

# PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF AGE CRISES IN CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:** The article examines age crises that manifest themselves in children's mental development. The study showed that one of the criteria for the successful course of the crisis and cognitive development, in general, is the ratio of negative and constructive symptoms. Correlation analysis also revealed some relationships between the psychological characteristics of the crisis and indicators of readiness to learn. The research showed that the obtained data are not unambiguous. Greater expression of adult behaviour corresponds to higher levels of visual linear thinking ( $p < 0.01$ ) and visual-motor coordination, the ability to move correctly ( $p < 0.05$ ). Argument is also positively related to imaginative thinking ( $p < 0.05$ ). The higher the child's cognitive motivation and ability to concentrate, the more general questions and new topics he has in communication ( $p < 0.05$ ). These contradictions show that constructive, neutral symptoms and an active form of negativism (argument) with a high level of motivation and intellectual preparation serve the normal course of the crisis. Passive forms of negativist behavioural reactions, on the contrary, are more common in children with a low level of speech development.

**Keywords:** Crisis period, child development, negative behaviours, psychological analysis, cognitive development

## Introduction

In modern psychology, it is relevant to investigate the age crises that arise during children's

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development and developmental periods. Adequate consideration of children's age crisis and a properly organized teaching process plays an important role in students' self-realization and are no less important for professional self-affirmation and create favourable conditions for students' self-expression (Jabbarov, 2012). In this regard, a crisis is a situation observed in children with aggressiveness, stubbornness, crying and other reactions. It is a process that comes from within the child and expresses its inner essence. During the crisis, children become self-actualized (Jabbarov, 2017).

Each age period is characterized by a unique crisis. Crisis is part of children's social, emotional and cognitive development. During this period, children try to know themselves and their surroundings, learn and explore. The crisis is a period observed with sudden psychological changes in certain age ranges starting from childhood. Crisis is not a disease, but just a factor that shows the child's development. Every age crisis has a beginning and an end. Depending on the circumstances of the individual, this duration may increase or decrease. During the crisis, the existing behaviour model is changed and replaced by a new one. Age crises have changed their character compared to previous years and are manifested in a more acute form in modern times. The purpose of studying age crises is to study the characteristics of age crises and to educate parents in this direction. It should be taken into account that focusing on age crises, as well as timely reduction of existing psychological issues in that period, lays the groundwork for timely prevention of complications arising in the future development of children. The purpose of the article is to investigate these issues.

## **Literature review**

It appears from psychological studies that age crises have been widely studied (Smirnova., 2009; Karabanova., 2005; Gadirov., 2008; Valiyev & Mustafayev., 2013; Rieber., 1998; Jabbarov, 2020). One of the reasons for the misunderstanding of the problem of "childhood crisis" is the lack of attention to the semantic, emotional and affective expression of feelings in a separate, isolated



consideration of issues related to the integral development of the child's personality. Separation, ignoring the development of the child's imagination and removing all of the above from the child's intellectual field (Krasnoyarya., 2014). An age crisis is related to the emergence of speech (Mukhina., 2010).

The 3-year crisis is manifested by realising the concept of "Myself". This is the child's first experience of separation and individuation. The child develops his sense of separateness, his inner structure. The child separates his "I" from the "I" of the mother. During this period, a sense of pride in achievements develops, he is proud that he can do something himself. Later, this new formation is incorporated into a very complex structure - the "self-concept" of a person, which leads to the formation of a sphere of motivation that contributes to the development of self-esteem. If a child does not develop such a sense of self, he will feel empty, uninterested in himself, flawed, unworthy of respect, and completely dependent on someone. During this period, children's ability to learn increases. Logical thinking replaces concrete thinking. With the development of thinking, self-perception, introspection, and the child's own experiences develop (Mudrik., 2002).

L.S. Vygotsky associates an age crisis with the emergence of speech. At this time, the child begins to walk independently. According to Vygotsky, the emergence of autonomous speech leads to a change in the child's attitude to the environment. Vygotsky emphasizes that walking emerges, remains and improves after one year, while autonomous speech is the opposite. L.S. Vygotsky elaborated on three age crises in his concept. His work "Three-year Crisis" is dedicated to the three-year crisis. The first sign L.S. Vygotsky drew attention to is negativism. This behavioural response is that the child does not want to do something because an adult suggests it. The second sign is stubbornness. Unlike negativism, stubborn children only insist on something. At this time, the child develops a stubborn attitude towards the whole way of life (Vygotsky., 1984).

L.S. Vygotsky defines the signs of the crisis and the behaviour of children in the work "Crisis of Seven Years". He notes that age seven is the age of "loss of spontaneity." Childish behaviour ceases to be natural. He considers the reason for this to be the generalization of experiences. Different crises



can occur in children during all periods of development. After all, children, like adults, go through various psychological and spiritual processes. These crises occur differently in children of different ages. Coping with multiple issues, children encounter things they haven't encountered before during development, and at certain ages, they initially begin to exhibit different behaviours. In those periods, the careful and correct approach of parents enables children to overcome the so-called crisis processes healthily.

Every baby's characteristics are different. Some babies are quiet, some babies are more active and active. However, it is known that babies face various crises in the growth process. The first of these is called the 1-year crisis. The 1-year crisis is a process that begins to manifest itself when babies reach the age of 1. Babies show aggressive behaviours within the 1-year crisis. He can damage his toys and break things around him. He may attack other children around him. Their tendency to do what they want increases. He does not want to share his toys and food with others. They show a selfish attitude. 2 years is considered one of the most difficult periods for children. The 2-year crisis occurs when the child is not understood, the family is overly protective, he cannot do what he wants, he realizes that there is no communication with mom and dad, and parents do not spend money. (Leontiev, 1983).

Spending quality and sufficient time with them, when there is a new sibling, when there is a lack of communication with the sibling, when either mother or father is absent, and when the child's daily routine changes, anxious behaviour can occur. Some factors can cause a child to become more aggressive. This may be due to the mother's use of cigarettes and alcohol during pregnancy, failure to meet the child's needs, or exposure to violence. The next 3 years are equally difficult and crazy for parents. However, with the right behaviour and attitude, many parents pass these periods more easily. The 2-year-old crisis covers a short interval. The attitude of a child showing such aggression and anger usually ends between 3 and 3.5 years of age. Sometimes it is observed that this aggression continues until the end of 4 years. In this case, it may be necessary to get support from a specialist (Erikson, 1968; Maslow, 1970, Tatlibayevoy, 1999; Young, 2016; Huhlayeva, 2009).

If the child does not feel valued enough and is not socialized enough, this leads to the



three-year syndrome. Factors that lead to a 3-year crisis include a child feeling or thinking that he is unloved, seeing himself as an insecure person, and not being able to socialize enough. The child is quite stubborn in this process, always goes against the norm and does not want to listen to anyone. In fact, at this point, the child does not have any bad intentions. The child just wants to prove himself to others. Trying to understand a 4-year-old child, is a difficult process, being tolerant and patient is the most important task of parents. You must make him feel that you are there for him to gain confidence and feel safe. The 5-year crisis refers to certain behavioural changes that occur during the child's development. Symptoms during the crisis may be different for boys and girls. Commonly observed symptoms are: Constantly asking questions and being very curious: During this period, children may constantly ask questions and exhibit curious behaviors with a desire to explore the world. Learning behaviours: They tend to show rapid development in many areas, such as language development, psychomotor skills, and creativity. Playing games in the social environment and showing leadership: Children tend to play different games to interact with friends, take leadership and improve their social skills. (Huhlayeva, 2009: Ramiz and Vakil, (2020).

A child who goes to school in the first years, which coincides with the 7-year crisis, now has more contact with the outside world. In addition, as the child feels more independent, his dependence on his parents decreases. This situation brings with it certain difficulties. Changes in a child's life can cause problems such as affective differences, anger and conflict. This situation is completely expected and normal. If this period is not resolved healthily, the resulting crisis is called the 7-year crisis. New rules come into the child's life, this continues in a certain sequence until the child reaches the age of 7, and he encounters new psychological situations with unusual regularity, which leads to the 7-year crisis. In addition to the physical development of the child, his mental and social development is also a very important part of the growth process. Along with the school process, there are evolutions in the child's mental development and differences in the thinking system may arise. Although some children can overcome this change with healthy pain, some children may have symptoms of a 7-year crisis (Tatlibayevoy, 1999). Signs of a 7-year-old crisis include constant expectation of praise from the



environment, especially from parents, anger problems, introversion, poor socialization, difficulty in following school rules, fear of being blamed, withdrawal from parents, aggressive attitude, too much focus on relationships with peers and easily influenced by negativity, etc.

## **Methodology**

The purpose of our research is to investigate age crises in children's development and support parents in this direction. For this purpose, a general philosophical approach was used.

As we know, the 2-year crisis is not only a very tiring process for parents but also a process that requires attention. At this time, parents should be more patient and pay attention to their behaviour. The parent should not frighten the child, but at the same time should create discipline by refraining from doing everything the child wants. This discipline should be established without harming the parent-child relationship. Otherwise, it can cause permanent effects on the child. The 2-year crisis can be a difficult process for both children and their families. However, by following some steps, you can ensure that the crisis passes smoothly.

- Wait for the child to express his anger.
- Do not force the child to do or not do something.
- Set the child's boundaries.
- Don't always use the word "no". Using it in the most suitable places creates a more positive effect on the child.

The 3-year crisis, like the 2-year crisis, is a period when the child is quite stubborn and aggressive. However, with some methods, it is possible to easily eliminate this process. Let's take a look at these methods.

- Involve your child in creative activities. Even do these activities together. In this way, you will strengthen the bond between you.



- Hug your child often. Let him know how much you love him.
- Avoid exaggeration when praising your child.
- Try to be consistent in your behaviour with your child.
- Allow your child to think for a while. Don't judge him or start getting mad at him right away.
- Be calm when your child misbehaves and show the child why your behaviour is wrong.
- The child is quite stubborn in this period and wants to do everything he wants. However, it is very wrong to say "yes" to everything the child wants. Say no to your child when necessary.
- Be calm in the face of the child's behaviour. Find logical answers by controlling anger.
- Be decisive and act together with your partner.
- Try to anticipate the behaviours that will trigger the child. Then try to take action for these situations.

In the 4-year crisis, children can be in different moods and react differently to events because they want to prove themselves as individuals. However, the attitude of the family towards the child is very important. Because this step is taken in the direction of children's personality transformation, relatives should not interfere with the process and maintain calmness. Parents are the first to observe the development and change of children. Therefore, parents should start by getting support from a specialist against the differences seen during the child's development. The expert interviews the parents and learns about the child's behaviour before and after the process. Then interviews are conducted with the child.

The WISC 4 test can also be used to determine whether a child's development is appropriate for his or her developmental period. Diagnosis can also be made by combining parent interviews, developmental tests, and play therapy techniques into a single denominator. In this process, communication and cooperation with teachers at school is important. Since children attach great importance to their social relations with their friends, the observations and opinions of their teachers



also allow us to have information about this crisis. If such an opinion is received, support from a psychologist is required. As the crises experienced by children during their development are a natural process, they deeply affect both parents and children. However, many things can be done to make this process easier. If a child has an extremely negative attitude, it is recommended to get the necessary support immediately so that this situation does not negatively affect the child's life. Advice on such problems can be obtained from specialist psychologists. In this process, the social environment as well as the family are important. The goal of treatment is to improve the child's quality of life. The main goal here is to get a positive result with both the treatment process and the support of the family. Families should be patient, knowing that crises are not a disease, on the contrary, they are a stage of the child's development and are important for self-development.

## Results

From a methodological point of view, it is important to avoid the social desirability of responses when studying the signs of a crisis. Some parents tend to exaggerate constructive symptoms and minimize negative ones. Therefore, it is important to give them some information about the age crisis pattern before the study. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the opposite effect - when familiar with the psychological content of the crisis, parents can exaggerate its severity in the child. The study showed that, in general, the crisis in preschool children is not so obvious: the severity of all signs of "domestic behaviour" is about 46%. The constructive symptom category predominates (37%), followed by the negativist symptom category (28%) and the neutral symptom category (35%) is the least expressed. Often, parents note the emergence of common questions and a desire for independence in the child. Then comes demandingness and contention, as well as the emergence of independent activities. Less common are cunning, mature behaviour, interruption, increased interest in appearance, disobedience and capriciousness. There was practically no gender specificity in the symptoms of the age crisis. The difference was significant only in the indicator of interest in





appearance, which was higher among girls ( $p < 0.05$ ). This also affected the differences in the overall index of neutral symptoms: this category is more prominent in girls ( $p < 0.05$ ). Correlation analysis revealed strong relationships between individual crisis symptoms for the group of preschoolers as a whole. Thus, 26 significant positive correlations were identified between symptoms of different categories. This confirms the idea of unity of destructive and constructive components of age crisis. Most associations were found in traits such as disobedience and adult behaviour. Considering their low average values, we can conclude that the severity of disobedience and adult behaviour is a fairly reliable criterion for the onset of an age crisis. Argument, pause, stubbornness and cunning also became a system builder. The least integrated into the general structure are manifestations of independence. In boys, the galaxy of correlations is more structured due to negative symptoms, while constructive symptoms are practically not integrated into the overall structure. For boys, the factors that create the system are disobedience, reaction to criticism and the behaviour of adults, for girls - interruption, stubbornness, capriciousness, and interest in school. Thus, the most obvious signs of the onset of the age crisis can be considered negativist symptoms: the appearance of a neutral symptom such as disobedience, argument, interruption, stubbornness, cunning, and adult behaviour. Constructive symptoms are less informative for the diagnosis of crisis, especially in boys. Group indicators of anxiety in preschool children are in the range of medium-high values. At the same time, 18% of children showed a high level of anxiety and 26% of children had an increased level. 34% of children had a medium level of anxiety, and 22% of children had a low level of anxiety. The anxiety level of girls is higher than that of boys ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Average levels of self-esteem and aspirations of preschool children are high, which corresponds to normative values. Most of the children are still not able to approach the differential evaluation of their qualities. However, some children already seem somewhat critical in their self-evaluations, which suggests a difference between the real self and the ideal self. The study of children's psychological preparation for learning revealed a fairly high level of development of the student's internal position. Most of the children expressed cognitive motivation. Indicators of intellectual preparation generally



correspond to standard values. Thus, indicators of short-term memory, concentration and distribution of attention in preschool children are at an average level, and the speed of information processing corresponds to the upper limit of the norm. Figural memory is superior to verbal memory, which characterizes the age-related features of the development of mnemonic function.

The general indicators of children's speech development and conceptual thinking are at an average level. At the same time, it turned out that conceptual logic and conceptual imagination are the least developed among preschool children. This was manifested in children's difficulties in performing tasks on visual and speech analogies, intuitive visual analysis-synthesis and visual classifications. The level of hand-eye coordination of preschool children can be called moderately weak. The analysis of variance did not reveal the influence of the gender factor on the indicators of children's readiness to learn. Only girls tend to higher distribution of attention and intuitive speech analysis-synthesis. According to the results of the study of psychological preparation, all children were divided into 3 groups: high (30%), medium (48%) and low (22%) levels of preparation. The variance analysis confirmed the significance of the differences between the selected groups in the following indicators: distribution of attention, development of speech, visual structure, conceptual logic and speech thinking, hand-eye coordination during independent work in graphic dictation ( $p < 0.01$ ), formation of the internal position of the student, concentration of attention, conceptual intuitive and imaginative thinking ( $p < 0.05$ ). Then, a comparison of crisis symptoms was made in children at different levels of school readiness. It was found that general questions ( $p < 0.01$ ) and interest in school ( $p < 0.05$ ) are expressed less in children with low preparation. As a result, the difference in the category of constructive symptoms between the low and medium training groups was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Neutral symptoms were also less pronounced in the group of children with low preparation. Preschool children with high preparation have higher values of negative symptoms. However, these differences are not significant. Let's consider the data in more detail by groups. In the group with low readiness, the desire for independence, demandingness, stubbornness and argument prevail. Analysis of individual indicators showed that preschool children in this group were characterized by uneven



severity of symptom categories: negative symptoms decreased in 42% of children, and constructive symptoms decreased in 25%. The averages even out this difference, but it is quite important because it reflects the inconsistency in the development of children with low readiness to learn. In the medium-prepared group, the appearance of general questions prevails. The most prominent signs of negativity are demandingness, argument and stubbornness. In the high-willed group, general questions, demandingness, debate and response to criticism prevail. In these 60 groups, the disparity in severity of symptom categories is approximately 33%. The majority of children with a high level of preparedness (42%) are characterized by clear severity of all categories of symptoms. A blurred picture of the crisis is typical for 25% of children in this group. The data obtained from the correlation analysis of symptom indicators in groups of children at different levels of school readiness are of interest.

The most integrated is the galaxy of relationships in the group with the highest readiness level (18 relationships). Considering the high average values of the symptoms, we can talk about a more unified, bright picture of the crisis in this group. The factors that create the system are stubbornness, reaction to criticism, argumentation and interest in school. The degree of integration is significantly lower in the group with a medium level of preparation (10 attitudes). The most correlations were found in responses such as interruption, demandingness, adult behaviour and general questions. This shows that all three categories of symptoms are important in this group, and we can talk about the relative uniformity of development.

## **Conclusion and discussion**

Our study showed that children with low readiness show disorganization of indicators (a total of 8 attitudes). In addition, two negative correlations between different categories of symptoms were found in this group: between interruption and interest in appearance, and between reaction to criticism and independence ( $p < 0.05$ ). This also shows that crisis symptoms are contradictory in children with



low readiness for school. When the negative symptoms are quite obvious, but not constructive, the crisis can take an unfavourable course of development. Or, on the contrary, the process of orientation to rules is delayed, which is associated with an erased image of negative symptoms. In this group, the most common contact is disobedience and reaction to criticism. There were no significant differences in anxiety scores among children at different levels of school readiness. In the group of children with low readiness, the level of self-esteem and desire is significantly lower than in other groups ( $p < 0.05$ ). More than 33% of children in this group are characterized by a low level of self-esteem and aspirations. All this indicates unfavourable trends in the development of the self-concept of preschool children in this group. There were no differences in group mean scores for the discrepancy between the actual self and the ideal self. Thus, in general, we can talk about a brighter picture of the age crisis in the group of preschool children with high readiness for learning.

Children have more clear constructive and neutral signs of crisis, and a high degree of integration of behavioral responses has been found. A discrepancy between the real self and the ideal self begins and increased anxiety is noted. In children with low readiness, the signs of crisis are somewhat erased, and inconsistencies in development are noted. In general, the crisis continues in a constructive direction, but along with increased anxiety, a rather low level of self-esteem and aspirations has been revealed. In other words, preschool children with a high level of readiness experience an active crisis, while preschool children with a medium and low level of readiness experience a less acute crisis. One of the criteria for the successful course of the crisis and mental development, in general, is the ratio of negative and constructive symptoms. Correlation analysis also revealed some relationships between the psychological characteristics of the crisis and indicators of readiness to learn. It should be noted that the obtained information is ambiguous. Thus, the greater expression of adult behaviour corresponds to higher levels of visual linear thinking ( $p < 0.01$ ) and visual-motor coordination, the ability to move correctly ( $p < 0.05$ ). Argument is also positively related to imaginative thinking ( $p < 0.05$ ). The higher the child's cognitive motivation and ability to concentrate, the more general questions and new topics he has in communication ( $p < 0.05$ ). On the



other hand, disobedience, pausing, and whims, as well as the overall index of negative symptoms, are negatively correlated with the index of speech thinking (speech classifications,  $p < 0.05$ ). Pausing is also negatively associated with general indicators of speech development and conceptual speech thinking ( $p < 0.05$ ). How to explain this contradiction? We see that constructive, neutral symptoms and an active form of negativism (argument) are characteristic of a high level of motivation and intellectual preparation. Passive forms of negativist behavioural reactions, on the contrary, are more common in children with a low level of speech development.

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