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**MOTIVATION OF CANDIDATES FOR FOSTER CARERS AS A
FACTOR IN THE SUCCESSFUL CREATION OF A FOSTER CARER'S
FAMILY**

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The introduction of the foster care service in Ukraine is conditioned by the priorities defined in the legislation of raising a child in a safe family environment, the creation of support services for families with children in the community. For the effectiveness of the provision of foster care services, it is important to conduct an initial selection of candidates for foster carers, to study their motivation.

The goal of this article is to study the features and justification of the role of motivation of candidates for foster carers in the process of creating a family of foster carers. Theoretical (analysis of the literature to determine the starting points of the study) and empirical methods (questionnaires, surveys, standardized interviews) were used to solve the tasks.

On the basis of researches by scientists and practitioners the peculiarities of motivation of surrogate families and classification of motives are determined. A study of the motivation of candidates for foster carers and members of their families has been conducted, identified the most common fears of candidates that affect their motivation, identified levels of formation of professionally significant motives.

Keywords: selection of candidates for foster carers, motivation, foster care service, foster carer, fears.

Introduction. The priority of raising a child in the family is one of the basic principles of family law in Ukraine. However, parents are not always able to provide the child with safe living conditions, to meet their needs. Support services for families with children in the community will help them restore their own parental potential, reduce vulnerability, and overcome difficult life circumstances. The foster care service ensures the right of a child temporarily removed from the family to live in a family environment, their right to receive educational and medical services, and the restoration of social roles.

Prerequisite for the introduction of foster care services in Ukraine were ratified international standards, which set priorities for the introduction of social services for families with children at the community level, the principle of decision-making in the best interests of the child, creating a system of family education for children deprived of parental attention.

The are benefits of providing a foster care service not only for the child transferred to the foster family, his or her parents, but for the community itself as well. In the process of providing a foster care service, the level of mentally traumatic influence on the child decreases during the transfer from their family to the foster carer's family, because they remain living in their community, as close as possible to friends, relatives, parents, social environment; receive quality care, education, educational and medical, rehabilitation services.

At this time, the child's family receives social support services in accordance with certain needs, develops / restores their own parenting skills, has the opportunity to meet with the child, communicate with them, spend time together.

The community, by developing and implementing this service, reduces the risk of children entering institutional care, creates conditions for early intervention, provides support and assistance to families with children according to identified needs.

For the successful functioning of the institute of foster care it is important to increase the potential of foster carers through professional selection and training of candidates for foster carers. One of the important stages in the selection of candidates is to study their motivation to start a foster family.

Analysis of recent research and publications. E. Ilyin, V. Kovalyov, O. Kulchytska, B. Lomov, N. Lytvynova, V. Molyako, N. Morozova, S. Rubinstein, O. Sosnyuk, P. Shavira, V. Shadrikov and others have thoroughly studied the motivation and structure of the motivational sphere of personality. Peculiarities of motivation, its influence on the functioning of various forms of substitute family care were reviewed by scientists S. Arkhipov, O. Bezpalko, G. Bevz, I. Zvereva, A. Kapska, N. Krasnova, V. Martynova, V. Mukhina, V. Oslon, P. Pavlenok, J. Petrochko, I. Pesha, J. Raikus, N. Tolstykh, R. Hughes, A. Yaroshenko. However, the motivation of foster carers and its features have not been studied in detail.

The goal of this article is to analyze and substantiate the role and features of motivation of candidates for foster carers in the process of creating a family of foster carers.

Presentation of the main research material. Motivation, as noted by N. Morozova (Morozova, 2005), encourages activity, occupies a leading place in the structure of personality behavior and denotes a set of external and internal conditions that motivate the subject to activity [6, 75-84]. Therefore, the professional activity of an individual depends on what their motivation is. It is especially important to identify and study the motivation of candidates for foster carers, as children will be relocated to their families in

the process of providing foster care services. And the quality and effectiveness of the service depends on the reason the candidates chose to start a foster family.

Substantiating the importance of motivation, P. Shavira (Shavira, 1981) noted that the motive is organically linked to the content and process of activity, it provides constant attention to activity, encourages people to evaluate themselves, their own knowledge, skills and moral qualities in the context of the requirements of this activity [8]. Researcher O. Sosniuk (Sosniuk, 2006) notes that motivation can ensure the harmonious implementation of tasks and promote self-disclosure of the professional's personality [8, 86].

External and internal motives are distinguished by V. Molyako, O. Kulchytska, N. Lytvynova (Molyako, Kulchytska, Lytvynova, 1995). Thus, scientists attribute recognition, enrichment, arousal to external motives and believe that such motives do not contribute to the satisfaction of professional activity. If a person is guided by internal motives in the process of professional activity, then their motivations are aimed at finding something new, unknown, unusual, they seek to solve various problem situations in a non-standard way and enjoy the activity [5, 82].

Scientists and practitioners have studied the motivation of foster families, its impact on the functioning of such a family, its success. Thus, A. Yaroshenko (Yaroshenko, 2016) singles out motivational complexes for deciding to become foster parents, namely: harmonious, altruistic, religious, normative, pragmatic, egocentric [11, 37-42].

S. Markova and O. Podolska studied the influence of the value orientations of foster parents on the process of adaptation of orphans in a foster family (Markova, Podolska, 2016). The researchers concluded that the constructive motivation of foster parents to adopt and raise a child in the family is determined by their value orientations, which further determines

the success of the adaptations process of the child. Researchers also identified three groups of constructive motivation, in particular: creating a family (the need to realize themselves as parents, to have a large and friendly family, to achieve harmony in the family); helping the child (the desire to take care of the child and prepare them for adult life; to develop the child's personality and make them happy, not to compare with other children and not to take into account their past); compensation for the consequences of their own child mental trauma (attempts of foster parents to compensate for their own unsuccessful childhood experience, ensuring a successful childhood for the orphan) [3, 52-55].

Scientists and practitioners in the course of research distinguish different groups of motives, but most often these are constructive, destructive, altruistic, pragmatic motives. Thus, V. Martynova (Martynova 2004) refers to the destructive motives the need to procreate (infertility, the inability of a married couple to have children), to the altruistic – the desire to protect the child, to help them, to create good living conditions for them and so on. The scientist pays special attention to this motive of a married couple to adopt a child into the family – the restoration of the emptiness of life due to the loss of the child, their death. Such a motive, according to the scientist, can provoke an exacerbation of psychological trauma in adults, such a couple needs mental help and support. The pragmatic motives that stimulate a married couple to adopt a child are the desire to improve their financial situation, to receive certain material benefits. To the same group of motives, she includes the desire to adopt children in order to help run the household [4].

Based on the analysis of the activities of foster families in Germany, Vakker (Vakker, 2013) identifies the following groups of motives for creating a foster family: the desire to help raise children of friends; the desire to pass on the positive experience of raising foster children to other generations;

desire to realize humanistic worldviews; desire to compensate for infertility; the desire to neutralize the «empty nest syndrome» (when native children have grown up and live their lives away from their parents); desire to self-realize as an educator [2, 29-32].

T. Shulga (Shulga, 2018), according to motivation, distinguishes the following types of foster families: foster parents with a clear parental (maternal) attitude to children; motivated by satisfying activities; professional teachers motivated by altruism; romantics, for which the upbringing of children is an opportunity for self-realization; those who want to get the maximum amount of material goods and create good conditions for displaced children; those who seek to assert themselves in any way are motivated to realize the need for power over others [10, 55-65].

V. Oslon (Oslon, 2006) identified the following set of motives for adopting a child: the absence of their own children; desire to be no worse than others; continuation of family traditions; desire to help a child from a boarding school; filling the void after losing your own child; filling the void after their own children have grown up and left home; desire to help at least one child; hope for help in old age; solving financial problems through payments and monetary rewards; desire to influence the relationship with any member of the family, the restoration of relations; the desire to correct their own unsuccessful parenting experience [7].

The transfer of a child to a foster family, as in an adoptive family, involves changes in the family system, the reconciliation of one's own expectations and real events. In the foster care, in contrast to the adoptive family, the children stay temporarily for a period of 3 to 6 months, they maintain a safe relationship with their biological family, so the motives of the candidates will be somewhat different, but in many respects similar. The inconsistency of motivation and the expected situation with the real one is a

very important factor of maladaptation and destruction of the family system, inefficient performance of the tasks of the foster care service.

Based on the research of scientists, we conclude that the motivation of candidates is important for the creation of a foster family, its functioning; the focus of motivation on moving children to their families largely determines the success of rehabilitation activities.

Research to determine the motivation of adults to adopt a child into their family has allowed us to group them into the following groups: selfless motives, when adults are willing to help children, understand their needs; socially-oriented motives, when adults are motivated by service, the desire to commit an act of charity; pragmatic motives are based on personal interests and needs, such as improving one's financial situation, «completing one's retirement» and so on.

We refer the first and second groups of motives to constructive motives, because the choice is based on such needs as recognition, desire to act, contribute to life, respect, self-affirmation, «service», active life position, desire to help children and so on. Destructive motives include pragmatically motivated motives, which may be based on losses, compensation for the absence of their own children, the consequences of psychological trauma, children's psychological trauma, improvement of financial situation, saving the marriage, and so on. Also, destructive motivation can arise under the influence of feelings, emotions, social advertising, when candidates for foster care seeks to protect the child from «their bad parents», give the child everything they cannot get in their own family, the need for radical change and more. This causes pity for children and does not allow them to objectively understand their own resources for providing the service.

Candidates' motivation is influenced by fear of change in their lives, relationships with their own children, often based on fears of myths about

the «genetic heredity of a child's bad behavior», his mental health; they are afraid of the «massacre» of the child's biological parents, and so on. Typically, in the process of training these fears disappear, but their presence affects the motivation of candidates.

Another important point in the motivation of candidates is the consistency of motives of all family members who live with them in the same apartment, and if the foster carer is motivated and his assistant is negative about the decision, considers it a whim, the effectiveness of rehabilitation will be low due to the inconsistency of the educational impact on the child, the environment in the family of the foster parent, the psychological atmosphere will not always contribute to the rehabilitation of the child, the restoration of its social ties. Equally important is the willingness of biological children to have other children in the family, and their parents will spend much of their time with them.

Assessment of professionally significant motives of the candidate for foster carers and his assistant, the readiness of their children to start a foster carer family, was carried out on the basis of a specially designed questionnaire based on the analysis and classification of motives for foster care, developed by V. Oslon [7]. To clarify the motivation of the foster parent and his assistant to the rehabilitation activity, we adapted a standardized interview, developed on the basis of materials by V. Oslon, D. Raikus, R. Hughes. To determine the motivation of candidates for foster carers to provide patronage services, the following levels were distinguished: creative (high), productive (medium) and reproductive (low).

Creative (high level) involves the formation of candidates' constructive motives, which are agreed with his assistant, family members. Candidates may have minor concerns about future activities, which are due to a lack of awareness of the content of the foster care service.

At the productive (medium) level, the formation of candidates is mainly characterized by constructive motives; they are partially aware of the changes that may take place in their lives; one of the candidates is interested, while the assistant partially understands their participation in the process of providing foster care services. Candidates have fears about future activities.

To the reproductive (low level) we include candidates and their assistants, who have formed mostly destructive motives for creating a foster family, they have many fears about future activities.

Diagnostic of adolescents' personal readiness for temporary placement of children in their family was conducted according to a developed questionnaire. The methodic is developed on the basis of the analysis of psychological characteristics of teenage children, the detailed description of the properties diagnosed was made, those qualities and features which promote formation of readiness are allocated. For this purpose, the selection of synonyms and antonyms for this characteristic was carried out. This allowed us to compile a thesaurus of characteristics, which later helped to determine the direction of the questions.

We identified three levels of adolescent readiness: high, medium, and low. If we talk about direct questions that can be asked to adolescents, then, as experience shows, they do not always give the truthful answer. The low efficiency of direct questions is due to feelings of fear of punishment or condemnation for the answer, which does not coincide with the generally accepted norm. Therefore, we used projective situations to study the readiness of adolescents for temporary placement of children in their families.

When providing foster care services, the main role is carried out by the foster carer, his assistant provides him with support, assistance, and joins this process if necessary. They also pass together selection in order to

become potential candidates, training in the program of preparing foster carers, therefore, in the process of determining the level of readiness for rehabilitation activities in the study involved candidates for foster carers and their assistants, children aged 10 to 18 years, living with the candidate.

The study of the levels of motivation of candidates for foster carers to provide foster care services was conducted throughout 2017-2020 during the initial selection. The study involved 108 people from Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kirovohrad, Zhytomyr, Cherkasy, Kharkiv, Sumy, Ternopil regions, including: 54 people – candidates for foster carers, 54 people – assistants of foster carers; 36 children of candidates for foster carers.

The majority of respondents are women. Thus, in the group of candidates for foster care 93% of respondents are women, 7% are men; in the group of assistants to foster carers – 72% are males, 28% are females. The following groups have been singled out among the assistants of foster carers: 12% – adult children of the candidate for foster carers; 8% – one of the parents of the candidate who lives with him in the same apartment; 70% are husbands and only 7% are wives of candidates for foster carers. By age, respondents are distributed as follows: up to 30 years old – 5%, from 31 to 40 years old – 11%, from 41 to 50 years old – 33%, over 50 years old – 51%.

The presented data show that the majority of candidates for foster carers are aged 40 and over, which confirms the thesis that people who have expressed a desire to become foster carers have already had professional experience, raising their own children and their decision is conscious and thoughtful.

To study the level of motivation of candidates for foster carers and their assistants, we analyzed the results of the survey «Diagnosis of professionally significant motives of the candidate for foster carers and his assistant» and a standardized interview.

The level of *formation of professionally significant motives* is as follows: 60 people, which is 55.5% of the total number of respondents formed professionally significant motives, they mainly have motives aimed at the child's self-worth, altruism. 28 people (25.9%) mostly have professional constructive motives and only 20 people (18.5%) have destructive motives, which are partly related to selfish private and financial benefits.

Based on the results of a standardized interview, we identified a difference in the levels of motivation of candidates for foster carers and their assistants. Thus, out of 54 candidates for foster carers, 32 people (59%) have formed professionally important motives at a high level. This shows that the candidates, deciding to become foster carers, approach this issue consciously, the main motive is the desire to help children and their families, to provide them with warmth and support, help.

To the question «*Why did you decide to become a foster parent?*» they gave answers that they want to help vulnerable children as a foster carer, have the example of their own parents, who are adoptive parents, foster parents from a family-type orphanage. It is worth highlighting a group of respondents who consider their main motive to be the desire to help children, because their children have already grown up and left their home, the so-called «empty nest» motive.

16 people (29.5%) have separate motives, candidates are aware of their responsibilities as foster carers, they believe that they should help children, take care of them, bring them up, but they believe that this is their sense of duty. They say that they can provide care and upbringing for the child, his rehabilitation, because it is their duty, service.

6 people (11%) consider the main motive the possibility of employment, as there are no jobs in the community. Some of them said that they have not decided yet, but want to help orphans, think about how to do it, so they decided to start a foster family. They also did not understand the essence of

the service itself, did not understand that one or several children of different ages could be transferred to their family, and were not ready for that.

Candidates for foster care assistants are less motivated, in particular: 28 people (52%) are aware of the new role and are ready to help the foster carer, convinced that their role is important and understand it. 12 people (22%) want to help children, foster carers, but are not fully aware of their role and motivation, respectively. 14 people (26%) do not understand their role in providing patronage services, do not know which families and children are provided with the service, and are afraid that these families may endanger the lives of people close to them.

In order to determine the extent to which family members are aware of their future professional activities and ready to support their parents, a survey of 36 children of candidates for foster care was conducted and the following results were obtained: 29 people (80%) understand and support their parents' choices to provide foster care services, ready for temporary placement of foreign children in their family; 6 adolescents (17%) are generally ready for temporary placement of foreign children in their family, but sometimes they have doubts because of the generally accepted opinion in society; 1 teenager (3%) is not ready for temporary placement of foreign children in his family, stated that he does not want anyone to take his belongings, his parents paying more attention to them rather than to him.

The respondents' concerns about their future professional activities were revealed during the survey. All the voiced fears of the candidates and their assistants can be combined into groups: fear of negative perception by the immediate environment, society; fears about future activities; fears about children displaced into the family and their family environment. The results of the survey of respondents are presented in Fig. 1.

Candidates for a foster family are concerned about how to prepare the family and social environment for the immediate arrival of children in the

family. Such fears were expressed during the survey by 15 (28%) candidates for foster carers and 17 (31%) of their assistants. Naturally, such fears are understandable, because society is ambivalent about adoptive families, family-type orphanages, and they have almost no information about foster families at all. We conditionally divided the fears and anxieties of this category into two groups: how to prepare the immediate family environment (own children, grandchildren, parents of the couple, etc.) before the candidates plan to provide foster care services; how to explain to neighbors, school staff, kindergarten, hospital about the temporary appearance of children in the family.

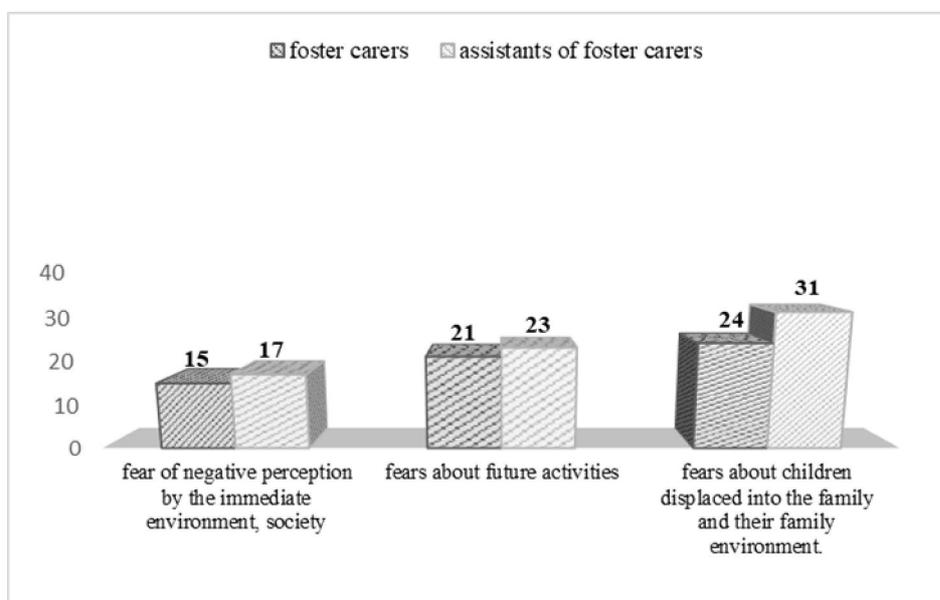


Fig. 1. Fears of candidates and their assistants identified in the standardized interview process, 108 people

Fears related to the future activities of foster carers and their assistants are formed due to lack of understanding of foster care services, rehabilitation activities, insecurity of their own resources (creating a foster family is a very global change in life and affects all areas of candidates). Among the candidates for foster carers we interviewed, 21 people (39%) said about them, and almost as many of their assistants noted that they had such fears (23 people, 42%). Here are the typical fears and anxieties of the

candidates: I will not be able to help the child; I have no knowledge to support a child; I will not be able to help the child in education, etc.

The most common group of concerns of candidates are fears about displaced children and their family environment, which were mentioned during the survey by 24 candidates for foster carers (44%) and 31 people from among their assistants (57%). Their fears are related to the child's health and development, heredity, mental disorders, and deviant behavior.

For example, candidates' fears about children: *«A sick child will come to us and we will not be informed about it»; «A child can seduce a man, our children, because it is unknown what were they doing in their own family», «What to do if a child smokes, drinks alcohol?». Concerns about the biological families of displaced children are the most complex and widespread. «The child's parents will come to us and break the windows», «The child's father will come and beat the kid», «The child will run away with their parents, what can we do then?».*

Nine candidates for foster carers (17%) said in an interview that they had no fears and that they hoped to get all the answers to their questions during their studies. They also noted that, if necessary, they could always seek the help of specialists who would arrange the child for foster care. Among the assistants there are only 3 such people (5%). If we analyze the responses of married couples (candidate and foster carers and his assistant), then out of 54 couples, only one has no fears about future activities.

Conclusions. Thus, examining the presence of professionally significant motives, we can conclude that most candidates for foster carers and their assistants (55.5% – creative level, 25.9% – productive level), they are formed, dominated by constructive motives, they are consistent with others family members. Only 20 people (18.5%) have destructive motives, which are partly related to selfish private and financial benefits.

It is important to take into account the peculiarities of candidates' motivation, their fears related to future activities, when organizing training under the foster care training program, psychologist consultations provided during training, writing recommendations to foster care candidates and their assistants based on selection results and teaching.

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