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# The major challenges of financing educational service for persons with disabilities in the Russian Federation

**Abstract**

The article examines the socio-economic factors that reveal the specifics of educational policy in relation to handicapped children and children with disabilities in the Russian Federation. The focus is on ensuring access to education for such children, insistently voiced their right to receive education in regular schools through inclusion. The problem of a sharp decline in the level of state guarantees for the population, the experience of social protection of people with disabilities, including in the field of education, changing the principles of teaching children with disabilities are brought up as an issue. The legal framework and analysis of the main aspects of financing educational services for children with disabilities in recent years are presented. The research is based on the analysis of program documents implemented in the Russian Federation in favor of disabled persons, data of statistical observation in the field of education and the situation of disabled children. The main objective of the study: to assess the situation in the field of accessibility of educational services for specified class. The research used data from official statistical reporting, as well as representative studies conducted by the Federal State Statistics Service. The new route of educational policy determines the relevance of the study of problems arising in the course of teaching children with disabilities, and leads to the need to take into account the socio-economic factors affecting the educational and adaptive trajectories of this category. This presupposes the consideration of scientific, methodological and applied issues, the development of criteria that will allow assessing the effectiveness of the measures, introduced and determined the directions for the development of the policy pursued. Also measures to provide financial guarantees for the implementation of inclusive education are proposed. Used a general scientific and statistical method, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, mental modeling.

**Keywords**

Disability, disabled children, education, educational financing, funding, health, inclusive education, special needs

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**1 Introduction**

The conviction that every child has the right to get quality education that respects his or her dignity and promotes optimal development is at the heart of UNICEF's approach to education based on human rights. Getting a quality education is every child's right. This postulate became decisive in the choice of the research topic.

*Subject of research:* the legal framework on the basis of which the financing of educational services in the Russian Federation is carried out.

*Object of research:* problems arising in financing educational services for children with disabilities.

*Research objective:* development of measures to eliminate the main problems of inclusive education of children with disabilities.

*Research methods:* general scientific method of analysis, synthesis, statistical modeling.

**2 Latest scientific progress and publications review**

E. G. Ogoltsova, A. E. Timokhina, E. A. Sergeeva consider the problem of financing inclusive education in a historical perspective. Kononova N. V. sets itself the disclosure of the essence of the process. Kulagina E. V. reveals the socio-cultural aspect. In this article, we consider the main challenges that exist today in the system of financing inclusive education for children with disabilities. The scientific novelty of the research is the development and proposal of measures to ensure financial guarantees for the implementation of inclusive education in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

**3 Purpose of article**

Against the background of a sharp decline in the level of state guarantees for the population, and the experience of social protection of disabled people, including in the

field of education, the problem of changing the principles of teaching disabled people and children with disabilities is being raised. The regulatory framework and analysis of the main aspects of financing educational services for children with disabilities in recent years are presented. Purpose of article is to consider the main challenges and outline financial and legal guarantees for the implementation of inclusive education, to eliminate the main problems in this field.

#### 4 Results

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) clearly articulate the goal of providing quality education for all and the importance of providing the necessary holistic support to develop the potential of every child. Quality education can only be achieved when every child (including the most vulnerable and excluded children) attends school and receives an inclusive quality education that provides them skills they need to live. While inclusive education is a broad concept that includes all groups of children, in this research we will focus specifically on children with disabilities. UNICEF education programs, however, cover all groups of children, with particular attention to children at risk of exclusion from the education system. Disability is not uncommon and it is part of human diversity. It is generally believed that 15 percent of the world's population lives with a disability (WHO, World Bank, 2011).

In 2008, Russia signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which aims the state to ensure inclusive education at all levels and lifelong learning.

It is noted that 15-25 thousand cases of child disability are registered annually in the country. Thus, in 2016, there were 617 thousand disabled children in Russia, in 2018 – 651 thousand, and by January 1, 2019 – already 670 thousand. Many of the diagnoses are associated with congenital anomalies, mental and nervous disorders. Such data are provided by the Ministry of Labor, based on statistics from the Bureau of Medical and Social Expertise (The Federal Bureau of Medical...).

The growth in the number of disabled children is influenced by a set of diverse trends. This is also a global trend towards an increase in the number of children with disabilities, associated, however paradoxical it may seem at first glance, with the success of medicine – the possibilities of neonatal medicine for nursing children with serious pathologies that were previously incompatible with life, the development of pharmacy, complex medical and rehabilitation technologies. The goal is the implementation of long-term targeted programs and strategies aimed at preventing disability, and changes in the procedure for determining disability, and the attitude of people to the fact of establishing disability as a stigmatization that deprives a child of any rights or as an opportunity to enjoy a whole range of social benefits.

In accordance with paragraph 27 of Article 2 of the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation", inclusive education is the provision of equal access to education for all students, taking into account the diversity of special educational needs and individual opportunities. Inclusion in education involves reforming educational institutions so that they meet the needs and requirements of all students without exception. The goal of such a school is to give all

learners the opportunity to have the most complete social life, the most active participation in the team, the local community, thereby ensuring the most complete interaction and care for each other as members of the community.

Inclusive education is about ensuring equal access to education, taking into account the diversity of special educational needs and individual opportunities. The principles of inclusive education state:

- every child has the right to education and should be able to receive and maintain an acceptable level of knowledge;
- each child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs;
- it is necessary to design education systems and implement educational programs in such a way as to take into account the wide variety of these characteristics and needs;
- persons with special educational needs should have access to education in regular schools, which should create conditions for them on the basis of pedagogical methods, primarily aimed at children, in order to meet these needs;
- regular schools with such an inclusive orientation are an effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and providing education for all (Kononova, 2020).

In Russian legislation, in contrast to foreign legislation, disability and health restrictions are different categories of persons. Thus, the status of a disabled child is assigned by the Bureau of Medical and Social Expertise on the basis of disorders of the body's functions, leading to limitation of vital functions. The status to a learner with disabilities is assigned by the PMPK (Psychological, Medical and Pedagogical Commission) on the basis of the existing special educational needs caused by various disorders that impede education without creating special conditions. That is, the category "child with disabilities" is defined not from the point of view of health limitations, but from the point of view of the need to create special conditions for education.

Therefore, it is proposed to describe the name of this category of children as "children with special educational needs". Financing of correctional education of children in accordance with clause 3 of part 1 of article 8 of the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" standard costs for the provision of state or municipal services in the field of education are determined by the state authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation for each level of education in accordance with federal state educational standards for each type and focus (profile) of educational programs, taking into account the forms of education, federal state requirements (if any), the type of educational organization, the network form of implementation of educational programs, educational technologies, special conditions for obtaining education by learners with disabilities, providing additional professional education for pedagogical workers, ensuring safe conditions for training and education, protecting the health of students, as well as taking into account other features of the organization and implementation of educational activities (for various categories of students) provided for by this Federal Law, with the exception of educational activities carried out in accordance with educational standards, per student, unless otherwise provided by this article (Article 99) (Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation"). Thus, the

funding standards for training citizens with disabilities should include the corresponding costs.

The standards are established by the subject of the Russian Federation, so there is a need to refer to the relevant regulatory legal acts of certain region. To what extent the money received in accordance with the standards gives the school the opportunity to provide certain conditions for learning – it is available to find out by contacting the school administration and calculating the costs and funds available to the school.

Since inclusive education is carried out in municipal institutions, its financial support is lower than the financial support for special (correctional) education in public institutions financed directly from regional budgets. In fact, there is an underfunding of inclusive education.

The Russian Federation has introduced normative per capita financing of general education. Taking into account the existing distribution of powers between the constituent entities of the Russian Federation (they allocate subventions for wages and educational expenses in schools) and municipalities (which are in charge of preschool and general education institutions), in practice this means the following. The municipality receives a subvention from the budget of the constituent entity of the Russian Federation for the salaries of school employees and educational expenses, calculated depending on the number of students in the schools of the municipality. The municipality distributes the specified subvention among schools in accordance with its regulations (either on a per capita basis or not). Other expenses, including utilities, are funded directly from the municipal budget.

The ongoing reform of the budgetary process, which implies a transition to a system of state (municipal) assignments and funding not institutions, but services, will not make fundamental changes to the described situation. After the reform, municipalities will continue to receive subventions calculated on a per capita basis and will distribute them in accordance with their regulations. The form of relations between the municipality and the school will change, now the funds allocated to the school will be called "financial support of the municipal assignment." Also, municipal tasks will establish a set of services provided by the school and the requirements for their quality.

The described changes will not be able to have a direct impact on the financial provision of inclusive education for children with disabilities in municipal institutions. The problems of financing the inclusive education of children with disabilities in public schools are determined by two main factors:

1) Methodological approaches used in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation to the calculation of standards for financing general education;

2) The procedure for distributing funding between schools, applied at the municipality level ("bringing the normative principle to the school").

The methodological approaches used in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation to calculate the funding standards for general education in general can be divided into 2 main types:

1. Instructional letter of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation dated June 29, 2006 No. AF – 157/02 "Methodological recommendations for determining the standards of budgetary financing of basic general education program.

The document provides guidance on mechanisms for the transition to regulatory financing. The document recommends the use of the adaptation period. The standard is considered as the cost of implementing an educational program and covers the costs of:

- employees' salaries;
- textbooks and teaching aids, technical teaching aids, consumables;
- utility payments.

2. Letter of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of September 13, 2006 N AF-213/03 "On the preparation and direction of model techniques".

The document provides guidance on mechanisms for the transition to regulatory financing. The document recommends the use of the adaptation period. Initially, it is advisable to take the average expenditure as the value of the regional calculated per capita standard. Correction factors are provided for each municipality and each institution.

Approaches to the calculation of funding standards based on typical staffing tables and model staffing tables have also been developed, but they have not become widespread.

The first approach, described in the Instructional Letter of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of June 29, 2006 No. AF-157/02, contains the possibility of calculating an increased funding standard in the presence of children with disabilities in the school, since it considers the standard as the cost of the corresponding educational program implemented for a certain number of children of a certain category.

The second approach (Letter of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of September 13, 2006 No. AF-213/03) does not contain such a possibility, since it is built on the averaging of actual costs and does not take into account the peculiarities of the educational programs being implemented.

Accordingly, in those regions where the first approach is applied (there were more than 40 such regions in 2009), the methodology for calculating the subvention allows for the calculation of increased funding standards for the education of children with disabilities. However, this does not mean that all regions use this opportunity.

In the second group of regions where averaged standards are applied, the calculation of increased funding standards for the education of children with disabilities is impossible without establishing additional funding standards or enactment special regulations on this issue.

The procedure for distributing funding between schools applied at the municipality level ("bringing the normative principle to the school") differs greatly among the subjects and municipalities of the Russian Federation and does not depend on the procedure for calculating the subvention chosen by the region.

The procedure for the distribution of funding between schools divides in to two groups. In the first group of municipalities, the amount of funds calculated at the regional level on a per capita basis is distributed to schools in the same proportion, depending on the number of students. In the second group of municipalities, the subvention received from the regional budget is redistributed between schools depending on the actual expenditures of the previous period. This method is untenable in that it actually neutralizes the effects of per capita funding: the amount

of resources received by the school does not depend on the number of children.

Effects for the development of inclusive education in the first group: schools that implement inclusive education can lose out if the methodology for calculating the standard does not include additional costs for children with disabilities. In the second group the principle is not reflected in schools implementing inclusive education, since their funding depends on the prevailing costs. But:

a) the admission of a new child with disabilities to school will not affect the amount of funding;

b) chronically underfunded schools persist.

In the first group of municipalities, funding for schools implementing inclusive approaches directly depends on the methodology for calculating the standards chosen by the subject of the Russian Federation. If at the level of the subject, separate increased standards for children with disabilities are calculated, the same funds are transferred to the school. Otherwise, the school receives the same amount for the education of a child with disabilities as for an ordinary student. This creates disincentives for the development of inclusive education at the local level.

The municipalities of the second group, on the one hand, provide funding for the school's expenses. But this is also bad for the development of inclusive education, since: a) the admission of a new child with disabilities to school will not in any way affect the amount of funding; b) chronically underfunded schools remain, which do not have enough resources even to implement the usual set of educational programs.

Financial provision of inclusive education does not require the introduction of fundamentally new models of education financing. In Russia, new models of education financing have been introduced annually since 2004. At the moment, there are 4 main financing models and a large number of their variations, implemented in various regions of the Russian Federation. Moreover, in 2010, the transition to the system of state (municipal) services began, which is also a new financing model. Therefore, the main problem is not in developing new models, but in adapting the current legislation to the needs of children with disabilities.

Russia has a multi-level complex legal system and at this stage of its development, the integration of a new financing model, even at the regional level, affects a large number of existing regulations. The transaction costs of developing and implementing new models may exceed the effect of their implementation. It is much more effective to modify the existing regulatory framework, for example, within the framework of the methodology described in the Instructional Letter of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation No. AF-157/02 dated June 29, 2006, it is possible to calculate the cost of implementing educational programs for persons with disabilities in ordinary institutions and preparation of relevant recommendations for the subjects of the Russian Federation. It should also be noted that in 2007 the Federal Agency for Education carried out research work on the development of a procedure and methodology

for calculating standards for financing educational services for persons with disabilities based on the cost of educational programs. The current system for assessing the effectiveness of budget spending in education contains significant obstacles to the development of inclusive education.

Admitting a child with disabilities to a regular class or creating special classes for children with disabilities in a regular school overestimates the average cost per student and underestimates the average number of students per teacher at the institution and municipality level. Accordingly, the efficiency indicators of budget expenditures are decreasing (the calculation formula is established by law). Municipalities and regions, on the contrary, interested in the growth of performance indicators, thus, are not interested in the development of inclusive education, which reduces these indicators.

Solving the problem requires adjusting the system for calculating the effectiveness of local authorities and adjusting the methods for calculating the amount of educational subventions.

## 5 Conclusions

Thus, in order to provide financial guarantees for the implementation of inclusive education, it is necessary to take the following measures:

1. To stimulate the adoption by the regions of normative acts establishing the procedure for calculating higher standards for financial support of educational activities, taking into account the additional costs of teaching children with disabilities.

2. To stimulate the establishment by municipalities of the procedure for financial support of municipal assignments to educational institutions, which provides for the financing of educational services for children with disabilities in an increased amount in accordance with regional standards ("bringing the standard to the level of the institution"). To organize a high-quality educational process, specially trained pedagogical staff, psychologists, specialists in special education, tutors and others are needed. Changes must also take place at the value level – gradually an inclusive culture will develop in schools, as in society as a whole. In the development of an inclusive culture, education, informing society, in particular, schoolchildren and their parents, overcoming negative stereotypes and building tolerance play an important role.

Children with disabilities have common needs – health, well-being, economic and social security, learning and skills development, and community life. These needs should not be met in specialized and segregated services, but in an inclusive environment. In doing so, it is necessary to take into account the diversity of children with disabilities and disabilities, which requires effective management, trained personnel and financial support. It is important to ensure in practice the implementation of the conceptual provisions declared in the strategic documents of recent years.

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