

**ЕРЕКШЕ БІЛІМ БЕРУДІ ҚАЖЕТ ЕТЕТІН БАЛАЛАРДЫ ЗЕРТТЕУ  
ИЗУЧЕНИЕ ДЕТЕЙ С ОСОБЫМИ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫМИ ПОТРЕБНОСТЯМИ**

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**AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE APPLICATION OF THE SOCIAL STORIES  
METHOD IN THE FORMATION OF LEARNING AND BEHAVIORAL SKILLS IN  
CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS**

**Abstract:** This article presents the results of an experimental study examining the use of the Social Stories method in the development of learning-behavioral skills in early primary school-aged children (6–7 years) during individual developmental sessions. The intervention demonstrated positive changes in instruction-following, self-control, sustained attention, and social engagement. The findings indicate that the Social Stories method contributes to increased motivation for learning activities and improvement of learning-behavioral skills. However, the degree of progress varies depending on the level of cognitive development and the severity of speech impairments.

**Keywords:** autism spectrum disorders, Social Stories, learning-behavioral skills, individual developmental lesson, emotional regulation, self-control, attention, academic skills.

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**АУТИЗМ СПЕКТРІНІҢ БҰЗЫЛЫСТАРЫ БАР БАЛАЛАРДА ОҚУ-МІНЕЗ-  
ҚҰЛЫҚ DAҒДЫЛАРЫН ҚАЛЫПТАСТЫРУДА ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК ОҚИҒАЛАР ӘДІСІН  
ҚОЛДАНУДЫҢ ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТТІК ЗЕРТТЕУІ**

**Аңдатпа:** Мақалада жеке дамыту сабақтарында әлеуметтік оқиғалар әдісін қолданудың кіші мектеп жасындағы (6–7 жас) балалардың оқу-іс-әрекеттік мінез-құлық дағдыларын қалыптастырудағы нәтижелеріне арналған эксперименттік зерттеу ұсынылған. Эксперимент барысында нұсқауды орындау, өзін-өзі бақылау, зейіннің тұрақтылығы және әлеуметтік қатысу дағдыларының қалыптасуында оң динамика байқалды. Алынған нәтижелер әлеуметтік тарихтар әдісінің балалардың оқу іс-әрекетіне деген мотивациясын арттыруға және олардың оқу-іс-әрекеттік мінез-құлық дағдыларын жақсартуға ықпал ететінін

көрсетеді, алайда ілгерілеу деңгейі психикалық дамудың деңгейіне және сөйлеу бұзылыстарының айқындылығына байланысты.

**Түйінді сөздер:** аутизм спектрі бұзылыстары, әлеуметтік оқиғалар, оқу-мінез-құлық дағдылары, жеке түзете-дамыту сабағы, эмоциялық реттеу, өзін-өзі бақылау, зейін, академиялық дағдылар.

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## **ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТАЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ПРИМЕНЕНИЯ МЕТОДА СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ ИСТОРИЙ В ФОРМИРОВАНИИ УЧЕБНО-ПОВЕДЕНЧЕСКИХ НАВЫКОВ У ДЕТЕЙ С РАССТРОЙСТВАМИ АУТИСТИЧЕСКОГО СПЕКТРА**

**Аннотация:** В статье представлены результаты экспериментального исследования использования метода социальных историй в формировании учебно-поведенческих навыков у детей младшего школьного возраста (6-7 лет) на индивидуально-развивающих занятиях. В ходе экспериментальной работы отмечена положительная динамика в формировании навыков следования инструкции, самоконтроля, устойчивости внимания и социальной вовлеченности. Полученные результаты показывают, что метод социальных историй способствует повышению мотивации детей к учебной деятельности и улучшению их учебно-поведенческих навыков, однако степень прогресса зависит от уровня психического развития и выраженности речевых нарушений.

**Ключевые слова:** расстройства аутистического спектра, социальные истории, учебно-поведенческие навыки, индивидуально-развивающее занятие, самоконтроль, внимание, эмоциональная регуляция.

**Introduction.** In the context of the development of inclusive education, there is an increasing need for scientifically grounded methods for forming learning-behavioral skills in children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The success of including this category of learners in the educational process is determined not only by the level of cognitive development but also by the degree to which skills such as following instructions, behavioral self-regulation, sustained attention, and social interaction are developed. Insufficient development of these skills significantly limits the educational opportunities of children with ASD and reduces the effectiveness of corrective and developmental interventions.

In special education, technologies for structuring behavior are being actively developed; however, the effectiveness of specific methods, particularly social stories, in the formation of learning-behavioral skills within individual developmental sessions remains insufficiently studied.

There is a need for systematic research that will make it possible to determine optimal approaches to adapting social stories to the individual characteristics of the child, taking into account the level of development of cognitive and emotional domains as well as the specific features of social communication impairments.

Children with ASD are characterized by impairments in social communication, restricted interests, and stereotyped patterns of behavior, which complicate the formation of learning-behavioral skills. Learning-behavioral skills include the ability to follow instructions, maintain attention, regulate emotional responses, and interact with the teacher in the educational environment. Insufficient development of these skills leads to difficulties in adapting to learning activities and reduces the effectiveness of education.

The aim of the study is the theoretical substantiation and experimental validation of the social stories method in the formation of learning-behavioral skills in children with autism spectrum disorders.

**Methodology, materials, and research methods.** The theoretical and methodological framework of the present study is grounded in the principles of the cultural-historical theory of mental development, the neuropsychological approach to the regulation of activity, the conceptual foundations of special education, and contemporary evidence-based practices of corrective support for children with autism spectrum disorders.

From the perspective of the cultural-historical theory, the development of higher mental functions is understood as a socially mediated process in which the formation of voluntary behavior results from the internalization of socially organized forms of interaction. This position substantiates the necessity of pedagogical tools that structure the child's social experience and facilitate the formation of behavioral regulation [1, p. 244]. The theoretical principles formulated by Lev Vygotsky provide a foundation for understanding the social nature of behavior formation and learning.

The neuropsychological approach explains the mechanisms of voluntary regulation of activity through the systemic organization of higher cortical functions. Behavioral control, action programming, and regulatory processes are viewed as outcomes of the coordinated functioning of interconnected functional brain systems. This perspective determines the necessity of targeted development of self-regulation in children with autism spectrum disorders [2, p. 75].

Within the national clinical and psychological tradition, developmental disorders associated with autism spectrum disorders are conceptualized as complex impairments affecting the formation of mental functions, including the emotional-volitional sphere, communication, and behavior. This approach emphasizes the necessity of systematic corrective and pedagogical intervention [3, p. 97].

Psychological and pedagogical descriptions of autism within special education identify impairments in social interaction, communication, and voluntary behavioral regulation. These characteristics necessitate the structuring of the educational environment and the application of specialized instructional methods [4, p. 45].

Contemporary models of support for children with autism spectrum disorders emphasize individualized corrective intervention, the use of visual supports, environmental predictability, and the development of adaptive behavior through specially organized pedagogical conditions [5, p. 88].

Corrective and developmental education is conceptualized as a systemic process aimed at the formation of cognitive activity, volitional regulation, and regulated forms of behavior in children

with developmental disorders. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of structured pedagogical intervention in behavior formation [6, p. 121].

The Social Stories method, developed by Carol Gray, represents a structured pedagogical approach that describes typical social situations, expected patterns of behavior, and potential consequences of actions. The method is individualized in accordance with the child's cognitive profile, level of language comprehension, and characteristics of social communication. Social stories are constructed with consideration of cognitive characteristics, comprehension abilities, and communication features, thereby ensuring accessibility and predictability of information. The method is directed toward the development of social understanding, voluntary behavioral regulation, and the acquisition of socially appropriate interaction patterns [7, p. 2].

Practice-oriented studies describe methodological principles for constructing social stories, including individualization of content, precision of formulations, reliance on visual supports, and a positive orientation of behavioral descriptions. Empirical evidence indicates that adherence to structural requirements regarding the content and format of social stories enhances their effectiveness in corrective and developmental work with children with autism spectrum disorders [8, p. 15].

Meta-analytic research demonstrates statistically significant effectiveness of social stories as an intervention for the formation of adaptive behavior in learners with autism. Synthesized empirical findings indicate a positive impact on the development of social skills, reduction of maladaptive behavior, and increased learner independence [9, pp. 812–826].

Experimental studies conducted in educational settings confirm that the use of social stories facilitates the formation of socially appropriate behavior patterns, improves understanding of social expectations, and reduces problematic behavioral responses. Additionally, improvements in pedagogical interaction and learner engagement in educational activities have been reported [10, pp. 215–222].

Empirical data further indicate that systematic implementation of social stories in educational practice contributes to the development of instruction-following skills, enhancement of self-control, reduction of behavioral impulsivity, and increased attentional stability in learners with autism spectrum disorders [11, pp. 43–57].

Comparative studies of behavioral interventions demonstrate that social stories possess established effectiveness and may be considered a scientifically grounded method of behavior correction applicable in both individual and group pedagogical formats [12, pp. 264–287].

Evaluations conducted within the framework of evidence-based pedagogy confirm that social stories represent effective methods for the formation of social and behavioral skills in individuals with autism spectrum disorders and meet criteria of reproducibility and pedagogical validity [13, pp. 149–166].

Systematic reviews of evidence-based practices in special education emphasize the importance of structured behavioral technologies that ensure environmental predictability and promote the development of adaptive behavior in children with autism spectrum disorders [14, pp. 275–282].

Contemporary integrative studies of evidence-based pedagogical practices confirm that social stories constitute an effective component of comprehensive psychological and pedagogical support programs for children with autism spectrum disorders and contribute to increased effectiveness of corrective and developmental work [15, pp. 1951–1966].

Thus, analysis of the scientific literature demonstrates the theoretical validity and empirically confirmed effectiveness of the Social Stories method as a means of developing learning and behavioral skills in children with autism spectrum disorders. The application of this method corresponds to contemporary principles of evidence-based special education and to the requirements of individualized corrective intervention.

Despite the substantial body of research confirming the effectiveness of social stories in the development of social skills, their impact on learning and behavioral competencies requires further investigation.

The present study is aimed at expanding scientific and practical knowledge regarding the application of social stories in corrective pedagogy and at developing methodological recommendations for specialists working individually with children with autism spectrum disorders.

**Results and Discussion.** The experimental study was conducted at the Department of Additional Inclusive Education of Schoolchildren’s House No. 7 in Almaty. The sample comprised 11 primary school children aged 6–7 years diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders who attended individual correctional and developmental sessions. The participants presented with heterogeneous impairments in mental and speech development, as well as difficulties in the formation of learning and behavioral skills, including reduced attentional stability, difficulties in following instructions, insufficiently developed self-control, and deficits in emotional regulation.

Correctional and developmental sessions were conducted in a specially equipped room with minimal distracting stimuli, ensuring optimal conditions for concentration and reduction of anxiety. Each session lasted 25–30 minutes and was conducted two to three times per week over a three-month period. All sessions followed a clearly structured format consisting of an introductory phase, the main corrective component, and a concluding stage incorporating elements of emotional reinforcement.

The experimental work was implemented in three stages: baseline (ascertaining), formative, and control.

At the baseline stage, an initial assessment of the level of development of learning and behavioral skills in children with autism spectrum disorders was conducted. The assessment employed pedagogical observation, analysis of performance on structured learning tasks, and diagnostic procedures targeting voluntary attention, the ability to follow instructions, self-control, and emotional regulation. The following indicators were evaluated: comprehension and execution of instructions, ability to maintain attention throughout the session, responsiveness to adult demands, degree of engagement in learning activities, and characteristics of emotional reactions.

Table 1. Distribution of Participants by Levels of Learning-Behavioral Skill Development (Baseline Stage)

Level	Level characteristics	Number of children (n=11)	Percentage, %
Level 1 (low)	The instruction is partially understood or not understood; attention is unstable; self-control is not formed; behavior is regulated mainly by external adult control; pronounced difficulties in emotional regulation; in most children — absence or severe limitation of speech	6	54.5

Level 2 (medium)	The instruction is understood with support; attention is maintained for a short time; elements of self-control are situational; emotional reactions are partially regulated; speech means are limited or situational	3	27.3
Level 3 (relatively formed)	Instructions are understood and executed with minimal support; attention is relatively stable; elements of voluntary behavioral regulation are present; emotional responses are regulated; language abilities are preserved.	2	18.2

Results of the ascertaining stage showed that the majority of children demonstrated a low level of formation of learning-behavioral skills. The children experienced difficulties in understanding and following adult instructions, rapidly lost attention, displayed impulsive or emotionally unstable reactions, and required constant external regulation of behavior by the teacher.

**The formative stage** of the experiment was aimed at the purposeful development of learning-behavioral skills through the use of social stories. Social stories were developed individually for each child, taking into account the level of mental and speech development, characteristics of information perception, and the motivational sphere. The content of the social stories reflected typical learning situations: the beginning of a lesson, task performance according to instructions, waiting for one's turn, completion of an activity, regulation of emotional reactions, and interaction with the teacher. Social stories were presented in a visual-text format, accompanied by discussion and subsequent consolidation through practical activities during sessions.

During the formative stage, particular attention was paid to the development of skills in following instructions, self-control, sustained attention, and basic academic skills. The work was organized according to the principles of gradual increase in task demands, systematic repetition, and positive reinforcement of appropriate forms of behavior.

**The control stage** of the study was aimed at reassessing the level of formation of learning-behavioral skills after the completion of the formative intervention. Repeated pedagogical observation was conducted, children's behavior in learning situations was analyzed, and the obtained results were compared with the data from the ascertaining stage. The dynamics of changes for each identified indicator were evaluated, as well as the stability of the formed skills during individual developmental sessions.

The control stage confirmed the stability of the achieved changes. A comparative analysis of the results of the ascertaining and control stages demonstrated a statistically and pedagogically significant increase in the level of formation of learning-behavioral skills in the majority of participants. At the same time, it was established that the degree of positive dynamics was individual in nature and depended on the level of mental development, the severity of speech impairments, and the formation of the child's motivational sphere. Children with more preserved cognitive abilities and family support demonstrated higher rates of acquisition of behavioral models presented in social stories.

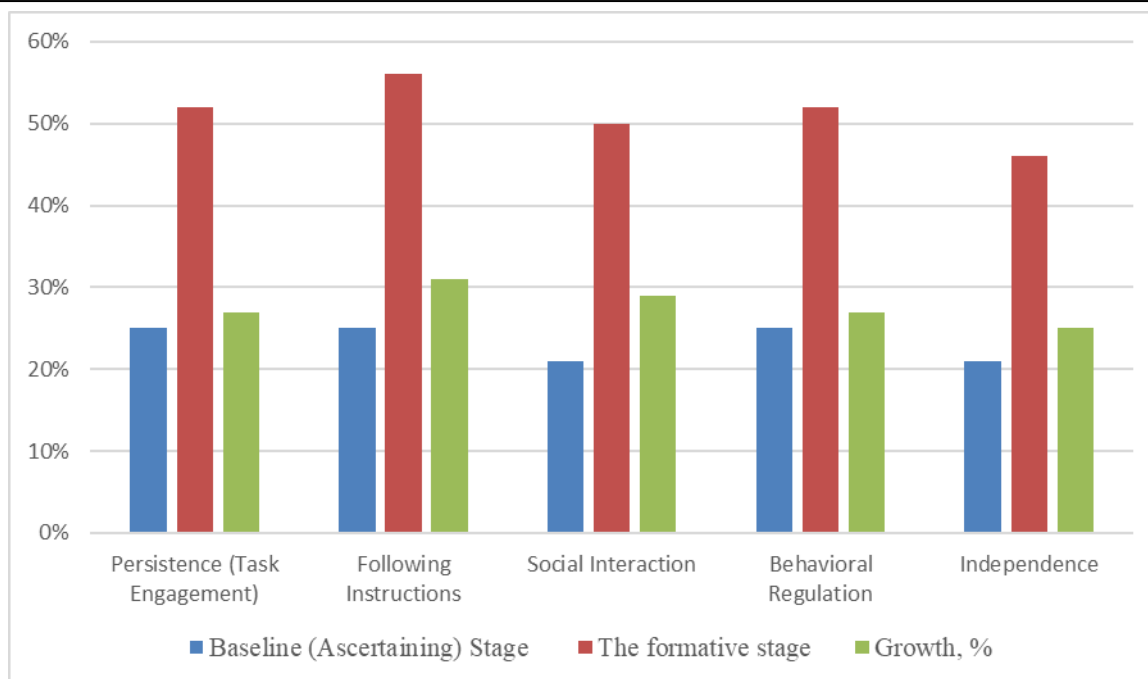


Figure 1- Dynamics of the formation of learning-behavioral skills during the formative stage of the experiment (scale: 0–100).

The obtained data allow the conclusion that social stories constitute an effective corrective and developmental means of forming learning-behavioral skills in children with autism spectrum disorders, provided their systematic and individualized application. The social stories method contributes to the structuring of learning activities, the development of voluntary behavioral regulation, and the creation of a psychologically comfortable educational environment. The practical significance of the study lies in the possibility of using the presented results in the development of individualized intervention programs and methodological guidelines for specialists in inclusive and special education.

The conducted experimental study confirmed the relevance and practical significance of using social stories in corrective and developmental work with children with autism spectrum disorders. The results indicate that the purposeful and systematic application of social stories in individual developmental sessions promotes the formation and development of learning-behavioral skills necessary for successful inclusion of the child in the educational process.

The analysis of indicator dynamics revealed positive changes in children's ability to follow instructions, sustain voluntary attention, exercise basic self-control, and regulate emotional reactions in learning situations. Social stories, functioning as a means of structuring activity and modeling expected patterns of behavior, reduce anxiety levels and increase the predictability of the educational environment, which is particularly important for children with autism spectrum disorders.

It was established that the effectiveness of the method is largely determined by individual characteristics of the child, the level of mental and speech development, and the degree of formation of the motivational sphere. This underscores the need for individualization of social story content and their integration into a comprehensive corrective and developmental program, taking into account the capabilities and needs of each learner.

### *Conclusion*

The conducted study confirmed that the social stories method is an effective pedagogical tool for the formation of learning-behavioral skills in children with autism spectrum disorders in the context of individual developmental sessions. Systematic and purposeful use of social stories contributes to:

- structuring learning activities and increasing the predictability of the educational environment;
- the development of skills in following instructions and maintaining the sequence of actions;
- the development of voluntary attention, self-control, and regulation of emotional reactions;
- reduction of anxiety and increased motivation for learning activity;
- improvement of the child's interaction with the teacher and social adaptation within the educational process.

The results suggest that Social Stories constitute an effective corrective-developmental tool for fostering learning-behavioral skills in children with autism spectrum disorders when applied systematically and individually. This emphasizes the necessity of individualizing the content of social stories and integrating them into a comprehensive corrective and developmental program that considers the capabilities and needs of each learner.

The practical significance of the study lies in the possibility of using the developed methodological recommendations in designing individualized intervention programs for children with autism spectrum disorders, as well as in training specialists in inclusive and special education. The obtained data may serve as a basis for expanding applied methods and developing new pedagogical technologies aimed at the effective inclusion of children with autism spectrum disorders in the educational process.

Directions for further research include:

- examining the long-term stability of formed learning-behavioral skills;
- expanding the use of social stories in group and inclusive educational settings;
- integrating the social stories method with other behavioral intervention and instructional technologies (e.g., elements of ABA, visual schedules, social scripts);
- analyzing the influence of family support and teacher interaction on the effectiveness of social stories.

Overall, the study confirms that social stories represent a scientifically grounded and practically applicable tool for corrective and developmental work with children with autism spectrum disorders, facilitating their successful adaptation and the development of key learning-behavioral skills.

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