

# The Peculiarities of Senior Preschool Children's Representations of Family in Russian and Khakass Ethnic Groups

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## **Le peculiarità delle rappresentazioni del concetto di famiglia nei bambini della scuola dell'infanzia dei gruppi etnici della Russia e della Repubblica di Khakassia**

This article presents the results of a study on Khakass and Russian preschool children's representations of family and family relations in the Republic of Khakassia. The data obtained reflect modern children's specific perception of a family as their micro-environment. The article demonstrates the differences in preschoolers' representations based on their ethno-cultural family affiliation. The research proved the high importance of traditional family arrangement and the value of family. The results identified that the Khakass children have the idea of the indispensable link between the young and old generations involving large relations within the extended family, while Russian children expressed the idea of a predominantly scaled down and closed nature of relations within family.

Questo articolo presenta i risultati di uno studio circa le rappresentazioni sulla famiglia e le relazioni familiari dei bambini della scuola dell'infanzia in Russia e nella Repubblica della Khakassia. I dati ottenuti riflettono la percezione specifica dei bambini odierni sulla famiglia come proprio micro ambiente. L'articolo dimostra le differenze nelle rappresentazioni dei soggetti prescolari sulla base della loro appartenenza etnico-culturale. La ricerca conferma la grande importanza della struttura familiare tradizionale e del valore della famiglia. I risultati dimostrano che i bambini khakassi hanno un'idea della necessità del legame intergenerazionale che comporta un ampio spettro di relazioni all'interno della famiglia allargata, mentre i bambini russi esprimono la percezione di un contesto relazionale più ristretto e ravvicinato all'interno della famiglia di origine.

**Keywords:** Representations of family; Preschool age children; Russian ethnos; Khakass ethnos; Khakass folk traditions.

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## 1 Introduction

Family is the basis of a child's growing up and formation. It is defined as a natural part of a person's life. Everybody needs a family, regardless of their age.

According to various social sciences that study family, it comprises such components as blood kinship, a certain range of family duties, special relationships among family members performing their educational function in relation to the younger generation.

From the standpoint of sociology and pedagogy, family is the first social community (group) in a person's life. "A person experiences the first social interaction in the family. Family prepares a child for life. It is a child's first and deepest source of social ideals. It is in the family that most children learn what it means to be a father or a mother, and how family relationships develop. Here he sees the world for the first time and tries to understand and comprehend it" (Aptikieva, Aptikiev & Bursakova, 2014, p. 185).

The concept of family is defined, first of all, as a small social group, which is bound by special intergroup relations and performs certain functions. It is in the family that a child accumulates social experience, assimilates values, traditions, and relations among people, behavior rules, and involvement in the world of culture. Family forms values such as domesticity, self-identification with the kin, orientation towards family, as well as its values and traditions. Therefore it is important and necessary to form a preschooler's understanding of the family world and its values.

The problem of family and upbringing has always been relevant and considered by foreign and domestic psychologists and sociologists who touched upon the problems of family relations. While studying various cultural types of family and family relationships in crisis, they systematically highlighted the issues of marriage, divorce, upbringing, family crises (Boss, Bryant & Mancini, 2016), interpersonal and intergenerational relations in a family (Day, 2014), the dependence of changes in children's behavior on those in the family structure (Ryan & Claessens, 2013), the peculiarities of children's representation of family (Howard et al., 2017; King et al., 2015; Qiu, 2013; Sharif et al., 2018; Sonnette et al., 2009; White, 2015).

In particular, the work of King, Boyd, and Thorsen (2015) depicts the relationship of an adolescent's relationship to his stepfather from the point of view of mother-teenage relationships in the family.

Works revealing the peculiarities of children's representations of the surrounding world and families of different ethnic groups are of special interest to this research. A group of authors (Qiu, Schvaneveldt & Sahin, 2013; White, 2015) show the influence of children's literature on the peculiarities of children's representations of the surrounding world and family in different countries.

The next direction in the research of family relationships is related to the study of family conflicts. Day R. D. examines the strategies and behaviours of parents and children in family conflicts.

Studies in the field of children-parents relationships in the formation of family values are of particular importance. Researchers of Sonnette, Patrick, Sturge-Apple and Cummings (2009) showed the dependence of a child's adaptation to school on the child-parent relationships in the family (White, 2015). Howard et al. (2017) described the use of drawing tests aimed at studying parents' relationships to their relatives and adopted children. Raby Kenneth Lee and Dozier Mary (2019) studied the nature of adopted children's attachment to adoptive parents throughout their life in comparison with biological children.

The analysis of foreign and domestic studies shows that the works devoted to the problems of family and family values generally touch upon the relationships between parents and adolescents. There are extremely few works devoted to the peculiarities of the formation and development of family values among preschool children. The mission of the research is to fill in the existing scientific gap.

The significant point within this research is that family is an universal inherent value; every person is free to choose a partner for starting a family and a value attitude to bring up their child.

Russian research of family and family relations (Ushinsky, 1974; Lesgaft, 2000) is characterized by the recognition of a mother's leading role in the formation of personality and the importance of an extended family traditionally consisting of parents, grandparents, and any other relative (Ushinsky, 1974; Mustafaeva, 2015). The following idea of academician G.N. Volkov (2003; 2010) presently acquires particular relevance: "Without love for one's family, one's clan, tribe, tribal union, and without pride in the historical past, the peoples would not have been able to maintain their ethnic independence"

(Shkhakhutova, 2015, p. 50). In the works of various researchers, it is possible to trace the idea that upbringing a child in a complete family gives them a sense of security, helps to form ideas about themselves and the model of a “proper” reliable family (Ivanikhin, 2017; Kolomiychenko, Voronova, 2013; Lapshina, 2010; Mustafaeva, 2015).

Russian educators revealed multiple interrelated functions of family that all together provide for an individual's fully fledged upbringing and development. Along with this, at the present stage of the development of scientific knowledge about family, it is necessary to pay due attention to the global processes that take place in the society and affect family and family relations. These global processes include a decrease in the reproductive function, changes in family composition, renouncement of legal relations, and transition to a new family model.

In such circumstances, when faced with the realities of a modern family, a preschool child of the 21st century desperately needs pedagogical supervision to formulate correct ideas about family as a source of educating morality and human values based on popular traditions and social value norms. In this regard, studies of family traditions and the family arrangement acquires particular relevance among various ethnic groups residing on the territory of the Russian Federation, including small indigenous peoples (Bureeva & Gorbunova, 2017; Butanaev, 1996; Mustafaeva, 2015; Toburchinova, 2003; Tokmova, 2016).

The Khakass, an indigenous people of the Republic of Khakassia, currently account for 12% of the total multinational region. The turn of the 20th-21st centuries saw negative tendencies in the development and identity preservation of the Khakass ethnoses. There is an active assimilation of the indigenous population due to the number of mixed marriages. The Khakass language surrenders its social functions. Traditions and customs are forgotten, and the ethnic identity is undergoing a change. At the same time, it is possible to observe a positive tendency that is mastering of various professions by the Khakass and an increase in the level of education among the indigenous population.

The relevance of this research is substantiated by the need to study the peculiarities of the representation of family that children aged 6–7 have being brought up in Russian and Khakass families of the polyethnic Republic of Khakassia considering modern context. So far there have been no studies on the aspect of family education and the formation of modern Khakass children's family values.

The purpose of this work is to define the peculiarities of senior preschool children's representation of family in Russian and Khakass families.

The theoretical framework of this research implies socio-cultural concept of family as a small group and a social and cultural community (Antonov, 2077; Golod, 2008; Gurko, 2017); the socio-psychological approach to family (Akulova, 2017; Aleksandrova & Ishutina, 2016), and the specific scientific approach to the education of senior preschool-age children based on the recognition of the inherent value of pre-school childhood (Berezina, 2014; Kolomiychenko & Voronova, 2013; Dybina et al., 2011).

The scientific significance of this research lies in the fact that it provides the clarification and systematization of empirical data on the peculiarities of senior preschool children's representation of family in different ethnic groups, which, in general, is a contribution to the development of comparative family pedagogy and pre-school education in a multi-ethnic environment.

The results of the research will contribute to a more in-depth study of the psychological and pedagogical support for preschool children and their families in a multi-ethnic environment, as well as to the expansion of information about the peculiarities of Russian and Khakass preschool children's representations of family and family values. The main research findings can be juxtaposed with the theoretical provisions of axiological, culturological, and ethno-pedagogical approaches on family values.

The practical significance of the research consists in the development and approbation of diagnostic materials aimed at studying the families and family values of preschool children of different ethnic groups.

## 2 Literature Review

Representations have an exceptional place in the mental life of a preschool child. S.L. Rubinshtein (2007) noted the uniqueness of the child's psyche and linked its development directly with representa-

tions as the dominant psychic form in this period of childhood. A child thinks with representations, includes them in the cognition of reality, reflects and uses them to form the image of the world.

According to N.I. Demidova (2003), children's representations include the "image of family" as a subsystem of the "image of the world."

Based on her conclusions that children perceive family as an organization with layers in its structure, categoricity, and prognosticities, subsequent studies sustain the influence of the "family image" on the formation of both child-parent relations and the future parental position and as an adult behavior in their own family.

T.A. Berezina (2014) notes that children's perception of family is often formed spontaneously. Scholars identified such qualitative characteristics of children's perception of family as fragmentation, inaccuracy, poverty of sentiment, and often inconsistency of reality and fantasy.

In a family, a child who is immersed in a living volative environment, observes the behavior and actions of their parents, adopts their system of values, judgments about people and events, behavior and pattern of relationship between their parents. This way, a child is gradually forming their own idea of family relations and developing a system of value orientations to their home, family and relatives.

Relying on the works of T.A. Kulikova (2000), T.A. Markova (1981), and L.V. Kolomiychenko (2013) which reveal the conditions and ways of forming preschool children's interests and attachments, the authors of this research consider that the main peculiarity of preschool childhood is the fact that a child perceives their parents as a role model to emulate and a basis for the concept of family (Kolomiychenko & Voronova, 2013). In her works O.V. Dybina identifies the defining parameters of a role model that contributes to the formation of preschool children's representation of family (Dybina, 2009, p. 190):

- productivity, which implies compliance with requirements and stimulates a child's desire to emulate an adult in their behavior;
- «compositional completeness» that implies taking into account children's age and individual characteristics, relying on the experience of a child's perception of their family, and involving a child in the traditions, norms and cultural patterns of their people and family;
- the personal component of a child's activity, which manifests itself in such significant qualities as kindness, care, responsibility, and justice that can only be acquired in everyday practice.

It is effective to use the following aspects to analyze the senior preschool-age children's representation of family:

- motivational (interest in the family; importance of the family for a child);
- cognitive (a child's knowledge about his family and relatives; roles of family members);
- emotional (a child's feelings in connection with family events);
- personal (understanding of one's place in the family, as well as the present and future family roles).

N.I. Demidova (2013) singles out two basis components of the "family image" in a preschooler's mind: compositional (denotative) and value (connotative). In the structure of the compositional aspect of the "family image," the researcher includes the family structure, which determines a child's living space in the family (practices and traditions established in the family, housework, family duties, leisure, and family relations).

The emotional component implies the connotative, evaluative aspect of the "family image" and is manifested in the preservation of family ties and the process of a child's communication with close and distant relatives. It is necessary to emphasize the fact that as early as at preschool age, a child can realize the importance of family for themselves and their place in it (Demidova, 2003).

Thus, the analysis of psychological and pedagogical works confirms the importance of forming representations of a family image in children of preschool age. Psychological research reveals the peculiarities of a child's perception of family relations, as well studying child-parents relations and their influence on the formation of a preschooler's personality. Pedagogical works contain an integral system of the

formation of preschool children's representations of family from the standpoint of the historical, ethno-cultural, and personality-activity approaches.

The centuries-old experience of mankind has shown the importance of familiarizing children with the culture of their people since the reference to the fatherly heritage fosters respect and pride in the land we live on. In this regard, the views of preschool-age children on the family, its role and importance in the modern world are of great scientific interest.

Both in the traditional patriarchal and contemporary understandings of family, the peculiarities of a Russian family arrangement are revealed in the scientific literature on ethnography, sociology, culturalology, as well as family psychology and pedagogy. Studies emphasize that a Russian family arrangement presupposed the dominant position of a husband, general management of the household by all family members, feasible participation of children in the life support of the family, a clear hierarchy of family relations, where the youngsters unquestioningly obey the elders, and the presence of three generations (grandparents, parents, children). A Russian patriarchal family adhered to a cultural mindset that every person should start a family and fulfill family responsibilities. All violations of this mindset were perceived disapprovingly. Modern families demonstrate the increasing refuse to legally confirm marriage, the image of a "strong" mother as the breadwinner and thus the performer of the family head, as well as numerical reduction of the family (the presence of two generations and a small number of children) (Lapshina, 2010).

Before analyzing the preschool children's representation of family in Khakass families, it is necessary to refer to the basic provisions that reveal the peculiarities of the composition, traditions, and functions of a Khakass family represented in the works of V.Y. Butanaev (1996), O.G. Toburchinova (2003). It is necessary to point out that there are very few pedagogical studies on this topic.

In the way of life of a Khakass family, the first unifying principle is related to all family members' adherence to family traditions. "The Khakass people have their own cycle of holidays and rituals connected with the reception of a new person into society: *Кин тойы* (Kin toyi) (the holiday of the dropped off umbilical cord and burial of after birth); *Пизик тойы* (Pizik toyi) (the holiday of placing a baby in a cradle); *Пала тойы* (Pala toyi) (name day); *Ымай тойы* (Ymai toyi) (a holiday in honor of goddess Umai); *Тис тойы* (Tis toyi) (the feast of the eruption of the first tooth); *Киспек тойы* (Kispek toyi) (the feast of the fist cutting of hair), as well as the the fetter cutting rite (when a child takes his first independent steps)" (Butanaev, 1996; Under the Cover of Goddess Umai, 2017).

As in families of any people, when raising a child in a family, the Khakass have addressed to the apt folk word and used lullabies, proverbs, sayings, riddles, tales, and teachings. "A Khakass family did not have the custom of physically punishing children. It was believed that due to the lack of life experience, a child is allowed to make mistakes and correct them himself" (Toburchinova, 2003).

It is necessary to point out that there was one person in each family to observe the process of children's upbringing. Most often, the oldest man in the house performed this role. There was no time to expressly teach something to children. They often learned everything in the process of labour by imitating adults (Tokmova, 2016, p. 13).

Another distinguishing feature of Khakass traditions is honoring the elders. From the cradle, a child was taught to honour ancestors and respect the elderly, not to interfere in adults' conversations, to service the weak, the infirm, and the elderly, and not to expect praise.

In a traditional Khakass family physical labour is an effective method of education. Researchers note clear division of responsibilities among parents, and children's feasible participation and early inclusion in the family life and agricultural work as an integral part of family life.

Since ancient times the Khakass have lived in unity with nature; therefore, the value of nature is a priority in a Khakass family. It was nature that taught wisdom to the Khakass people, brought up a sense of harmony, and formed religious ideas. Accordingly there have been functioning ethnic traditions with rituals of worshipping objects of nature, and the Universe (the Sun Day; holiday of birds; consecration of the ancestral tree, mountains).

In the upbringing of children the Khakass have always referred to folk pedagogy based on the knowledge accumulated from the lives of their ancestors. Researchers express the opinion that "going through difficult historical times, the Khakass could survive only because they preserved their traditions, mutual

assistance in any life situations: in joy and trouble, in the construction of yurts, and much more” (Toburchinova, 2003).

Among the traditions of the Khakass people O.G. Toburchinova (2003) emphasizes their system of raising young children, worship of nature, respect for the elders, care for the younger, mutual assistance and upbringing of diligence. In a Khakass family the example of the elders has always been a powerful educational factor. «Whatever they learn in the nest, they do in flight».

Summarizing the theoretical review, it is possible to conclude that in a Khakass family value orientations have the following peculiarities: a careful attitude to a child, honor and respect of the elders, respect for one's kin, preservation of national and family traditions, a rigorous upbringing of children with respect to the individual; a careful attitude to the environment and nature; teaching of diligence, development of household management skills; concern for the preservation of the native language and encouragement to study it; care for the health and spiritual development of a child. However, these traditions were gradually forgotten or remained unclaimed, which gave rise to multiple problems related to the upbringing of the younger generation, including modern parents' refusal to teach the Khakass language to their children, a lack of understanding national traditions and customs.

### 3 Methods

In order to reveal the peculiarities of senior preschool children's representation of family in the Russian and Khakass ethnic groups, the authors conducted an empirical study in preschool educational institutions in the Republic of Khakassia. The study involved 45 Russian and 45 Khakass children living in urban areas.

As research methods, the authors chose interview and conversation, as well as the comparative method. There were also techniques of the research, which comprise O.V. Dybina's projective techniques «Drawing My Family» and «Who Lives in the House»; L.V. Kolomyichenko's standardized technique «Conversation about Family», and conversation about family traditions based on an authorship questionnaire.

The authors of this research used the criteria and levels proposed by O.V. Dybina as criteria and levels of the formation of family perceptions that children aged 6–7 years have.

The cognitive component includes:

- the representation of the world of family. Family is when there are both adults and children. Family is when everybody loves, respects, and takes care of one another. Family is when everybody performs tasks, has responsibilities, and works with the others. Family is when everybody rest, play, and celebrate together. Family is when everybody has rights;
- the representation of the past of the family world (a family pedigree, traditions, the family's coat of arms, and customs passed down from generation to generation);
- the representation that the family world is progressing (its composition is increasing, new members appear);
- the representation of the links between family members. For example, my mother is my grandparents' daughter and my father's wife. In relation to them, I am a daughter, a granddaughter, a sister, a niece;
- the representation of the links between the family world and the world of objects (everybody has their favorite objects; the choice depends on their owner's interests);
- the representation of one's own involvement in the family world (I am a family member);
- the representation of the importance of the family world for a person (a family will protect you, cheer you up, help preserve your health) (Bureeva & Gorbunova, 2017, p. 256).

Based on this the authors of the research compiled a table of levels and criteria for assessing the formation of the cognitive component of family representations (Table 1).

Table 1. The Cognitive Component, Levels and Criteria for the Formation of Senior Preschool Children's Representation of Family (According to O.V. Dybina, 2009)

Component	“Low” level	“Medium” level	“High” level
Cognitive	The child cannot define what family is, does not know the attributes of family, and does not understand the kinship relationship among family members — even with the help of an adult. He fails to describe the customs and traditions of their family.	With the help of an adult a child can define what family is. They understand who their family members are and can list them. They can characterize some of the attributes of family. With the help of an adult they can understand the kinship relationship among their family members, but sometimes fail to characterize the customs and traditions of their family.	The child independently defines what family is. They have mental representation of their family members, know their family's customs and traditions, adequately understand the family rules and norms, show a positive attitude towards them and their parents' requirements.

Children's representations of the customs and traditions of their families were revealed with the help of a conversation developed by the authors of this article. The materials used in conversations included a family photo or picture stories reflecting one of the family traditions, for example, a birthday celebration, the celebration of *Чыл пазы* (Chyl Pazy) or *Тун Пайрам* (Tun Pairam), hiking in nature.

A conversation was organized in the following way: an adult offers a child to take a look at a photograph (or a story picture) depicting a family tradition (for example, the holiday of *Чыл пазы* (Chyl pazy) and to answer the questions. The content of the child's answers undergoes the researchers' analysis.

The content of O.V. Dybina's technique «Drawing My Family» is aimed at revealing a child's understanding of his family composition. It implies asking a child to draw their family and asking questions on their drawing. The assessment of the results should be based on the following indicators:

- high – a child independently fully completes the task, i. e. draws his family and depicts all the members of his family; gives full answers to all questions; lists all of his family members correctly; characterizes the significant attributes of family and highlights a positive attitude of family members towards one another;
- medium – a child manages to complete the task with the help of an adult: he draws his family and depict most of his family members; gives answers to all questions; lists most of his family members; characterizes several attributes of family;
- low – a child does not fully complete the task even with the help of an adult: he draws individual family members; fails to name most of family members; does not distinguish the attributes of family” (Dybina, 2009, p. 31).

The final technique for assessing the formation of senior preschool children's representation of family is the projective one by O.V. Dybina «Who Lives in the House». The purpose of this technique is to identify a child's mental representations of his own involvement in the world of family (I am a member of my family).

## 4 Results

Analyzing the results obtained by O.V. Dybina's projective technique «Who Lives in the Family» application, the authors of this research note that a high level representation of family prevails among the children of the Khakass group (40%). Among the Russian children the authors observe a high level only in 9 people (20%). Children who demonstrated a high level of representation of family easily established family ties, argued their choice of placing family members at certain windows, thereby showing their involvement in the family world. When explaining their choices in relation to the distribution of windows between family members, the majority of children with a high level representation of family pointed to the functions of family members. For example, the argument of a girl from the group of the Khakass ethnic group was as follows: «My dad will be living in the top window, in the center, since our dad is the head of the family. He fixes the car and repairs the house. My mom will be living in the window next to my dad, because she cooks dinner for the whole family, cleans the house and washes our clothes. My grandmother and grandfather will be living in the windows below my mom and dad, because they visit us at weekends. Grandma brings us pies, and grandpa plays tennis with us».

A medium level representation of family was observed in 33% of children in the Khakass group and 47% in the Russian group. When performing the task, children with the medium level representation of family characterized their involvement in the family world (I am a member of my family.) only with the help of an adult. These children depicted all of their family members and named them but failed to identify the family ties.

The analysis of the results of conversations with children according to L.V. Koloshiychenko's standardized questionnaire (Kolomiychenko & Voronova, 2013) showed that a high level representation of family prevailed among the children of the Khakass ethnic group (47%). In the Russian group of children, a high level of the same indicator was observed only among 27% of children. These indicators are especially evident in the answers to the following questions, «What is your mother to your grandmother?»; «Are you your grandmother's son or grandson?». These questions require children's awareness of family ties and their pedigree, which was observed in the children of the Khakass group, who substantiated their answers as follows, «For my grandmother, I am a grandson, because I am already my mother's son». These questions caused difficulties for the children in the Russian group.

When answering the question «Who in your family can you trust a secret to?», 53% of Khakass children demonstrated a high level of understanding the meaningful aspect of the concept of family. The children's answers were as follows: «In my family, I trust my secrets only to my grandmother, because she is the oldest and the wisest. Grandma tells me that I can always tell her the most intimate and secret things».

Emotionally reflecting on their family members, the children of the Khakass group gave broader and well-reasoned answers. For example, when asked the question «Who is the head in your house and why?», 40% of children showed a high level representation of family. They complemented their answers with examples from the life of their families, for example, «Dad is the head in our house, because everybody waits for him to return from work», or «Dad is the head since he repairs everything in the house and drives all our family in the car». Among the children of the Russian group, the medium level representation of family (60%) was dominant. Children with the medium level representation of family knew basic information, for example, the family composition, parents' jobs; they knew who the head of the family is, who takes care of the children. But this knowledge turned out to be incomplete and inconsistent.

Thus, the method of conversation allowed the authors to fix the formation level of the cognitive component of the Russian and Khakass children's representation of family (Table 2).

Table 2. The Formation Level of the Cognitive Component of the Representation of Family (Conversation by L.V. Kolomyichenko's Questionnaire)

Levels	Russian group		Khakass group	
	Number of children	%	Number of children	%
High	12	27%	21	47%
Medium	27	60%	18	40%
Low	6	13%	6	13%
Total	45	100	45	100

Analyzing the presented indicators, it is possible to state that a high formation level (47%) of family values prevails among the children of the Khakass group. Among the Russian children, one observed the medium level (60%) of the concept of family. Most children have superficial knowledge about family. Despite the fact that the Russian children were able to speak about their families and its composition, and could list their family members — mother, father, brother, sister — they often forgot to list their grandparents. Some children did not understand the relationship between their family members, even with the help of an adult.

The children of the Khakass group often mentioned the representatives of the older generation. They listed not only their grandparents and even great-grandparents but also aunts, uncles, and cousins, which was not observed in the answers of the Russian children. This fact testifies that children in Khakass families know their relatives well since hospitality and spiritual ties between relatives have always been welcomed by the traditions of Khakass families.

The results of the second conversation with the children allowed to record the formation level of children's knowledge and representations of family traditions (Table 3).

Table 3. The Formation Level of Representations of Folk Traditions among Children of Preschool Age

Levels	Russian group (Group 1)		Khakass Group (Group 2)	
	Number of children	%	Number of children	%
High	4	10%	7	15%
Medium	29	65%	29	65%
Low	12	25%	9	20%
Total	45	100	45	100

Analyzing the presented quantitative indicators, the authors of the research state that the medium (65%) and low (29% and 25% respectively) formation levels of representations of family traditions prevail in the children of both groups. The children were not always able to characterize the customs and traditions of their families. They had difficulty listing holiday names. Only 10% of the children in the second group had a high level of knowledge about family traditions. These children were able to answer what family traditions are, what traditions there are, and what they are for. They were able to list the customs and traditions of their families.

For example, only 10% of the children could answer the question “Do you know what family traditions are?” The other children had difficulty answering this question. Only after they were explained what family traditions are, 65% of the children could give an example of family traditions (celebrating the birthdays of family members, family leisure). 5% of the children were not able to answer this question.

10% of the children in both groups independently answered the question “Is the celebration of *Чыл пазы* (Chyl pazy) a tradition?” 65% of the children could answer this question only with the help of an adult. With the help of leading questions, they were able to list such family traditions as celebrating the birthdays of family members, preparing gifts for International Women's Day and Defender of the Fatherland Day, celebrating the Khakass holiday of *Тун Пайрама* (Tun Pairam), and resting in nature. The other children had difficulty answering this question.

When asked the question «How do you understand the traditions of your family?», all the children answered that for them, traditions are family holidays, birthday celebrations of all family members, the celebration of New Year, and national holidays (*Чыл пазы* (Chyl pazy), *Тун парам* (Tun Pairam)).

When asked the question «What family traditions are for?», 10% of the children answered that traditions are needed to gather the family and recall grandparents, who introduced these traditions into the family. 25% of the children failed to answer this question.

To study the ethnic peculiarities of children's upbringing in a Khakass family, parents were asked what language they used to communicate with their children at home. The analysis of the answers showed that the overwhelming majority of parents communicate with children both in the Russian and Khakass languages. 31% of the Khakass parents from the city of Abakan communicate with their children only in Russian. This fact testifies that the knowledge of the native language as a phenomenon of national culture is thoroughly lost in these families. Only 10% of the surveyed parents communicate in their native language.

The obtained results threaten the very existence of the Khakass language, which can lead to the loss of national traditions of children's upbringing and the national culture of the Khakass people.

Analyzing the results obtained with the application of the projective technique «Drawing My Family», the authors of the research point out that the drawings of the children of the Khakass group demonstrated a high level of family representations (an indicator of 47%) than the children of the Russian group (20%). The drawings of the Khakass children were distinguished by broadness and diversity. They drew not only their parents and themselves but also their relatives. Relations between family members and involvement with one another could be well traced. In addition, the authors of this research observed traced elements of the traditional chest ornament of Khakass women, *нозо* (pogo), in the drawings of these children. These drawings also reflected that their families adhere to the folk traditions of respecting the elders and caring for the younger. For example, some drawings depicted a large family — starting from the youngest family members to the oldest ones — around a large round table. Most children from the Khakass group depicted the rite of tying a *чаллама* (chalama — a special ribbon) on a *хазын*» (khazyn), the sacred birch tree, which indicates the functioning of the Khakass tradition of venerating nature.

In their drawings, the children of the Russian group usually depicted their family members. However, they tended to forget about the older generation and did not draw their grandparents, which is explained by the fact that children do not include them in the «close circle» of family environment. They do not consider them their family members and often do not even know their ancestors. In the drawings of the Russian children, friends and pets prevail. The children painted themselves next to their mothers or fathers. However, often the father remained outside the drawing. When asked the question «Where is your dad?», the child answered that he left in his car. Most children of the Russian group paid attention to draw such elements as a doll in the sister's hand, a handbag in the mother's hand, a painting on the wall, the father's car, or the brother's computer, while the Khakass children depicted themselves in a family setting. In many drawings of the Russian group, no closeness of emotional ties was observed. All family members were depicted as detached from one another.

Thus, one can observe the explicit difference between the drawings of the two groups. The drawings of Khakass children were full of interconnectedness of family members and friendliness, while those of the Russian group — though very bright and colorful — most often reflected the material side of family life.

Based on the obtained results, the authors of this research came to the conclusion that senior preschool-age children of the Khakass group were characterized by a high and medium levels of the formation of family representations, while the children of the Russian group showed a medium and low levels of the formation of family representations.

## 5 Discussions

The analysis of family drawings and children's answers to questions allows to determine both quantitative and qualitative indicators of the formation of family representations among children of the Russian and Khakass ethnic groups living side by side in a multi-ethnic environment. The empirical research

has shown that there are explicit differences between the family representations of the children of the Khakass and Russian ethnic groups. First of all, a tiered assessment of the results, based on the selected criteria (by O.V. Dybina), showed a higher level of the formation of family representations among the children of the Khakass group.

The qualitative analysis of the children's answers and comments on their drawings proves that the Khakass children have more complete and diverse understanding of the family world. They have the representations of the relative ties among all the family members who they include in the close circle of family environment. For Khakass children, family is when all members love, respect, and care for each other; when they work, rest, play, and celebrate together. Children of the Khakass ethnic group have a more complete representations about family members, their interrelations, their pedigree, family traditions and customs. They show an emotional attitude towards them and include family ties in the "inner cycle" of family environment. Among children of the Russian group, the representations about family members, their interrelations, their pedigree, and family traditions are of a diffuse and unsystematic nature. Russian children include family ties in the «distant cycle» of family environment.

The authors of this article revealed that the children of the Russian group had difficulty in characterizing the customs and traditions of their families and failed to see the important and the valuable meaning in them. The theme of family should evoke in children a bright and affectionate feeling, which was barely observed in the course of conversations. The children's answers did not express a careful attitude towards their parents and the older generation. According to the authors of this research, the children did not show trembling and exalted feelings that arise from memories of one's house, parents, and close people who compose the family. This indicates that the emotional and behavioral components of the orientation towards family values have not been sufficiently formed.

## 6 Conclusions

Family is defined as a small social group. However, it is necessary to identify close and distant circles within this group. The close circle of a family traditionally includes those who live «under the same roof». The distant circle includes the extended family (the older generation, the kinship line of aunts and uncles, as well as cousins).

The authors of this research view family as a social institute, i. e. a system of connections, interactions, and relations of individuals, who perform the reproductive functions of the human race and regulate their activities on the basis of certain values and norms that are subject to extensive social control through a system of positive and negative sanctions. The emotional attachment of family members is an indispensable family attribute.

On the one hand, the results of the surveyed children from the Russian and Khakass ethnic groups living in a modern city allow to confirm the high importance of a traditional way of family life and family values for preschool children. On the other hand, the research recorded an overall change in the system of family relations and family representations among modern children. Among Khakass children, representations of the family world are more complete and diverse. It is possible to trace in their answers an inextricable link between the younger and older generations. Khakass children necessarily include their grandparents in the family image. Their families include a wide range of family ties and relationships. Among Russian children's family representations, the authors of the research observed a more closed nature of intra-family relations. Their families, first of all, consist of themselves, their parents, and siblings. Summarizing the main results of the research, it can be argued that the system of children's upbringing in a Khakass family continues to be based on folk traditions that determine a family's way of life and form the image of a family in younger generations.

The perspectives of the research consist in a comparative analysis of the representations of family and family values of preschool children of different ethnic groups in Siberia. In the framework of ethno-psychological and ethno-cultural approaches it is important to study the functioning of family traditions of the peoples in Siberia.

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