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Transition from home to daycare services in Russia

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<p>Early childhood education is an important stage in life of every child. Transition from home to day-care can be either stressful for the child or a positive experience if supported properly. It is important to take into account all the factors that impact the transition and remember that they are interrelated. Physical development is as important as psychological and intellectual.</p> <p>This Bachelor's thesis studied the transition from home to day-care. The research took place in a private day-care center in St. Petersburg. To conduct the research, the following methods were used: observation and interviewing. All together five children were observed. Two three-year-old children were later observed more precisely and the data was collected. In addition, parents of these two children and teachers were interviewed. Questionnaire was used for the interviewing. The methods provided a lot of information for analyzing.</p> <p>The purpose of the research was to identify the factors that ease the transition or make it more difficult. Moreover, the study investigated what can be done by the teachers and parents to support their children during this stage.</p> <p>What is more, Finnish and Russian kindergarten systems were studied and compared to point out good things from both systems. The results of the research were presented to the teachers and were claimed to be useful for further development.</p>	
Keywords	day-care transition, adaptation, developmental factors, Finnish kindergarten system, Russian kindergarten system

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<p>Varhaiskasvatus on tärkeä osa jokaisen lapsen elämää. Siirtymä kodista päivähoidon voi olla joko stressiä aiheuttava tilanne tai se voi olla positiivinen kokemus lapselle, jos siirtymävaiheessa tukea annetaan riittävästi. On tärkeää ottaa huomioon kaikki ne tekijät, jotka vaikuttavat siirtymävaiheeseen sekä muistaa, että nämä tekijät linkittyvät toisiinsa. Fyysinen kehitys on yhtä tärkeässä osassa kuin psyykinen ja älyllinenkin kehitys.</p> <p>Tässä opinnäytetyössä tarkastellaan tätä siirtymää kodista päivähoidon piiriin. Tutkimuksen käytännön osa suoritettiin yksityisessä päiväkodissa Pietarissa. Aiheen tutkinnassa käytettiin metodeina havainnointia sekä haastattelua. Havainnoinnin kohteena oli viisi kolmevuotiasta lasta. Myöhemmin kahta näistä viidestä lapsesta havainnoitiin tarkemmin. Havainnoinnin lisäksi näiden kahden lapsen vanhempia sekä lastentarhanopettajia haastateltiin. Haastattelun tukena käytössä oli kyselylomake. Nämä käytetyt menetot tarjosivat paljon informaatiota aiheen analysointiin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on tunnistaa ne tekijät, jotka tekevät siirtymävaiheesta sujuvan ja onnistuneen tai vaihtoehtoisesti hankaloittavat sitä. Tämän lisäksi tutkimus pohtii keinoja, joilla lastentarhanopettajat ja vanhemmat voivat tukea lapsia tässä siirtymävaiheessa.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa myös tarkastellaan suomalaista ja venäläistä päivähoitojärjestelmää kokonaisuudessaan sekä vertaillaan niitä ja pyritään löytämään kummankin hyvät puolet. Tutkimuksen tulokset esiteltiin tutkimuksessa mukana olleen päiväkodin lastentarhanopettajille ja tulosten todettiin olevan hyödyllisiä siirtymävaiheiden kehittämistä varten.</p>	
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1. Introduction

Day-care is a new environment and it takes a while for any child to get used to it. The way how the child adapts to the new surroundings depends on a number of factors that can either help or hinder the transition. The factors range from the psycho-physiological and individual characteristics of a child to the family situation and the atmosphere in the day care center. If the factors are taken into consideration, it can protect the child from the stressful situations and make the transition to be comfortable and smooth.

One of the main tasks of the kindergarten teacher is to support the child and ease the transition to the kindergarten. The teacher has to have the knowledge about the children's psychology in order to avoid any traumatizing situations which can lead to serious consequences in the future.

Environment plays a big role in formation of a child. However, family plays a greater role, especially at the early stages of development. Children get the very first impression about the world around them through the lens of the parents. In most of the cases mother plays a key role in the child's shaping. The child's character, behavior, development, perception of the world and the future life depend on the family atmosphere. Cooperation with parents is very important at all the stages and especially during the transition to the day-care.

The child's communication and interaction within the peer group are the key factors of the socialization and adaptation.

Justification of the topic

There is not much written data about the transition to the day-care. However, this process is one of the main ones because the way the child is going to develop in future greatly depends on that first time spent in the new environment. There haven't been many researches made in order to identify the factors that speed up or hinder the transition. It is important to support children at this stage and there is a need for more researches and observations made on the subject, therefore this justifies the relevance of this thesis paper.

Scope of the current paper is the transition to the day-care center and the adaptation process.

Goals of this thesis paper are to explore the kindergarten system in Finland and Russia and to identify the factors that can make the successful transition to the day-care center.

Research questions:

- What are the factors of the successful transition?
- What is the role of a kindergarten teacher during the transition phase?
- What is the role of parents and how they can support their child?
- How can the results of the observation can be put into practice?

The research objectives and the scope:

- to build the knowledge of the adaptation period based on the available literature;
- to learn about the Finnish and Russian kindergarten systems;
- to identify the factors which effect the transition;
- to determine the factors that make the successful transition;
- to analyze the results of the observation and interviewing;

Research methods: to study the available literature related to the subject, observation, usage of questionnaires, handling the results.

The research was conducted in a private day-care center in St. Petersburg, Russia. Altogether 5 children were observed, two children were observed more closely and the interviews with their parents were arranged. Later the received data were processed and the results were analyzed.

2. Finnish early childhood education system

According to the Finnish National Board of Education all children under school-age have a subjective right to early childhood education and care (ECEC). The municipalities are responsible for arranging the ECEC services, for their quality and supervision. Families can also opt for publicly subsidized private ECEC settings. The Finnish ECEC is based on an integrated approach to care, education and teaching, the so-called “educare” model. Learning through play is essential. ECEC is primarily organized in day-care

centers and in family day-care. The content of ECEC is guided by the National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC (2005). (Finnish National Board of Education)

Day-care services are available to every child and children are entitled to receive municipal day care. Day-care has a fee which is calculated according to the family size and income. Costs of private day-cares can be partially covered by the governmental allowance. (Määttä K. & Uusiautti S., 2013)

Kindergarten teacher qualification can be acquired from Finnish universities and Universities of Applied Sciences. The degree qualifies graduates to work both as kindergarten teachers and in various professions requiring expertise in early education. (Määttä K. & Uusiautti S., 2013)

Pre-primary education as part of the ECEC is the systematic education and instruction provided during the year preceding the start of compulsory education and it is free of charge. (Määttä K. & Uusiautti S., 2013) Pre-primary education is organized in day-care centers and schools. Education is based on a local curriculum of the National Core Curriculum for Pre-primary Education (2010). (Finnish National Board of Education) The content of a child's pre-school education plan shall focus on factors essential to individual development, such as the objectives to be set for the child's growth and development and the assessment of the child's strengths and weaknesses. The preschool education consists of learning social skills and the basics of reading and writing. (Määttä K. & Uusiautti S., 2013)

Early childhood education and care, pre-primary and basic education form an integrated whole progressing consistently following the child's development. At national level ECEC is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture. (Finnish National Board of Education)

Municipalities are obligated to provide pre-primary education, and the municipality in which a child lives must provide them with a place in either a municipal day-care center or a private child care program (including family home care). (Expat-Finland)

Pre-primary education lays emphasis on the preparation for school. Each education provider is obliged to draft a local curriculum based on the national core curriculum. (Finnish National Board of Education) Each day-care center is obliged to prepare a

curriculum taking into account the main principles stated in the National Core Curriculum for Pre-primary Education. While implementing the pre-primary education such key points like conception of learning, learning environment and working approaches are taken into consideration. What is more, the National Core Curriculum sets particular objectives related to the integration of education for day-care centers. Integrative education is composed of themes related to children's sphere of life, on the one hand, and to contents expanding and structuring children's views of the world, on the other. In addition, there are core content areas to pay attention to. They include language and integration, mathematics, ethics and religion, environmental and natural studies, health, physical and motor development, arts and culture. (National Core Curriculum for Pre-primary Education, 2010) Pre-primary education is based on the child's own knowledge, skills and experiences. Its focus is on play and a positive outlook on life. Another central consideration is to promote the child's own initiative and to emphasize its significance as the foundation for all activities. (Finnish National Board of Education)

Alongside the day-care system, parents also have an opportunity to stay home with their new-born and small children. For this purpose, maternity and paternity leaves are available. What is more, parents can choose an option of the child home care allowance which enables parents either to care of their children themselves or to choose a place in private day-care. (Grierson, H., 2000)

The Early Childhood Education services provided by the local authorities are predominantly financed through the tax revenues. As it was stated above, there is a monthly charge for the day-care services, determined in accordance with the family's income and size. Maximum fees are provided by the Act on Client Fees in Social Welfare and Health Care. Both the amount set as the income limit and the payment percentage vary according to the number of parents or other guardians, the number of children under school age and the number of children under the age of 18 in the family. Those families, whose income does not exceed the set income limit, cannot be charged a fee. The highest fee for full-time care may be no more than €185. As for the part-time care, a local authority may charge a fee adjusted to the reduced hours spent in day care. What is more, families are entitled to get a compensation in case the children are unable to attend due to illness and if the absences amount is more than ten day-care days per month. Pre-school education is free of charge. (Grierson, H., 2000)

3. Russian early childhood education system

Russian early childhood education system is based on the Federal State Education Standard for early childhood education, latest version of which was passed in October 17th 2013. It includes all the requirements that an early childhood education institution should meet. It concerns both public and private providers of the early childhood education. The above mentioned standard is based both on the Constitution of Russian Federation and the legal system as well as with regard to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, Decree 1155)

The education policy based on the following principles:

- Freedom and pluralism in early childhood education, claiming the childhood to be an important stage in the development
- Humanistic and developmental nature of cooperation between parents (statutory representatives), teachers or other workers involved, and children
- Respect for child's personality
- Implementation of the standard according to the age of the children, mainly in a form of play, cognitive activity, creative activity that can provide the artistic and aesthetical development. (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, Decree 1155)

The Federal State Education Standard for early childhood education takes into account individual needs of a child, regarding his/her life situation and state of health, which can determine individual needs of certain groups of the children, including special needs children as well as the capability of a child to follow the program at its different stages of implementation. (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, Decree 1155)

The Federal State Education Standard for early childhood education safeguards the right of the child to go through all the stages of the child's development. Educational activity takes into account the individual capabilities of every child and the child plays an active role in terms of choosing the content of his/her education. Child's initiatives are to be supported. The early childhood educational institution has to cooperate with families. (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, Decree 1155)

One of the principles of the Federal State Education Standard for early childhood education is to acquaint children with the socio-cultural norms, traditions of the family, society and the State. The standard also obliges to take into account the ethno cultural aspects of child's development. (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, Decree 1155)

The standard's purpose is to rise the social status of the early childhood education institution, to provide equal opportunities for every child in terms of receiving an education of high quality, to safeguard the quality of the early childhood education and make sure that children from different regions of the country have access to the high quality early childhood education. (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, Decree 1155)

The Federal State Education Standard for early childhood education has to be taken into account when working on the educational program of an early childhood education institution. The individual program of an early childhood education institution has to be worked out based on the principles and aims stated. The standard has the requirements for the education of the teachers and other workers. Funding is also explained in the standard. (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, Decree 1155)

Mainly the educational program is carried out in the Russian language. It may also be taught in the native language of the minor groups. However, the education in the language of the minor groups should not be carried out at a price of receiving the education in the Russian language. (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, Decree 1155)

Working on the individual educational program of a particular educational institution, the organization has a right to decide the working hours, the maximum number of children in a group and activities for children. (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, Decree 1155)

However, there are some requirements how many children should be in the group when counting how much funding the early childhood institution is to receive. From 2 months to 2 years there should be 15 children; 1 to 3 years old – 15 children; 3 – 7 years old – 20 children. If the group includes children of different ages between 2 months and 3

years old, there should be 8 children; between 3 and 7 years old, there should be 10 – 20 children. (Bembinn)

The program has to provide child's development in terms of the following content orientations:

- Socio-cultural development
- Cognitive development
- Speech development
- Artistic and aesthetic development
- Physical development

The program has the obligatory part that is based on the Federal standard and the part that is formed by the educational services providers. The obligatory part makes sure that the holistic approach is used and all the content orientations are taken into account. The part that is formed by the educational service providers includes the developmental activities that were decided by the educational institution itself. The obligatory part constitutes 60% of the program, the other part should not be more than 40%. (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, Decree 1155)

Even though every child has a right for early childhood education, there is a difficulty to get a place in the day-care center due to lines. If a parent wants the child to attend one of the municipal preschools and learn in a Russian environment, he/she will need to attend the school in question and enroll. If a place is available the child will be accepted, but most likely there will be a need to go onto a waiting list until a place becomes available. (Expatica) There are also international preschools that teach according to an English and American curriculum.

Child may start attending day-care centers from the age of 2 months till 7 years old. Early childhood education is not compulsory and many parents chose to stay home and take care of their children on their own. (Glavsprav)

According to Rosstat, Russian Federal State Statistics Service, in 2015 there were 51,100 pre-school institutions in Russia, 26,600 are located in cities, and 23,850 are situated in the rural areas. (Rosstat) Modern early childhood education system consists of nurseries, day-cares, groups for children for short-time staying, day-care centers of

integrated type, day-care centers of compensation type, centers of child's development, and pre-schools. (Glavsprav)

Day-care centers of compensation type are mainly focused on the disabled children who have delayed psychological or intellectual development, tuberculous intoxication, problems with supporting-motor apparatus, hearing imparity, speech and sight difficulties, or those children who are being sick quite often. Children in such day-cares are supported by special needs teachers and nurses. What is more, parents can get help and assistance from such day-care centers. (Glavsprav)

Day-care centers of integrated type usually have several groups with different focus:

- group of general development
- compensation type groups
- health-improving groups (Glavsprav)

Centers of child's development are focused on development and revelation of child's talents and abilities. Children can attend drawing, computer, and musical classes; there are facilities for doing sports, children's theater, and swimming pool. (Glavsprav)

Funding for the day-care centers consists of federal, regional and local parts. Mainly, early childhood education is funded by the government. Parents are only required to pay a small monthly fee that varies from 10 to 20% from the overall sum, 20 to 70% of which can be compensated later on. (Abankina, I.V., 2011) The educational costs are paid entirely by the government, parents are to pay for the costs related to the childcare. (Education Act of Russian Federation from 10.07.1992 N 3266-1 (edited 12.11.2012), section 52.1) The average sum that is required to be paid by the parents in the public sector is decided by the state governments. (Education Act of Russian Federation from 10.07.1992 N 3266-1 (edited 12.11.2012), section 52.2) Additional educational services that are not included into the educational standard are paid for by the parents themselves. (Education Act of Russian Federation from 10.07.1992 N 3266-1 (edited 12.11.2012), section 45)

4. Transition to the day-care

4.1. Definition of the transition

Concept of kindergarten transition is tied to the concept of “readiness”. However, it is not about the child’s readiness but also how ready the school and communities are to the transition process. (Bohan-Baker, M & Little, P., 2002, 2002)

There are many interpretations what can be considered as transition. Some say that “transitions reflect a one-time set of activities undertaken by programs, families, and children at the end of the year. To others, transitions reflect ongoing efforts to link children’s natural environments to support environments. Lastly, to some, transition is the manifestation of the developmental principles of continuity, that is, creating pedagogical, curricular, and/or disciplinary approaches that transcend, and continue between, programs” (Bohan-Baker, M & Little, P., 2002, p. 1) Transitions mean changes in identity, roles and relations. (Griebel, W. & Griebel, R., 1997) To sum up transition is a process experienced by all the parties involved rather than an event that happens to a child. (Bohan-Baker, M & Little, P., 2002, p. 2)

Adaptation is a very important characteristic of social life; it facilitates the development of many specific skills required on the long journey of discovering the outsides. The day-care center has a role to enlarge the personal experiences with socio-cultural activities. (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 32)

4.2. Transition phases and challenges

Depending whether the child just enters out-of-home care or it is a transition from day-care to pre-school, adaptation process may vary greatly. (Pianta, R. C. & Cox M. J., 1999)

In Finland parents are invited to bring their children to visit the day-care center in advance. Children can also stay for a shorter period at first and parents can participate in the day-care activities together with their children. (Grierson, H., 2000) In Russia, many day-care centers are also opened for the parents to come and visit. Parents can play an integral role in the functioning of the day-care center. (Evdokimova E.S. & Dodokina N. V. & Kudriavtseva E.A., 2007)

Those children who just started the day-care may miss their parents. They are in a new setting, unfamiliar routines and people, and generally fewer resources for one-to-one interactions with adults. (Datler, W. & Ereky-Stevens, K., & Hover-Reisner, N. &

Malmberg L., 2012) The child may also be scared and have lots of question regarding this new stage of his/her life. (Preschool Prep: How to Prepare Your Toddler for Preschool) Adaptation to non-parental care can be difficult and stressful for the child because they are greatly dependent on their primary caregivers. Small children associate the separation from their parents and transition to the new environment with the feelings of insecurity, loss and even threat. (Datler, W. & Ereky-Stevens, K., & Hover-Reisner, N. & Malmberg L., 2012)

Entering day-care for the first time, toddlers show insecurity and they may be closed for any kind of social interactions. (Datler, W. & Ereky-Stevens, K., & Hover-Reisner, N. & Malmberg L., 2012)

There are certain phases of transition and it is important to do particular things to ease the adaptation process.

Two weeks before the child starts the pre/school, parents should pay more attention to this new event in the life of their child. Parents can go to the store to buy a backpack for the child and it is better if the child chooses the backpack himself/herself. This gives the child a sense of control and emphasizes that he/she is a “big kid” now. Labelling the items that the child uses to go to pre-school is a good practice as well. (Preschool Prep: How to Prepare Your Toddler for Preschool)

Family plays a very big role in helping the child to adjust to the new environment. (Pianta, R. C. & Cox M. J., 1999) Many day-care centers in Finland are opened to the cooperation with parents. Individual Early childhood education and care plan is done together with parents and assessed regularly. Teachers are drafting the curriculum. However, the parents have an opportunity to influence the content and participate in its evaluation. The plan takes into account the child’s individuality and the parent’s point of view how the child’s care should be arranged. The plan enables the staff to be aware of the child’s individual needs. Staff is required to observe the development of the child and organize the activities that support the child’s learning process. (National curriculum guidelines on early childhood education and care in Finland, 2003)

The individual early childhood education and care plan takes into account the child’s experiences, his/her needs and future perspectives, interests and strengths, need for

support and guidance. (National curriculum guidelines on early childhood education and care in Finland, 2003)

The child's development is reviewed during meetings, parties, discussion, interviews with day-care staff to communicate with parents. Parents are welcome to participate in the celebrations organized by the day-care.

First day at day/care is very important. Parents should comfort their children and prepare for the new step in their life. It is good if parents and a child pack the backpack together, choose what to have for the snack. If the child feels familiar and prepared, this will ease the transition. Parents usually spend first few days at the day-care together with their children. Children can pick a toy that they want to take with them to the kindergarten. The toy can help the transition and ease the naptime. (Preschool Prep: How to Prepare Your Toddler for Preschool)

First few weeks are the most stressful for the children who just started the pre-school. Being stressed, children avoid participating in the activities. (Datler, W. & Ereky-Stevens, K., & Hover-Reisner, N. & Malmberg L., 2012)

Those children who start the pre-school after the day-care, experience less stress, they are more sociable and easier contact with peers. They engage in more constructive, complimentary and reciprocal play, and spend less time with caregivers. (Datler, W. & Ereky-Stevens, K. & Hover-Reisner, N. & Malmberg L., 2012)

After six weeks, child feels more comfortable and becomes more sociable, peer oriented and active. (Datler, W. & Ereky-Stevens, K., & Hover-Reisner, N. & Malmberg L., 2012)

Many different factors influence the transition including age, gender, type of nervous system and temperament and contextual constituting the preschool and familial surrounding environment of the child. (Brzezińskam A. & Czub, M. & Ożadowicz, N., 2013) All the factors are interconnected and cannot work in isolation. For the successful transition, all the factors must be taken into account and they also must be considered in relation to each other. Examination of the transition to kindergarten should include identification of the aspects of transition to new and different environments that create risk or opportunity. All the parties like child, parents, family, teachers, school and

community should work together for successful integration. (Pianta, R. C. & Cox M. J, 1999, p. 305 – 317)

Child's age and level of development are significant for the adaptation process. (Brzezińskam A. & Czub, M. & Ozadowicz, N., 2013) What is more, difference in daily routines performed in the kindergarten and at home can make the transition process more complicated. If daily routines like eating, walking, sleeping are performed at a different time at home than in the day-care, it can be really hard for the child to get adapted to the new environment. (Melnikova A., 2002)

Another important thing that can ease the transition is if the child is able to do basic stuff on his/her own, for example, eating, going to the restroom, getting dressed, etc. (Melnikova A., 2002)

To sum up, adaptation takes time and both parents and teachers should be patient and help children to adjust to the new environment.

4.3. Family institution in Russia

Family is seen as scope of persons, who are connected by property and non-property rights and duties, which result from marriage, blood relation, adoption, or other form of child's care. People are bound by common household, moral responsibility and social need. (Ombudsmandeti)

The main characteristics of a family include:

- cohabitation
- mutual rights and duties of family members
- children in common
- common moral and financial aspects and family support (Ombudsmandeti)

The main function of the family is to satisfy the need of all family members. Other family functions embrace educational, domestic, religious/cultural, sexual and primary social control functions. (Ombudsmandeti)

There is a number of benefits available to support a family in Russia. In 2016 all the family benefits were increased by 7%. When woman gives birth, she gets 15,500 rubles (€206). There is a child allowance of 2,900 rubbles (€38.6, rate is counted based on the

Central Bank of Russia) paid monthly to the caregiver until the child reaches the age of 1.5 years if he/she is not covered by the statutory social insurance. The sum paid increases depending if this is a second, etc. child and constitutes 5,800 rubbles (€77.3). Allowance rate varies from region to region but should not be lower than average living wage for the child in the region in question. On average, average living wage for the child in Russia is 9,000 rubles (€120). (Ministry of labor and Social Protection, 2016)

Maternity allowance that constitutes 100% from the salary is paid 70 days before and 70 days after giving birth and its maximum amount is 53,900 rubles (€718). The maximum sum of maternity allowance that is 40% from the salary paid until the child reaches 1.5 years is 21,600 rubles (€288). (Ministry of labor and Social Protection, 2016)

Moreover, each woman who gives birth to the second and other children is entitled to get a federal subsidy for multiple-child families. The program was launched in 2007 and was supposed to be in force until 2016. Currently government is considering the extension of the period of granting the federal subsidy for multiple-child families. (Ministry of labor and Social Protection, 2015) The sum paid is 453,026 rubbles (€6,040) in 2015-2016. (Pension Fund of Russia)

Children can benefit a lot if they attend day-care centers. First of all, child get an opportunity to socialize and learn how to mingle with peers. What is more, those children who attend day-care centers have a better ability to read and cognitively perform more effectively throughout their lives. Those children who attend day-care centers full-time, exhibit more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers and reflectiveness than half-day day-cares centers. When children are engaged in a half-day program, they tend to spend less time on self-initiated tasks, activities, and lessons. (Chen, G.) Children learn to follow rules and keep boundaries, get used to sharing toys and wait for their turn. In pre-school children get prepared for the school. What is more, children get an opportunity to be physically active. (Charlin, L., 2013) Another important issue for day-care centers is that it gives women an opportunity to work. It can be really expensive choice to stay home with a child. Family loses one salary and this can result into problems with family budget. (Glynn S.J. & Farrell, J. & Wu, N., 2013)

In Russia quite a big number of children attend day-care centers of different types and pre-schools. In December 2015 182,480 children between 3 and 7 years old were

registered in St. Petersburg. 196,915 are actually attending the day-care centers. 5,130 children are in line to get a place in a public day-care sector. (Do.Edu, 2015)

Even though many children attend day-care centers, many children are taken care of by grandparents. Grandparents can usually help young parents in making decisions regarding children and their bringing-up. Those grandparents who are already retired have enough time that they can devote to their grandchildren. Grandparents often play the leading role in the bringing-up of the children, taking care of them and children do not attend the day-care. Grandparents usually live with their children and help with grandchildren all the time. (Azbuka) Grandmother usually plays one of the key roles in child's upbringing. She teaches child, does most of the daily routines. Since many parents are working, children spend summer with their grandparents. (Mirwomne)

5. Child's psychology and development

5.1. Psychological aspects of the adaptation process

Entering the kindergarten creates a stressful situation for the child and this can result into neurotic reactions. Transition into a new environment is usually a progression from private space at home to public or collective spaces, such as day-care centers. (Bernard van Leer, 2006) There are many changes coming at once: daily routines are changing, parents are not around all the time, there is a need to contact with peers, etc. When all these changes happen at once, child may feel badly and stop eating, sleeping or it can happen that the child will be getting sick very often in order to stay home.

There are different adaptation strategies of how a child gets adjusted to the new environment.

- So called "creative adaptation" is when a child is actively trying to change the environment. Changing the surroundings, the child gets adapted.
- Another way is when a child gradually gets adjusted and passively accepts all the requirements and rules of the surroundings. It is called slow warm-up.
- Third way is when a child ignores the rules. He/she cannot or does not want to get adjusted. (Melnikova A., 2002)

The above mentioned strategies can be divided into positive and negative ones. Creative adaptation and slow warm-up are considered to be positive. Negative strategies include

anxiety and passive adaptation as well as rebellion and resentment. (Brzezińska A. & Czub, M. & Ożadowicz, N., 2013)

The most common reason for the deviant behavior is if the daily routine is poorly organized. It is very important that the child gets enough of physical activities, sufficient amount of new experiences and is not lacking the contact with adults. The physiological necessities are to be taken into account too. If the child has uncomfortable clothes, it is more likely that he/she may be nervous and disturbed. (Melnikova A., 2002)

Some children do not demonstrate their dissatisfaction that clearly. They may start losing weight, not to play with other children. Even though they may look calm and not to cry. Such children should be paid equal attention too. (Melnikova A., 2002)

The mental health of the child should be the primary factor pursued by parents, educators and by the people in contact with the child. Physical development impacts the healthy overall development. Language is not sufficiently developed, so the child cannot make the difference between him and those around him. With day-care center, he becomes aware of him, of his feelings, of others. (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 30)

Teachers should respect each child as an individual. Those children whose individuality was disregarded could not integrate later on when they became adults. They had difficulties in social, relational, emotional, and moral integration. (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 30)

According to the Attachment theory, attachment is characterized by specific behaviors in children, such as seeking proximity with the attachment figure when upset or threatened. The Attachment theory originates with the seminal work of John Bowlby. Bowlby came to the conclusion that child's relationship with mother is very important in terms of social, emotional and cognitive development. Children experience intense distress when separated from their mothers, even when being fed by other caregivers. This does not diminish the child's anxiety. Attachment can be understood within an evolutionary context in that the caregiver provides safety and security for the infant. Many of the children have several attachments by 10 months old, including attachments to mothers, fathers, and other relatives. (McLeod, S., 2009) "The most important fact in forming attachments is not who feeds and changes the child but who plays and communicates with him or her. Therefore, responsiveness appeared to be the key to attachment". (McLeod, S., 2009)

Parents play an integral role during the process of transition. Parents' cooperation with the day-care center is a key to the successful integration. Cooperating with parents allows teachers to find out what children are engaged in at home, what kind of interests they have and, as a result, be able to better support the children in their learning in the day-care settings. Parents are the main children's up-bringers. If parents, close relatives or other caregivers take part in the day-care center's life, this brings positive results, for example:

- better psychological support
- care givers do not worry about their child
- parents have clear idea of what their child is engaged in and how successful the peer communication is
- parents receive up-to-date information about child's development
- teachers can get an idea of the relationships between the child and parents
- teachers are able to discuss child's achievements and problems with parents
- in turn, parents can use the obtained information for further work at home
- parents have an opportunity to take part in the day-care activities and events (Vashuk, M.I., Alekseeva, Y.N., Andrianova, O.L., Bordanova, I.N., Vedzijeve, D.M., Vorobieva, S.V., Viacheslaeva, N.A., Dedikova, L.L., Juravleva, O.Y., 2014)

5.2. Development of three-year-old children

Three-year old child is a small individual person. By the moment the child enters the day-care center, he/she has a certain background, knowledge, and experiences. (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 30)

Three-year old ones enjoy participating in creating the rules. If they are involved in making reasonable rules, they will know what is expected from them and others. Their participation will help ensure their willingness to maintain the rules and help to develop self-control.

At this age, most of the children respond to simple well-chosen rules. If there are too many rules, children may ignore them or become very frustrated trying to follow them. Three-year old children need to be supported in taking responsibility. Children will make mistakes and not always follow the rules, but these can be turned into learning

experiences. It is also important to treat children respectfully as they are involved into the problem-solving and learning process and try to get used to following the rules. (Miller, S. & Church, E. & Poole, C.)

As for artistic development, three-years old children are able to draw shapes and combine them together to enrich the drawings. (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 30)

At the age of three, an ordinary child knows and can use about 1000 words. Most of the children can speak well enough, use singular and plural forms, use personal pronouns but may make mistakes in terms of grammar. (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 30)

The three-year old ones are anxious to please their parents. They tend to play alone. Children of this age can usually tell the difference between boys and girls, however they play with both genders without distinction or preference. Three-year old children are self-focused and it can be hard for them to understand that not all the people around agree with them. This can result into crying and children may suffer because they are not understood. Children usually tend to repeat the same things as many times as required to be understood. (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 30)

As for intellectual development, children's developmental stage is characterized by imitation and symbolic representations. Children's ability to use symbols, helping them to operate with objects and things and to communicate about them is increasing (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 30-31)

Children's attention can be easily caught by whatever is colorful. Children like imagining themselves in the shoes of favorite fairy tale characters. (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 31)

Usually children are able to count to five or to ten. In the construction of a puzzle, a child needs fewer parts and they should be big enough for him/her to be able to build the whole thing. (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 31)

Children of this age like toys that have wheels. Usually they have a favorite toy that they are playing with most of the time but it does not prevent them from borrowing other children's toys too. The child is engaged in the game most of the time and if there is a

link between play in the kindergarten and play at home, that may ease the transition. (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 31)

A three-year old one I trying to give life to things around him/her. It is also common that having played with something in the day-care center a child may want to take a toy or an object home. At this age imagination is not well-developed yet, so it is very difficult for the child to change the meaning of toys or invent new games. Role play helps to develop various skills and abilities, like language. What is more, role play helps the child to adapt affectively and emotionally. The main goal of educators is to encourage role play, since this will impact child's development in different fields, like cognitive, socio-affective, emotional, language and communication, attitudinal. (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 31)

Transition of three-year old children to the day-care center can be a really difficult and challenging process that requires attention, understanding and affection from teachers. (Tudorica O. & Timpau C., p. 32)

6. Research

This thesis uses qualitative methods of research mainly concentrating on observation and interviewing.

Qualitative research is a type of scientific research that seeks answers to the questions, collects evidence and produces findings. What is more, it seeks to understand the research problem from the perspective of population it involves. Qualitative research is normally used to obtain culturally specific information regarding values, opinions, behaviors, etc. For the current paper two research methods were used: observation and interviewing. Observation helps to collect data on naturally occurring behaviors in their usual contexts. Interviews are suitable for collecting data on individual's experiences and perspectives. Qualitative data can be taken in a form of notes, audio/video recordings, and transcripts. For the current research data were taken in form of notes. (Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide)

The aim of the research is to identify what factors impact the transition and to define the role of the teachers and parents in the adaptation process. In order to find answers to the above mentioned questions the following research questions were posed:

- What are the factors of the successful transition?

- What is the role of a kindergarten teacher during the transition phase?
- What is the role of parents and how they can support their child?
- How can the results of the observation can be put into practice?

6.1. Data collection

Before starting the research, the informed consent was received from the parents that they agree that their children are observed, monitored and results are analyzed.

To identify the factors that make the successful transition teachers in the day-care center were interviewed. All together two teachers and one nanny were interviewed. To build a complete picture, monitoring form was used where all the behaviors of the children were recorded, for example there was information about sleeping, eating, walking, social interactions, mood, and other activities. Five children were observed in total and later on the observation was focused on two children. Parents of these two children were interviewed to find out what they think of the transition and how easy it was for their children.

At the moment when the observation was started, there were four children who just started the day-care and in three weeks a new child of three-years old came. Four children were observed during eight weeks and one child was observed during five weeks. The monitoring form used for the observation started from the first day the child came to the day-care center. The observations were recorded into the form according to the pre-defined schedule that included 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, 8th, 16th, 32d, 53d days.

At the end of the observation during the last week the interviews with parents were conducted. Parents of two children were questioned about their opinions regarding the transition.

All the questionnaires and the informed consent had to be translated into Russian.

6.2. Data analysis

Firstly, the replies had to be translated into English because the interviewing and monitoring took place in Russian.

The data analysis began by looking through the teachers' answers to the questionnaires. There was a lot of information that reflected the teachers' point of view about the transition.

After that the monitoring sheets were analyzed to assess how the behavior of the children was changing, how they were adapting to the new environment. Such things like mood, eating, sleeping, participation in activities and social interactions were taken into account. Five children all together were monitored, two children out of five were monitored more precisely.

The last step was to analyze the responses received from the parents of those two children who were chosen for a closer observation.

6.3. Ethical principles in research on children

When doing research with children, ethical principles have to be used. Firstly, no harm should be caused either physiologically or physically. The research should not be stressful for the children. If harm is inevitable, the researcher has to use other means of obtaining the information or to abandon the research. (Ethical Standards in Research, 2007)

Moreover, an informed consent has to be obtained. The researcher has to explain to the child what will take place and how it will affect the him/her. The child is free to decide if he/she wants to participate or not. When working with infants, the researcher has to explain the procedure to the parents of the child. Parental consent is obligatory to obtain in all the cases, preferably in writing. If other parties, for example, teachers, are involved into the research, their consent has to be obtained too. Consent can be refused at any time and no penalties can be applied. (Ethical Standards in Research, 2007)

Child's welfare and freedom is the first priority and it should be protected. The research has to be conducted anonymously. If any access to the records is needed, the permission has to be obtained. (Ethical Standards in Research, 2007)

When conducting the research, all the responsibilities have to be respected. If during the research any information that can be dangerous for the children emerges, it has to be discussed with parents or guardians. In case of unforeseen consequences, the researcher has to immediately employ appropriate measures to correct them. (Ethical Standards in Research, 2007)

All the information obtained during the research has to be kept in confidence. General findings have to be reported to the participants. (Ethical Standards in Research, 2007)

Caution should be exercised in reporting results, making evaluative statements, or giving advice. Any kind of misconduct like fabrication, falsification of data, plagiarism, misrepresentation, etc. has to be avoided. (Ethical Standards in Research, 2007)

7. Results

Based on the interviews with the staff, many factors that impact the transition were identified. Teachers claimed that the transition greatly depends on the staff working with children. They said that it is very important that the staff is professional and knows how to deal with different children. They also stated that if the group is not very big, there is more time that can be devoted to each child, thus the child starts feeling comfortable faster

The teachers also noted that parents play an important role. Their aim is to prepare children for the changes and that parents are not going to be around all the time. Relationships between parents and children that are full of love and support, give children the feeling that they are protected and safe, and also increase child's self-esteem. When the child lacks the emotional contact with the parents, this can cause anxiety and nervousity.

However, too much of care from parents may cause a negative impact because it hinders the child's readiness to become independent. The teachers also said that some children are too attached to the parents and this makes the transition very hard.

What is more, some parents allow their children to do whatever they want and this can be really challenging for the children to realize that there are particular rules in the day-care center that they have to follow.

Another important thing is that the parents should work together with the teachers when it is related to the child. Teachers are listening to the parents' opinion but also expect to be heard by the parents. They also said that it can be really hard to explain to the parents that something is wrong and the child needs special attention. Parents are reluctant to accept that there can be problems with their child. If some problems are detected and parents do not want to cooperate with the teachers, this can impact the transition in a negative way.

Teachers have also stated that the parents are always welcomed to visit the day-care beforehand and bring their child to get acquaintance to it. They believe that it can ease the transition because if the child visited the day-care center beforehand with parents, they do not see it as a totally new and alien place when they start attending it on the regular basis

What is more, the teachers said that if the children attend day-care full-time, this eases the transition and adaptation happens much faster than if they stay just half of the day.

Monitoring was another important stage in the research. Monitoring forms helped to build a picture how the children were feeling during the transition period. During the monitoring two children were chosen and interview with their parents were arranged during the last week.

Based on the monitoring form and the interview, it was found out that the child who was very attached to his mother had more difficulties during the transition period. He started day-care at the age of three and before that was spending all the time with his parents, mainly mother. He is the only child in the family and all the attention is focused on him. He had difficulties in mingling with peers, was crying quite often and was refusing the food. During first two weeks, he was in a bad mood and did not want to participate in the activities. Most of the time he was playing on his own or just sitting alone. Sometimes the mother had to pick up the child earlier because the staff could not calm him down. He was crying and asking to go home. During the week teachers were managing to comfort him a little bit but every Monday, after weekends spent with parents, he was reluctant to take part in the activities again and was not active. In few weeks, he got used to the routines and the necessity to come to the day-care, started participating in the activities and became more opened for the interaction with other children.

Another observed child was a girl of three years old. From the first day, she showed interest towards other children and teachers. At first, she was observing other children and was not taking part in the activities, but in about a week, she became more active and started playing with other children. Later on, she was already trying to attract everyone's attention and be the center of an activity or a game. Her mother said that she has little sister and she likes helping with taking care of her. However, she feels jealous from time to time because most of the time is devoted to taking care of the new born baby that can explain the child's desire to attract everyone's attention. Before her sister was born, child was getting everyone's attention from the family and had an opportunity to play with siblings.

To summarize, the teachers stated that both work of the staff and the parents is very important and it should be intertwined.

The research showed that those children who are more attached to their parents have more difficulties adapting to the new environment. Very often, it takes a while for the children to start feeling comfortable in the new place. The biggest difficulty is the necessity to be apart from their parents and this can be the biggest challenge for the teachers to comfort the child and make them feel like at home. Those children who used to be more sociable and had a chance to communicate with peers get used to the new place faster. Moreover, the children who have siblings get adjusted much quicker. In addition, it is quite hard for the children to follow the rules of the day-care. Some of them refuse sleeping and eating on time. However, as soon as the child gets used to the new routines, transition becomes smooth.

All in all, it happens quite rare that the transition does not cause any difficulties. The transition is seen to be successful not when there were no difficulties at all, but when they all were overcome and the child got adapted and feels well in the new environment.

Conclusion

Even though the kindergarten systems in Finland and Russia vary, both set the priority to support the child and do the best for the child's development. There is not much written about the transition from home to the day-care center that is why this makes the current paper relevant.

Many parents have to choose if they want their child to attend the day-care center or not. Many are afraid that transition to the day-care can be very stressful and traumatizing for the child. However, day-care gives many positive things to the child. Children have an opportunity to learn how to communicate with peers, follow the rules and routines, become independent and later on get ready for the school.

Finnish kindergarten system differs from the Russian one. Children in Finland can easier get a place in the day-care center than in Russia. Russia has the problem of long lines and waiting period and it can be really hard to get a place in a day-care center. Thus, some children do not have an opportunity to start the day-care at the age of three and have to stay home with their grandparents or parents. All this make the transition more complicated. Many children are limited in their connections with other children and do not have good communication skills. The better communication skills the child has, the easier it is for him/her to get adapted to the new environment.

Parents are as important as highly qualified kindergarten teachers are. They both contribute to the successful transition. It is very important that parents and teachers work together and support each other.

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Questionnaire for parents

1. Child's name
2. Family members
3. Other children in family, their age
4. Family member the child is attached to the most
5. Does the child get sick often?
6. Common child's games and activities at home
7. What kind of toys she/he likes?
8. Who does tidy up after the play?
9. Do you organize any learning games for your child at home? What kind? How often?
10. Any activity outside of home? (for examples, sports, music, etc.)
11. How long has the child been attending the day-care center?
12. What kind of relations does your child have with other children? Does she/he have any difficulties?
13. Special needs of the children
14. What does bother you about your child?

Adaptation assessment form

Child's name _____

Age _____

Date when a child started the kindergarten _____

Days	1st	2d	3d	4th	8th	16th	32d	64th
Mood	±	±	+	+	+			
Eating habits:								
Lunch	±	±	+	±	+			
Snack	±	+	±	+	+			
Sleep:								
Falling asleep	±	+	+	+	+			
Duration	45 min	nap						
Activity:								
Play	±	+	+	+	+			
Speech	±	±	±	±	±			
Relations with other children	±	±	+	+	+			
Relations with other children	±	+	+	+	+			

Nap time = entire nap time

+ positive

± neutral

- negative

Optional comments:

Mood

Eating habits

Sleep

Activity:

- in play
- speech

Relations with other children

What makes the successful transition? Questionnaire for teachers

1. What factors influence the transition?
2. What are the positive and negative sides of the transition?
3. How can the teachers support the transition to the day-care center?
4. How can parents help their children to adapt to the new environment?
5. How do the teachers deal with the difficulties during the transition?

Informed consent

Dear parents,

I am a bachelor student of Social Services and I am going to conduct the research for my final thesis in the day-care center starting from the 23d of May till 14th of July.

The research includes the observation, monitoring and questioning. The main purpose of the research is to identify the factors that impact the transition from home to the day-care center.

All the obtained results will be kept in confidence and the findings will be shared with the parents of the child in question and teachers only. So sensitive or harming information will not be disclosed.

Consent form

Name of the child: _____

My child can be observed and monitored

Teachers can be questioned about the child

Child's personal record can be shown to me

I agree to be interviewed about my child

I allow the results to be shared with the teachers

Parents' signature: _____