parents' ability to overcome their fears and other psychological difficulties, to increase their competence for the fullest possible involvement of parents in the learning process;
- to develop a positive attitude and general culture among parents regarding the provision of adequate care for children, encouraging children to choose their activities and to realize their creative potential and desires;
- to facilitate parents' united efforts in lobbying for the introduction of inclusive education, allowing them to influence the legislative process, the development of policies and educational procedures for schools and support networks, and the mobilization of financial and other resources for the development of inclusive programs;
- to create a strong network of parents' organizations for advisory and information work in the community, disseminating examples of inclusive good practice through the media, especially among parents of healthy children (Bohdan, 2020).

M. Van, K. Verschuere, K. Petry, and E. Struyf note that while providing psychological and pedagogical support for the development of children with special needs, it is necessary to try to involve all participants in the educational process. Therefore, parents, teachers, the child, and his/her immediate environment should be supported because comprehensive professional solutions are in the child's best interests (Van, Verschuere, Petry & Struyf, 2018).

As noted by A. Mieghem, K. Verschuere, and E. Struyf, psycho-pedagogical support is not a one-time activity but a long-term process aimed at studying the child's development and changing areas of activity to provide varied support and assistance in solving educational problems of the child who needs physical, psychological correction or help in spiritual growth (Mieghem, Verschuere & Struyf, 2018).

Psychological and pedagogical support is designed to solve several tasks, including organizing education with special needs in conditions of inclusive education in combination

with remedial classes and rehabilitation activities; monitoring the results of educational, correctional, and developmental work; ensuring comprehensive psychological, medical and educational support of the child in the learning process, taking into account their health condition, etc. These activities include counseling families on the upbringing and development of children with intellectual and physical disabilities, providing parents of such children with the necessary psychological support, creating a positive social environment for inclusion, and educating healthy students and their parents to prepare children for learning (Alnahdi, Elhadi & Schwab, 2020).

There are different approaches to the theoretical justification of the psychological problem of a person with disabilities in contemporary social and psychological science. Analysis of social issues of people with special needs, in general, is considered in terms of sociological concepts of a more general level of generalization of the essence of this social phenomenon as the socialization concept (Brown, Macgregor, Flood & Malin, 2022).

Rehabilitation is the basis of policy regarding people with special needs.

Nowadays, rehabilitation is an essential professional direction in the socio-psychological adaptation of people with disabilities in society, which must be implemented at a high level since today's labor market places high demands on work and professional qualifications. Therefore, the earlier the targeted personal and professional development of a child with disabilities begins, the more likely the prospects of psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and personal growth of such a child will have (Dymecka & Bidzan, 2018; Zaika & Morhun, 2021).

The effectiveness of rehabilitation of people with disabilities is primarily determined by socio-psychological factors, one of which is the nature of the socio-psychological adaptation of the individual to the existing situation. O. Bohdan, studying the psychological features of the behavior of cancer patients, distinguishes four groups of patients according to the type of social adaptation:

- active-constructive type of patients, rationally assessing the situation, having a clear life position and ready to find new ways of recovery, actively trying to change the situation;

- conservative type of personality, adequately adapting to new conditions, with a tendency toward autonomy, refusing social activities and work, which requires considerable physical and mental work;
- aggressive type with a negative perception, contradictory, unwilling to change, trying to blame others for the situation;
- the pessimistic personality type is characterized by passivity, lack of initiative, and deep depression. The family of such a patient is characterized by a condition of deep frustration and depression (Bohdan, 2020).

It is important to note that, as B. Karmánm, A. Szekeres, and G. Papp, work with parents of children with special needs usually passes in three stages: preparatory, fundamental, and reflective. At the preparatory stage, contact is established with the family, and an initial psychological diagnosis of the child and relatives is performed. The primary stage includes:

- Individual and group consultations.
- Participation in training sessions.
- Open school events with the involvement of children.

The reflection phase can be conducted at the end of the school year or the end of each semester to coordinate psychological and educational support to the family (Kármánm, Szekeres & Papp, 2021).

### Conclusions

The analysis of scientific literature and practical research allows us to conclude that inclusive classes in modern conditions can become centers of psychological support for parents of children with special needs, creating conditions for qualitative psychological and pedagogical support of life quality for persons with disabilities.

Under martial law, it is vital to ensure the continuation of education for persons with special educational needs at their place of temporary residence, ensuring the maximum possible preservation of the teaching staff potential of educational institutions that are educating children with special educational needs, including resource centers.

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