

A study of the pattern of non-adjustment reactions of the newly admitted children in the laboratory day care centre

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ABSTRACT

The investigation entitled aimed at studying the non-adjustment reactions of children in the Laboratory Day Care Centre. The study was based upon a sample of 32 (15 male and 17 female) children admitted in two consecutive sessions (April,2009 & April,2010) in Laboratory Day Care Centre, Department of Human Development, PAU, Ludhiana. Observation-cum-interview method was used for the collection of data for the study. Based on their non-adjustment reactions, the children were divided into two categories, viz., 'Early Adjusting Children' and 'Late Adjusting Children'. For this segregation an opinion survey was conducted in the five 'Early Childhood Care Centres' in Ludhiana City. As per the results of the opinion survey 3 weeks time was found to be average normal time for adjustment of the children. The subjects displayed non-adjustment reactions in varying frequencies and intensities. 'Eating problems' were the first to fade out and 'Unwillingness to come to the centre' the last. The non-adjustment reactions which strongly persisted beyond 3 weeks time period were 'Unwillingness to come to the centre', 'Over attachment with care provider' and 'Over attachment with mother'. 'Temper tantrums' and 'Withdrawn behaviour' were also displayed moderately up to 9th week of entry to Laboratory Day Care Centre.

KEY WORDS: Laboratory day care centre, Care providers, Non-adjustment reactions, Early adjusting children and late adjusting children

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When babies are less than 7 months of age they are willing to share their smiles with everyone and are happy to be comforted by almost any caring and loving individual. After 7 months however, infants are more aware of their dependence on their primary care givers and begin forming very strong relationship with them. At this stage a once care-free child can all of sudden become much attached and increasingly more upset at the notion of being left at day care centre. Stepping out of the house can be a very exciting time, but it can also be a stressful time for kids and parents alike. Taking a child to a day care for the first time can be easy if the parents can prepare their child as well as themselves for the big day. This includes both emotional preparation as well as physical preparation for the changed environment, routine and people. Most often the children are withdrawn or refused to engage themselves in activities initially or after attending day care for a few days or more. Shyness, isolation, fear and bed-wetting were the major problems of this age followed by the problem of dependence. Both male and female were seen exhibiting similar type and extent of problems (Duhan and Kaur, 2000). The family was

determined to be the main source of child's formation of behaviour patterns. Newcomers often appeared hesitant and non-assertive in initial interactions with classmates and in attempts to join ongoing activities. Wariness is a common response of young children confronted with an unfamiliar or potentially threatening situation (Bronson and Pankey, 1977). Children need time to differentiate between what goes on outside home and what goes on at home. Once a child feels secure with new friends and care givers, chances are that he will begin to let it go. It may take time for a child to develop that trust.

Each newcomer to the Laboratory Day Care Centre passes through this transitory phase and reacts to the demands posed by the newly found environment. As children seek to understand and craft relations with the care providers in the Laboratory Day Care Centre, they encounter certain amount of anxiety and distress. Sudden change in environment, expectations, competencies required and demand during entry to kindergarten are some of the reasons cited in recent research publications for the maladjustments of children in pre-schools especially among children from low socio-economic status