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## **THE PREFIGURATIVE CULTURE OF MARGARET MEAD OR THE ETERNAL PROBLEM OF GENERATION GAP**

The article deals with the digital culture and its impact on modern youth and their relationship with parents. The problem of the Internet's influence on the changing nature of relations between parents and children has been raised. The phenomenon of digital generation causes a number of contradictory opinions. Some people may say that digital generation is living at the origins of the "fourth industrial revolution", however others consider, the disease of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is digital dependence of young people. Analysis of the modern research of the digital generation is widespread in foreign, rather than in domestic science. Most studies in Kazakhstan in the field of generation have only focused on their peculiarities and impact of the Internet on them. It is necessary to develop a research methodology and perspective directions for the development of this issue in education. This topic seeks to discuss relationship between children and parents in the present day. Do we really see the generation gap? The authors are discussing the issue of the phenomenal occurrence of the prefigurative culture, about which the well-known American anthropologist Margaret Mead wrote in the 1970s and what the forecasts of this culture will come in the future. The statistical data of various sources, a comparative analysis of the youth of modern Kazakhstan and the youth of Europe is analyzed. Authors give examples of the risks and threats that modern youth face in the global Internet and which role play parents for "digital natives".

**Key words:** digital culture, generation gap, prefigurative culture, Z generation, mediaculture.

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### **Маргарет Мидтің префигуративті мәдениеті немесе әке мен балалардың мәңгілік қақтығысы**

Мақалада сандық мәдениет және оның қазіргі заманғы жастарға әсері талқыланады. Интернеттің ата-аналар мен балалар арасындағы қарым-қатынастардың өзгеру сипатына әсер ету мәселесі көтеріледі. Қазіргі таңда сандық ұрпақ құбылысы көптеген қайшы пікірлер тудыруда. Басым көпшілік оларды төртінші индустриалдық төңкерістің бастауында тұрған болашақ ұрпақ деп атаса, ал басқалары, олар 21-ғасырдың жастардың сандық тәуелділігін қалыптастыратын дерті деп есептейді. Сандық ұрпақты заманауи зерттеп талдау шетелде кең таралғанымен, біздің отандық ғылымда кештеу дамуда. Осы себепті білім беру мен тәрбиенің мақсатты даму бағыттарының зерттеу әдістемелік құралдарын әзірлеу қажет.

Бұл мақаланы жазудың мақсаты ата-аналардың балалары мен «қашықтан басқару пультімен туылған» балалар арасындағы үлкен алшақтыққа салыстырмалы түрде бақылау жасай отырып, Z ұрпақтың ата-аналарының балаларымен өзара қарым-қатынасына талдау жасау. Танымал америкалық антрополог Маргарет Мид 1970-жылдары жазған префигуративті мәдениеттің пайда болу мәселесі және бұл мәдениеттің болжамдары алдағы онжылдықта қандай болмақ деген сауал өзекті болып келеді. Авторлар заманауи Қазақстан мен Еуропаның жастарына салыстырмалы талдау жасап, Интернет ғаламдық желідегі қазіргі заманғы жастарда кездесетін қауіп-қатерлердің мысалын келтіреді.

**Түйін сөздер:** сандық мәдениет, ұрпақ бұзылуы, префигуративті мәдениет, Z ұрпақ, медиамәдениет.

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### Префигуративная культура Маргарет Мид, или вечный конфликт отцов и детей

В статье рассматривается цифровая культура и ее влияние на современную молодежь, поднимается проблема влияния Интернета на изменение характера отношений между родителями и детьми. Феномен цифрового поколения вызывает ряд противоречащих мнений. Одни называют их поколением будущего, которые стоят у истоков четвертой промышленной революции, другие считают болезнью 21 века цифровую зависимость молодых людей. Анализ современных исследований цифрового поколения имеет широкое распространение в зарубежной, нежели в отечественной науке. Необходима разработка методологии исследования и перспективные направления развития данного вопроса в образовании и воспитании. Целью написания данной статьи является анализ взаимоотношений детей поколения Z с их родителями, наблюдается ли большой разрыв между родителями и детьми, «рожденными с пультом в руке». Ставится вопрос об актуальности понятия префигуративной культуры, о которой еще в 70-х годах писала известный американский антрополог Маргарет Мид и, каковы будут прогнозы данной культуры в ближайшее десятилетие. Авторы анализируют статистические данные различных источников, делают сравнительный анализ молодежи современного Казахстана и молодежи Европы, приводят примеры риска и угроз, с которыми сталкивается современная молодежь в глобальной сети Интернет.

**Ключевые слова:** цифровая культура, разрыв поколений, префигуративная культура, поколение Z, медиакультура.

### Introduction

The first industrial revolution, which has begun in the second half of the 18th century, marked the development of mechanical production (construction of railways, launching a steam engine), gave rise to the spread of mass production, namely, the launch of electricity (the second industrial revolution), before the forthcoming of personal computers and the Internet (the third industrial revolution). The fourth industrial revolution, the main features of which are the Internet, mobile devices, the global flow of information, artificial intelligence and robots, marked a new way of human life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As K. Schwab says at the heart of the fourth revolution, “production has been developing through human cognitive activity” (Schwab, 2016, 12). We are already observing how it goes into all spheres of our life in “huge steps, from commercial platforms such as Airbnb, Alibaba, to 3D printing, drones and artificial intelligence” (Schwab, 2016, 13). Even the film industry, starting from the zero years, shows the viewer a large block of films devoted to the effects of information-digital technologies on humans. So in the film “Limitless” (2011), the hero of Bradley Cooper drinks “magic pills” to improve brain function, and in the film “Blade Runner 2049” (2017), people struggle with artificial creatures - replicants. In the movie “The Circle” (2017), the characters try to understand what lies beyond the general availability of Internet space, can we talk about human

security, about his personal privacy, when his whole life is under the strict control of social networks. It should be noted that in the last five years there have been even more such films raising the problem of the influence of the digital world on a person.

The scientific world today turned its face to information technologies and saw the close connection of the new era of civilization with all areas of science, from technology to humanities. Anthropologists are developing a new field of media anthropology, cultural scientists: media culture, ethnographers: digital ethnography. New concepts in education are emerging: digital humanities, virtual ethnicity, etc. In Kazakhstan, the program “Digital Kazakhstan” is taking place (Digital Kazakhstan 2018), and in the world they are launching the projects “Digital Autumn” (Central Communications Service. Ministries of information and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2018), “German Children’s Online University” (Goethe-Institute Russland n.d.).

For the first time about digital culture wrote many American, English and European scientists. There are Ch. Gere, K. Schwab, M. Prensky, D. Buckingham, O. Oldenburg, J. Palfrey, U. Gasser, F. Stalder, S. Turkle and others. While studying the phenomenon of digital culture, we identified a lack of a systematic study of the phenomenon of digital culture and digital generation in Kazakhstan. Research on the subject has been mostly restricted to limited comparisons of using internet of population, which aims have people in different ages by work

in the digital space etc. However, few writers have been able to draw on any systematic research into relationship between parents and children living in the Internet era. In our article we suppose, that digital culture, namely Internet has an impact on children and adolescents and affects on the generational change.

### Research methods

This scientific study was based on general logical methods such as: analysis, synthesis, description.

### Main part

Behind the euphoria of getting the right information in the short term, the sense of all-accessibility, freedom and transparency in the world of digital technologies, the awareness of a large range of opportunities for personal growth, there is a danger how digital technologies can negatively affect the development of an individual. "For us, individuals, it will have a multifaceted impact; affect our identity and the various facets of its manifestation: our ideas about privacy, property, consumer behavior, how much time we devote to work and rest, how we develop our career and improve our skills. This will affect how we make friends and develop relationships, the hierarchies we depend on, and our health. And it is possible that, faster than we can assume, it can lead to such forms of increasing human capabilities that will make us question the very nature of human existence. Such changes cause us excitement and fear at the same time, because we are racing at an unprecedented speed" (Schwab 2016, 78). In our opinion, the threat from the relationship of people of different generations, there is a risk of conflict of interests of people of different social strata. The digital world will raise the problem of self-determination of a person, his identity. "We are on the threshold of a radical systemic change, to which people will have to continuously adapt. As a result, we can witness the increasing polarization in a world that will separate those who accept the changes and those who resist them. These potential divisions and tensions that it generates will be aggravated by the boundary between the generation that grew up in the digital world and knew only it, and the generation that was born earlier and must adapt to the new conditions" (Schwab 2016, 78). The transformations are taking place all over the globe will not bypass the system of cultural practices of communicating people. The history of culture, according to the American anthropologist Margaret Mead (1901-1978), considered from the point of view of the evolution of ways of interaction of generations in the field of transmission

of social and cultural experience can be represented as formation of its three types – postfigurative, cofigurative and prefigurative. Giving a definition to all three types of culture, she considers the experience passed from a more mature generation to the younger. "The older generation", writes M. Mead, "assumes that there is still general agreement on the nature of the good, the true and the beautiful, that human nature with its innate mechanisms of perception, feeling, thinking and acting essentially remains unchanged. And she predicted". I believe we are on the verge of developing a new kind of culture, one that is as much a departure in style from cofigurative cultures, as the institutionalization of configuration in orderly and disorderly – change was a departure from the postfigurative style. I call this new style prefigurative because in this new culture it will be the child and not the parent and grandparent – that represents what is to come" (Mead 1973, 74).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, when a new form of the nuclear family was actively developing, consisting only of children and parents, the role of the older generation of grandmothers and grandfathers seems weak; it fades into the background (Grossbart, McConell 2002, 66). The cognitive culture is formed under the influence of new conditions, when in a situation of continuous change of space, the experience transferred from parents to children becomes irrelevant, loses its strength and young people have to make decisions based on the experience of their peers. **Prefigurative culture develops when people face unfamiliar and significantly changed circumstances, like when a new era appears. In such situations, the older generation is limited in adaptability to knowledge and experience tied to the past.** Young people in prefigurative culture are primarily focused on the present and the future and are less bound to the past than their parents and grandparents. Thus, children in a prefigurative culture can lead the way, rather than follow in the footsteps of their older relatives. What we are observing today. "Today, all of a sudden, in all parts of the world, where all nations are united by an electronic communication network, young people have a commonality of experience, the experience that has never been and will not be for the older ones. Conversely, the older generation will never see in the life of young people a repetition of their unprecedented experience of change, replacing each other. This generation gap is completely new, global and universal. Today's children grow up in a world that the elders didn't know, but some of the adults foresaw that this would happen. Those who foresaw were harbingers of a prefigurative culture

of the future, in which the impending is unknown. (Mead 1983, 235).

In this article, we raise two problems. One lies on the surface, it is associated with threats and risks of the Internet space for children.

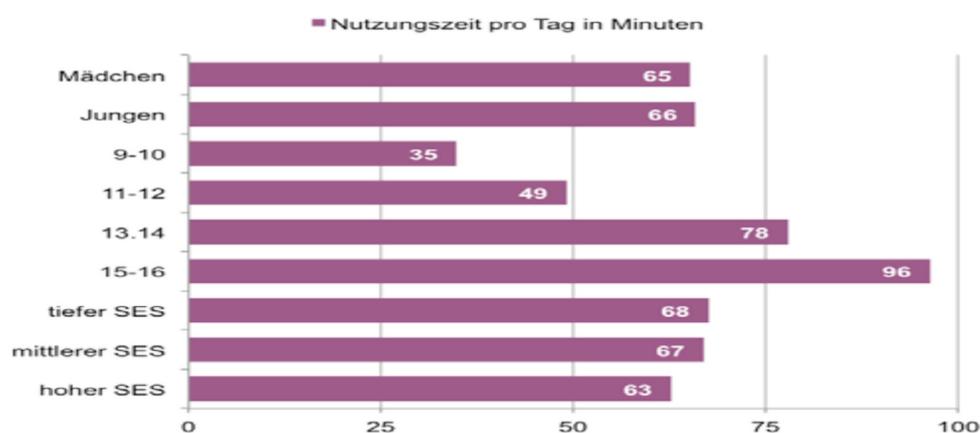
In March 2013, the international project “Das EU-Kids Online Projekt” was held in Switzerland, where one of the co-organizers was the University of Zurich. In the project, children aged 9-16 years old and their parents were interviewed.

The goal of the project is to find out what risks and threats children face while online. “The results showed that 97% of all children use the Internet at home, 83% in the living room, 58% in their room.

Also, many use the Internet (66%) at school. One third of children (30%) use the Internet everywhere” (Hermida, Signer 2013).

Particular attention should be given to the duration of use of the network. On average, the network is used for more than one hour (66 min). Moreover, the authors of the study emphasize that there are practically no sociodemographic, socioeconomic, and gender differences. Only age. Using the Internet depends on age. The older the child, the more he uses the Internet. 15-16 year olds use the Internet 96 minutes a day almost three times as many as 9-10 years old children with 35 minutes a day (Table 1) (Hermida, Signer 2013).

**Table 1** – Duration of the network’s use from [www.eukidsonline.ch](http://www.eukidsonline.ch) (Hermida, Signer 2013).



Taking into account, Swiss researchers went further and examined the risks that children faced on the Internet. So cyber mobbing touched 5% of Swiss children. The main location of cyber mobbing takes place in social networks, where children spend most of their

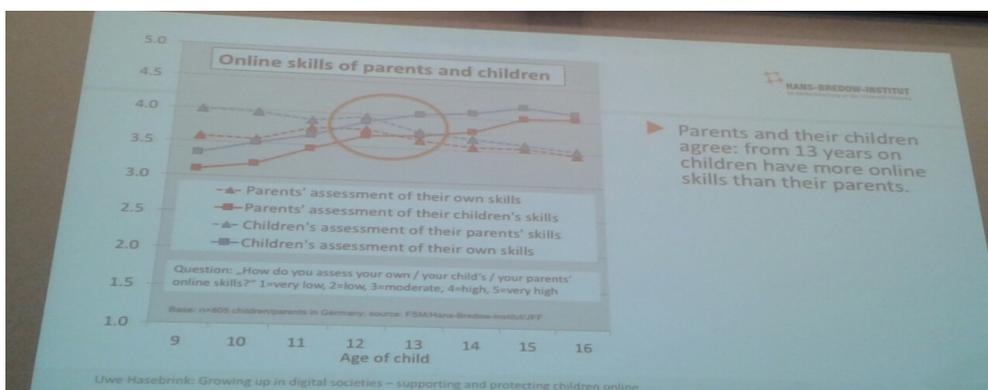
time. It also concerns Kazakhstani children. According to the website “www.tengrinews.kz”, Kazakhstani children overtook even children from the USA and Europe in using the Internet as a means of communication, and therefore in using social networks (Table 2).

**Table 2** – Screenshot from the website (Tengri News 2016)



According to Professor Dr. Uwe Hasebrink from Hans Bredow Institute of the University of Hamburg (Picture 1) (Picture 2), when he conducted the survey of German children and their parents, and parents and children, agree

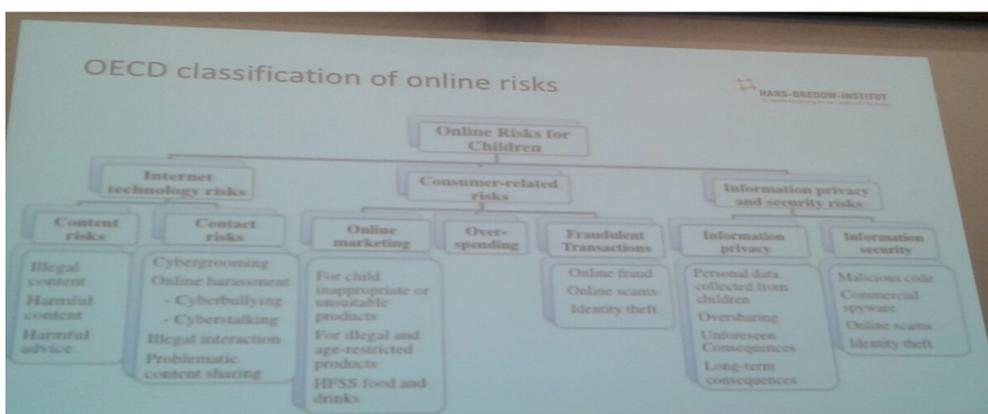
on one opinion that the abilities that are needed to work with media technology, are different. Parents agree, they do not understand much and have to learn from their children in the new world of media culture.



Picture 1 – Source from the public lecture of prof. Uwe Hasebrink in the Zurich University on the 16.10.2018

According to professor, the media threat is that parents, not having media skills, possessing conceptual thinking, as against their children who have clip thinking since childhood, are not able to prevent threats associated with undesirable content of the resource. According OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) there are online risks for children:

Risks associated with Internet technologies, which include unwanted or harmful Internet content, online extortion, cyberbullying, contact risks, etc.);  
 Risks associated with consumption (online marketing, the sale of unhealthy foods);  
 Risks associated with the protection of information (hacking account, theft of personal data).



Picture 2 – Source from the public lecture of prof. Uwe Hasebrink in the Zurich University on the 16.10.2018

American researchers identify three groups of threats to the psychological safety of children and adolescents on the Internet:  
 – unwanted contact (which can lead to sexual abuse);

– cyberbullying: insults, aggressive attacks, harassment on the Web;  
 – “dangerous” materials (pornography, videos, images and texts of a sexual, extremist nature, incitement to violence). (Godik, 2011).

Exploring the interests of young Internet users in Kazakhstan, experts at Kaspersky Lab have found that 77% of their Internet activity is accounted for by means of communication, the overwhelming share of which is occupied by social networks. The threat of social networks has been confirmed by the Swiss project. Based on numbers, cyber mobbing is most often found on social networks. 2% of children answered that it was

through social networks that they received threats. In addition, with increasing age, children receive more often threats. While 9-10 years old children do not yet have experience with cyber mobbing, 6% of all 15-16 year olds have already been cyber mobbed in social networks. In 13% of the threats, it came through messages, 11% of the chat, 8% – on the websites of games, 21% in another way (Table 3) (Hermida, Signer 2013).

**Table 3** – Places where children have faced Cybermobbing (from www.eukidsonline.ch) (Hermida, Signer, 2013);

<b>Tabelle 8: Wo Kinder Cybermobbing im Internet erlebt haben Alter</b>					
in %	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	alle
in einem sozialen Netzwerk	0	1	3	6	2
via Instant Messaging	0	1	1	1	1
in einem Chatroom	0.2	1	1	0.3	1
auf einer Spiele Webseite	1	0.2	1	0	0.4
via E-Mail	0	0	1	0	0.1
auf andere Art	0	2	1	1	1
überhaupt Mobbing im Internet erlebt	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>

To solve this problem, it is important to adopt a problem solving strategy. In addition, in our opinion, under the new conditions, as Margaret Mead predicted, it is within the framework of the prefigurative culture that the family becomes a close friend to each family member. The child, having the necessary skills to work with the Internet network, has not acquired the skills of elementary human communication, because of his inexperience, does not always understand that his actions on social networks can have negative consequences. Parents have a great opportunity to get closer with the child, playing by the rules of our time. Learning from children, they approach them, the gap or conflict of generations is narrowed, children and parents get the opportunity to look at the world with their own eyes. The study which has been conducted in 2017 by the staff of the University of Narxoz (Almaty), an interesting fact was noticed that proves Don Tapscott's theory that the N generation (Net generation) creates a new culture that all generations have been invited to, but which must be understood and to accept. "For parents, teachers, politicians, managers and advertising agents, there is no more important issue than how to find out how the new generation will apply its digital knowledge. In this book, we proceed from the hypothesis that we can learn a lot about the new generation, if we take a little attention to the children and show the same

interest in new technologies as they are." (Tapscott 1998, 15).

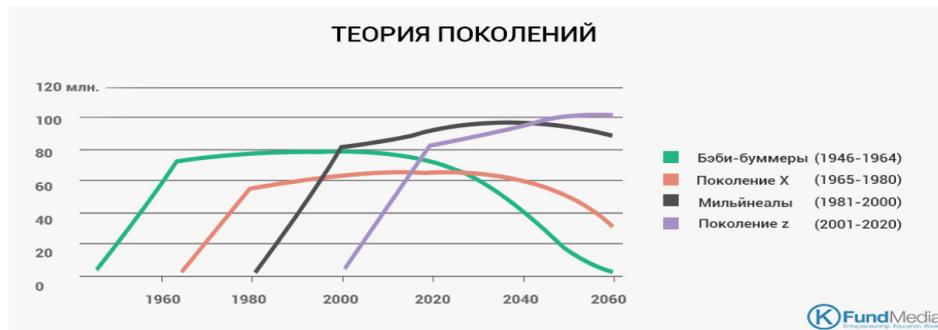
Generation Z, which is generally considered by children born since 2000, really forms a new set of values or a new look at old values. Modern scientists D. Palfrey and W. Gasser, D. Tapscott, D. Stillman, K. Haibach and S. Bollman, economist N. Howe and the historian W. Strauss, devoted their works to this question.

The generation of which, we say, according to the theory of N. Howe and W. Strauss is called the Z generation. An interesting fact is that this generation is also called the generation of "artists", based on the archetype, which is based on an identical age indicator, the time that takes shape their event, a series of basic attitudes, in relation to culture, family, risk, etc. They conducted an analysis of all generations ("prophets", "nomads", "heroes", "artists"). In their opinion, the generation born in the period from 1923-1943, and in 2000 to the present, belongs to the archetype "artists". Both were born during the crisis. Both those and others are faced with social and political contradictions, which determine their similarity (Howe, Strauss 2000). Generation Z was influenced by internetization and virtualization, which was the cause of their multitasking, clip-art, but also "silence", self-care, and isolation. This issue is devoted to many works, but our attention is drawn

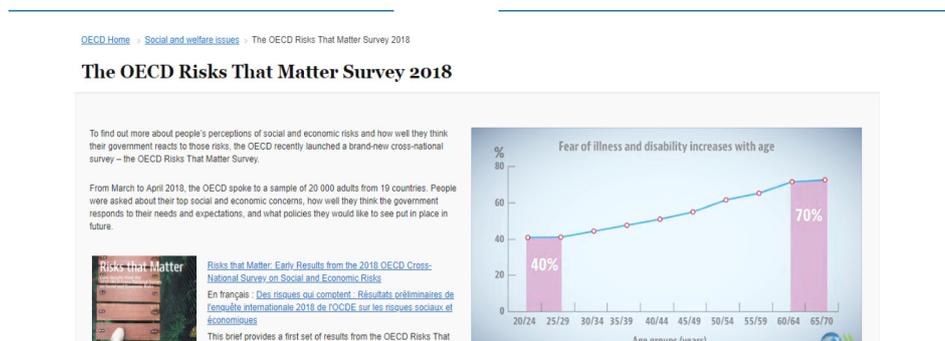
to the statistics, namely how the family participates in the development of the child from generation Z.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the summer of 2018 conducted a study in 19 countries of the world with 20,000 respondents aged 18 to 70 years. The purpose of the interview was to reach out to public opinion regarding the perception of risks and the response of the government. What social and

economic risks are important to them? How long do most people make ends meet without government assistance? Are people willing to pay more in the form of taxes and social security contributions for certain government services? We are interested in the fact that in the list of three risks and fears, people of all ages are afraid of getting sick and dying, not having a pension and financial security, having fear for a family.



Picture 3 – Generation theory according to the project “RuGenerations – Generation Theory in Russia” (K Fund Media. Entrepreneurship. Education. Books. 2017).



Picture 4 – Risks and fears are facing by people from OECD (OECD 2018 “Risks that Matter: Early Results from the 2018 OECD Cross-National Survey on Social and Economic Risks.” Policy Brief on the Future of Work. www.oecd.org/social/risks-that-matter.htm)

Research of the Narxoz University (Almaty, Kazakstan) has shown that for today’s adolescents, the family is one of the most important values in life. 75% of adolescents trust relatives and friends (Kaldygulova, Kosnazarov 2017). The study, which we began with a survey of schoolchildren in the East Kazakhstan region, also has confirmed the same result. First place in the list of values is family. The family for the young person means trust, openness, protection.

### Conclusion

Thus, we can conclude: the prediction of Margaret Mead about the emergence of prefigurative culture has become a reality. On the one hand, digitalization has given the child a new tool to adapt to new living conditions, on the other hand, it has given him the power to manage his life and the life of society. In all the studies we analyzed, we cannot say that the eternal conflict between parents and children

has become aggravated. It seems to us that this is a time when, on the contrary, children and parents can be closer to each other as never before. Parents should only transfer universal values through a new perception of their child. Probably, life in modern conditions can be represented as a game that has its own rules, in which players play, who understand the rules of this game well.

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