

**PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION ON  
PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS  
SUBJECT TO PHYSICAL ABUSE**

**Gabriela BALAN**

*Ștefan Cel Mare University of Suceava*

E-mail: gabrielabalan.psihologie@gmail.com

**Abstract**

*A novelty of this research is the study of early childhood abuse. The fight to eliminate physical abuse in the school environment must start from the first level of placing the child in this environment, respectively from the young school age. The important scientific problem solved lies in the change of the attitude of the parents and teachers towards the physically abused child, but also in the establishment of the psychotherapeutic methods of working with them.*

*The causes of physical abuse are numerous because abuse is a complex phenomenon, and the literature mainly reveals the abnormal behaviors of parents, poor parent-child relationships and problematic families. Very often we meet children who belong to disorganized families and / or with a disadvantaged socio-economic level. Any attack on the child's health, physical abuse, regardless of its form, affects all areas of psychological functioning of the child (intellectual, emotional, volitional, interpersonal), not only causes physical damage, but also negatively affects the child's overall development, his relationships with other people, school performance.*

**Keywords:** abuse; violence; child trauma; parental; psychotherapeutic program; educational model; prevention; family environment; primary cycle.

**Introduction**

**The purpose of the research** is to identify the psychological impact on physically abused 6-11 years old students, to develop and implement a psychotherapeutic program to support them. In other words, the research aims to know the phenomenon of physical abuse in

the primary cycle of education in terms of psychological and social characteristics that characterize the students in question. The research will lead to the enrichment of the theoretical bases of psychology with new knowledge on the issue of physical abuse of children, being the foundation of a guide to good practice, both theoretically (through its theoretical foundation) and from a practical point of view.

### **Symptoms of physical abuse of children**

The specialized literature, especially through the researches carried out in intrinsic connection with the pedagogical practice, reveals more and more examples of students who belong to the area of aggression. The pedagogues consulted in these studies highlight the fact that the development of the instructive-educational process becomes more difficult with each passing day due to the multiplication of cases of physical abuse both between schoolchildren and between schoolchildren and pedagogues.

Fischer and Riedesser (Riedesser, 2001, p. 243) highlight four categories of symptoms of abused children: recurrent, compulsive memories - visual relapse (most common), tactile, olfactory or acoustic memories, corresponding to the predominant experience of the traumatic situation; behavioral ways - the so-called "traumatic game", in which children repeat the traumatic experience in an often endless sequence and a re-enactment of partial aspects of the traumatic experience in automated behavior patterns; trauma-specific anxieties - the connection of anxieties with the original traumatic situation being a differential diagnostic criterion compared to neurotic infantile anxieties; altered attitude towards people, life and the future - the loss of confidence in people and negative expectations towards the future life being the most important consequences of shaking children's understanding towards the world.

C. Ionescu considers that the main affective symptoms encountered in abused children (Serban, 2001, p. 331) are: a type of atypical attachment - disorganized attachment, which can be expressed through bizarre behaviors, which occur in relationships with people dealing with child (example: interruptions or blockages in the relationship); emotional deficiencies, especially in the case of neglected children; in case of abandonment, there are specific deficiencies in maternal care: a qualitative, quantitative insufficiency or discontinuity situations; affective deficiencies, which influence the child's development, mainly in terms of the ability to link and maintain deep and meaningful interpersonal relationships, the ability to control impulses in favor of long-term goals; expression of emotions: physically abused children express more negative affects; children subjected to violence show hypervigilance and

have rapid reactions to stimuli; self-image is not satisfactorily developed; abused children have low self-esteem and perceive a decrease in skills; has an altered body image; feelings of guilt or shame.

Otilia Stamatina and Gabriela Bălan-Scânteie consider (Stamatina, 2015), "Children aged 6-11 have a bad general condition, they are scared, waiting for the adult's approval before making the slightest gesture, they seem frozen. The slightest gesture of the adult provokes a gesture of defense. " (Valentina Olărescu, 2015, p. 23) remarked that "some children present the state of frozen vigilance, which is characterized by an anxious and immobile attention to the environment, as if the child anxiously scrutinizes the environment to predict an imminent danger or to find out and anticipate the other's desire. At the opposite pole are those who prove an astonishing lack of reserve: they go too easily to strangers, they do not seem to be afraid when their parents leave, they establish a too immediate or too regressive relationship with adults. This lack of fear of strangers, excessive familiarity, reveals the profound distortion of the relationship with parents. "

School difficulties are also common: difficulty concentrating, agitation, breaking the rules, school failure. Behavioral disorders in the relationship with other students (aggression, impulsivity) result in social isolation or relationships only with agitated, aggressive students. It is about the difficulty of school adaptation, which he also observes (Serban, 2001, pp. 34-35). The author notes the unfavorable consequences on school performance; students are often placed in special classes or drop out of school. These students do not benefit from family support for homework and no external motivation for school success.

The long-term consequences of physical abuse on the development of the 6-11 years old child depend on a number of variables (Serban, 2001, p. 29)

- the type of abuse;
- severity and frequency of episodes;
- the author;
- sex of the child;
- existing support;
- particularities of the family system.

The long-term consequences of physical abuse experienced in childhood are serious and of great diversity: disorders of relationships, adaptation and family, social and professional integration, aggressive behavior towards members of his family, including his own children,

and towards other people, excessive consumption of alcohol or illegal or legal drugs, mental disorders, obsessive and self-destructive behaviors, abnormal sexual behaviors, etc.

### **Physical abuse in the school environment**

The school, in its defining capacity as an organizing institution and provider of education, in addition to its fundamental role in the educational training of future adults, has obligations, in parallel with the desideratum presented above, to ensure protection and promote children's rights. Anghel (Anghel, 2016) observes that "This is done either at the level of the formal curriculum or at the level of the non-formal and informal curriculum. The need to guide educational activities towards issues related to the promotion and protection of children's rights is justified in the context of the presence of violence against children against which, if not intervened correctly, it can degenerate with serious consequences. "

The issue of physical abuse in the school environment has a wide range of manifestations. Adăscăliță et al (V. Adăscăliță, 2017, pg. 6-7) considers that it "manifests itself both in the form of singular violent actions and in the form of permanent intimidation, humiliation and systematic harassment (bullying). Violence can be physical and verbal, it can manifest itself through violent actions and sexual statements, it can have a pronounced or unpronounceable emphasis on the gender dimension, it can pursue material benefit (extortion and theft of objects and money), but it almost always causes psychological trauma. to all persons involved. " In addition to teacher violence against students, there is another worrying phenomenon, student abuse of students. Students can be harassed by both a person (student or teacher) and a group. With the increase of internet accessibility, harassment also takes place in the virtual space: through mobile communications, e-mail and social networks, derogatory pictures, offensive messages and threats (cyberbullying) are spread.

In teaching activities, educators (teachers, teachers) must know and recognize in students the specific signs of physical abuse. The author Corina Mighiu (Mighiu, 2015, pg. 6-7) considers that the signs of physical abuse can be broken down into physical signs and affective-behavioral signs (Table 1).

<b>Physical signs</b>	<b>Affective-behavioral signs</b>
Delayed stature-weight and mental development.	Behavioral manifestations, polarized either to unconditional listening or to instability:

	- He doesn't want to sit down.
Language deficit.	- Strangely motivates the marks on the body / does not remember their cause.
Rickets, food deficiencies.	- Avoid any confrontation with the parent. - Seems overly docile.
Early insomnia, sleep disorders	"Hard or bizarre." - Hypervigilant, with unmotivated physical defense reactions.
Enuresis, encopresis.	- Manifesting terror and violence in interpersonal relationships.
Bruising, abrasions (scratches), dermatoses (spots on the skin).	- Provocative attitudes, out of a desperate need to attract attention.
Psychosocial dwarfism.	- Hyperactivity generated by repeated frustrations.
Mental anorexia.	- Disorderly behaviors.
Hematomas in unusual places	
Scratches, unexplained cuts in the genital area, face, head, burns, torn hair	
Bone fractures, dislocations, deformities of the limbs	
Injuries to the central nervous system (motor disabilities, sensory deficits, eye paralysis, convulsions, hemiplegia, coma).	Emotional feelings: - Distrust, fear. - Low or no curiosity. - Anxious vigilance. - Child "jellyfish" (frozen) to the entourage.
Cerebral or retinal hemorrhages.	- Interpersonal contact difficulties. - Fear of separation.
Injuries to internal organs	- Vulnerability to stressful situations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Difficulties in self-control.</li><li>- Difficulties in understanding.</li><li>- Learning difficulties.</li><li>- Drowsiness, dreams, nightmare.</li><li>- Retractable behavior or motor instability.</li></ul> Anger, vindictive attitudes, lack of control. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Poor motivation.</li></ul>
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**Table 1. Signs of physical abuse**

Recognition of abuse, as a direct activity of teachers, requires a thorough knowledge of the signs of abuse and a permanent concern for the ongoing assessment of its psycho-behavioral implications on the student aimed at healing physical and mental injuries.

### **Prevention and intervention strategies in the field of physical abuse of primary school students**

The main ways to reduce physical abuse are classified as follows:

- a) Primary prevention: involves intervention on both the social environment and the student.
- b) Secondary prevention: involves the design and operation of education systems.
- c) Tertiary prevention: it is carried out by specialized personnel in collaboration with parents and teachers and involves the prevention of the transformation of violent acts into serious forms, as well as recidivism.

### **Prevention methods for the student**

It promotes awareness and understanding by the student of abusive dynamics, encouraging growth and development beyond the role of the victim or improper identification with the abuser and supporting individuality and personal integrity, students to be taught to care for them, to think about their behavior and to make choices that maximize their safety, help them regain confidence, faith, and invest in meaningful relationships.

The psychologist must establish a relationship with the student according to his interests and needs. In this way, counseling is student-centered and determined by his interest, ability and desire to participate. The student must be guided in understanding and awareness; it has a clear plan of appropriate interventions.

### **Prevention methods for teachers**

In educational practice, teachers have a significant role in preventing, detecting and reducing the phenomenon of physical abuse on primary school students. Studies have shown that a good knowledge of students by teachers, their desire and effort to ensure a quality education and school success for all, are measures to prevent physical abuse. Thus, teachers who establish harmonious relationships with their students, a positive emotional climate, communicate frequently with students, use empathy and a sense of humor, manage to improve this phenomenon at school.

The main measures that teachers can take against physical abuse of primary school students are:

- Democratization of the pedagogical relationship through the real functioning of the class advisory council.
- Reorganization of the classroom space.
- Constant motivation of students in the learning process by humanizing disciplines, using rewards, interesting, active, diverse methods, etc.
- Efficient class management.
- The learning process based on cooperation and less on competition.
- Increasing students' self-esteem.
- Improving teacher-student communication both verbally and para and nonverbally - a very important aspect, given that studies show that, in students' perception, the main source of conflict in the classroom, is the teacher's lack of communication with students or a faulty communication.
- Informing students about the objectives, assessment criteria and level of requirement.
- Maintaining permanent contact with the family.
- Advising parents on parent-child interaction.
- Advising parents on the supervision of the entourage and moral education.

Through counseling activities, the psychologist promotes the child's awareness and understanding of abusive dynamics, encourages growth and development beyond the role of the victim or improper identification with the abuser and supports individuality and personal integrity, teaches children to care for them, to think to their behavior and make choices that maximize their safety, help the child regain confidence, faith and investment in meaningful relationships.

The psychologist must establish a relationship with the child according to his interests and needs. In this way, counseling is child-centered and determined by the child's interest, ability and desire to participate. The child must be guided in understanding and awareness; it benefits from a clear plan and appropriate interventions.

### **Conclusions**

Pedagogical practice brings more and more examples of children at this level of education, who, through their behaviors, fall into the area of school aggression. The teachers emphasize the difficulty of carrying out the instructive-educational process due to the multiplication of conflict situations between students, but also between students and teachers. The fight to eliminate aggression in the school environment must start from the first level of enrollment of the student in this environment, respectively from the young school age.

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