

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Impact of The Family Environment on A Child's Personality in Remarried Families

Yuldasheva Sojida Zoyirovna

Assistant at the Department of Psychology at Jizzakh Branch of the National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek, Uzbekistan

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Abstract

This article analyzes the impact of a child's transition into a new family on the development of the child's personality in cases such as parental divorce, the death of a father or mother, remarriage, adoption, placement under guardianship or trusteeship, as well as due to socio-economic problems and the psychological or social incapacity of parents. The article examines, from a psychological perspective, how such changes affect the child's emotional state, social adaptation, self-esteem, and behavior. It also analyzes, on the basis of scientific sources, the psychological difficulties that arise during adaptation to a new family environment, as well as the risk factors and supportive factors for the child.

KEYWORDS

family environment, socialization, psychological adaptation, emotional support, family communication, psychological climate, roles and responsibilities, personality development, behavior formation, self-esteem, conflict and disputes, family model, social experience, motivation and needs, parental divorce, death of a father or mother, remarriage, adoption, guardianship and trusteeship, new family environment.

INTRODUCTION

The family is the primary factor shaping a child's personality, and the social norms and values formed within the family environment contribute to the development of a stable personality in the child. A positive family environment directly influences the child's emotional, psychological, intellectual, and social development.

Sometimes, due to parental divorce, the death of a father or mother, remarriage, adoption, placement of a child under guardianship or trusteeship, socio-economic problems, the psychological or social incapacity of parents, or legal decisions, a child may become part of a new family. The reasons for a child's integration into a new family are multifaceted, and most of them arise from factors beyond the child's control. Joining a new family is not merely a change of residence; it is a

process that affects the child's entire inner world.

Remarried families, adoptive families, and families based on guardianship or trusteeship require the child to adapt to a new socio-psychological environment. In modern society, as a result of changes in family structures, cases of children joining new families are becoming increasingly common. This process is not simply an organizational change, but rather a complex stage of psychological adaptation that directly affects the child's emotional, personal, and social development. Therefore, ensuring certain psychological conditions is of great importance for a child's successful integration into a new family. In such families, alongside the marital relationship, special attention should be given to the psychological state, adaptation, and development of the children. For a child, the

family is not merely a living environment, but also a source of security, stability, affection, and personal identification. Any sharp change in the family structure, especially parental separation and remarriage, gives rise to deep psychological processes in the child's inner world. [1]

If a child's parents divorce and remarry, the divorce process leaves a significant mark on the child's psyche. If the separation was accompanied by intense conflicts, quarrels, and mutual hostility, the child may begin to perceive the world as a dangerous and unreliable place. For such children, adaptation to a remarried family becomes much more difficult. Conversely, if the divorce occurred relatively peacefully, was explained to the child, and the child's feelings were taken into account, the process of accepting the new family structure tends to be easier.

First of all, it should be emphasized that in such families the problem does not lie in the child, but rather manifests itself in the child's process of adapting to a new situation. The child often finds himself or herself between two opposing needs: on the one hand, the child wants to be accepted and loved in the new family, while on the other hand, he or she is afraid of losing loyalty to the biological parents. This condition is referred to in psychology as a "loyalty conflict." The child experiences an internal contradiction between remaining loyal to the biological parents and accepting the new family. This situation is expressed through feelings of guilt, inner tension, and emotional instability. Recognizing this conflict and not denying the child's feelings helps facilitate adaptation.

Children's psychological reactions are directly related to their age. Preschool children are unable to understand the situation logically, so they respond mainly through emotional reactions: fear, regression, clinging to the mother, and disturbances in sleep and behavior are often observed. In children of primary school age, the sense of justice becomes stronger; they frequently ask questions such as "Why did this happen?" and compare themselves with their peers. During adolescence, open or hidden resistance to the remarried family, aggression, rejection, and a strong defense of independence are quite common.

One of the biggest mistakes in remarried families is demanding that the child accept the new father or mother quickly and unconditionally. An approach based on compulsory demands such as "He is your father now" or "She is your mother now, and you must respect her" strengthens the child's internal resistance. From a psychological point of

view, the child first needs to feel safe and accepted, and only then begins to build relationships. Therefore, it is important for the stepparent to appear first not as an educator or controller, but as a reliable and stable adult figure. [2]

Likewise, speaking badly about the biological parents, blaming them, or devaluing them in front of the child leads to very negative consequences. The child accepts the parents as a part of his or her own identity; therefore, insulting them also damages the child's self-esteem. This may later result in low self-confidence, internal conflicts, and difficulties in relationships.

At the same time, properly organized remarried families also offer positive opportunities. If the adults act cooperatively, with patience and understanding, the child gains the opportunity to receive love and support from several adults. Such families can help the child develop flexibility, learn to overcome difficult life situations, and acquire healthy communication and compromise skills. Most importantly, the child begins to understand that love and stability do not exist in only one form, but can also be present under different circumstances.

One of the most important psychological conditions is ensuring the child's emotional safety. When a child enters a new family, he or she must first feel protected, accepted, and valued as an individual. If a sense of emotional safety is not formed, the child may display постоянный anxiety, distrust, withdrawal, or aggressive behavior. The adults in the new family should be sensitive to the child's feelings and should accept the child's fears and hesitations as natural. Through affection, attention, and patience, the child gradually begins to achieve inner stability.

The second important condition is creating a stable and predictable family environment. The rules of the new family, daily routines, obligations, and rights should be clear and consistent for the child. Uncertainty and frequently changing demands increase the child's inner anxiety. Stability strengthens the child's psychological defense mechanisms and facilitates the adaptation process. Especially for children who have experienced trauma, order and consistency serve as a psychological support.

Not denying the child's past life is also an important psychological condition. A child who joins a new family maintains an internal emotional connection with his or her previous family, biological parents, or past experiences.

Rejecting this connection or forcing the child to “forget” the past intensifies the child’s inner conflict. On the contrary, respecting the child’s past, allowing him or her to talk about it, and valuing those memories helps the child accept the new environment. This approach helps preserve the child’s personal integrity.

Another important condition is the gradual formation of relationships. Forcing closeness with the child too quickly and immediately demanding complete obedience and affection leads to negative consequences. Trust develops slowly, over time. The child first observes and evaluates the new family members, and only after feeling safe becomes ready to grow closer. Therefore, adults are required to show patience, flexibility, and respect for the child’s psychological boundaries. [3]

The principle of an individual approach is also one of the main conditions for effective adaptation. Each child differs in age, temperament type, psychological experience, and level of trauma. Some children adapt quickly, while others may maintain inner resistance for a long time. Therefore, using a single model or rigid method is not appropriate. An approach tailored to the child’s personality activates his or her internal resources and supports the adaptation process.

Open and honest communication is also an important psychological condition. The child should receive truthful answers to his or her questions in a way appropriate to his or her age. Secrets, lies, and concealment destroy the child’s sense of trust. Open communication allows the child to express feelings and to verbalize inner experiences. This reduces inner tension and psychological pressure.

Properly shaping the role of the stepparent in the new family is also of special importance. At first, the stepparent should appear not so much as a figure of educational control, but rather as a source of emotional support and encouragement. Immediately demanding the role of “father” or “mother” may provoke resistance in the child. As trust and closeness gradually increase, educational relationships are formed naturally.

If, during the adaptation process, aggression, social withdrawal, sleep disturbances, or behavioral disorders intensify, professional help becomes highly important. Psychological assistance helps the child process inner experiences in a healthy way and contributes to stabilizing family relationships.

In a child’s transition into a new family, children’s well-being depends on three main factors: time, emotional acceptance, and the maturity of the parents. The adaptation process may last several months or even 1–2 years, and this is considered normal. By not denying the child’s feelings, but instead listening to them, understanding them, and helping to name them, adults assist the child in restoring inner stability. The child is not the source of the problem, but rather an individual adapting to change. If adults understand the child’s emotional needs and build relationships without haste, pressure, and instead on the basis of respect, a remarried family can also become a healthy, stable, and educationally effective environment. Children raised in such families have the opportunity to develop with broad life experience, emotional sensitivity, and greater awareness in relationships. [4]

In general, a child’s successful integration into a new family is not a short-term event, but a complex, multi-stage, and emotionally sensitive process. In this process, affection, stability, respect, open communication, and psychological literacy serve as the main supporting factors. The primary goal is to form in the child’s mind a stable inner belief: “I am safe in this family, I am understood, and I am accepted.”

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