

ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS REGARDING THE INCLUSION OF PARENTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS OF STUDENTS

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Abstract

Parental involvement is an integral variable that has a considerable value in the overall educational achievement and student learning process. Family-school and parent-teacher cooperation contributes to child/student development, promotes the work of the teacher, strengthens the role that the parents have in the development, upbringing and education of their child. The need for active involvement of parents in the partnership with the school, stems from the fact that parents are the first educators, teachers, who can give the teachers the most useful information that will be the basis for directing and undertaking future joint actions for the benefit of each child/student. Partnership, i.e. fostering co-operation is a challenge for every teacher who is trying to pave the way to create conditions, forms, and means for realization of constructive cooperation. The school's collaboration with parents begins in the early years of schooling and accompanies the student throughout his entire school experience. The positive relation between parents and schools affects the behavior and success of children at school. Families can also play an important role in the process of promoting laws and policies for inclusive education.

Keywords: involvement, parent, school, partnership, student

1. Introduction

The family, as the most important factor in child's socialization is the most responsible for providing optimal conditions for their development. Parents of children with special needs must be prepared for many issues and difficulties in the child's development, such as various psychological reactions that occur when comparing them with other children, until several decisions are made regarding their upbringing, education, rehabilitation, planning of their future, etc.

Strict upbringing including prohibitions, perhaps even punishments, make the child insecure, and therefore encourage them to rely on others without forming an ego, so that they will always be dependent on others. Parents play a key role in children's development of behaviors, responses, children's attitudes toward themselves and others. People and their families are developing into a single system and are constantly striving for balance. The birth of a child with developmental disabilities creates a serious violation of this balance and the family faces a difficult existential experience (Kandel I., Merrick J., 2007).

In the last few years, education has focused on ensuring a higher level of parental participation in decision-making, which refers to the education and upbringing of students, in order to provide greater opportunities for partners to become involved in the educational process. This strengthens their responsibility and care for the development and progress not only of their own child, but of children in general. The process of achieving cooperation between the family, parent - school, teacher, derives from the common goal, i.e. the development of the young person by creating optimal conditions for the child's development

as a joint project aimed at creating conditions to encourage positively directed development of the student and their progress.

The set goal is specified through several tasks such as: exchange of information, participation of parents in various activities, their involvement in the governing bodies, active participation of parents in school activities. Achieving cooperation as a multidimensional process requires knowledge, requires experience from both parties that should meet the common interests. The role of parents in the education of children in regular schools as well as children with special educational needs has a positive effect on students, in terms of increased regularity of attendance, better grades, increased independence, self-esteem and confidence.

Parents' cooperation with the school is intense in the first years of education, while it becomes weaker later. Family involvement is important throughout the life cycle of both children with disabilities and all children, especially in the early years. Children with disabilities are not the only ones who benefit: there are benefits for parents, classmates, teachers and schools as well. Parental cooperation is not only beneficial for children: there are potential benefits for all parties, for example: parents have greater interaction with children, become more responsible and sensitive to their needs, and more confident in their parenting; teachers gain a better understanding of the culture and diversity of families, feel more comfortable at work and their morale increases; by involving parents and the community, schools gain a better reputation in the community. Partnership between children/young people, parents and professionals is clearly very important for the development of inclusion. The challenge is to move beyond the rhetoric that accompanies notions of 'partnership' to achieve ways of working that are experienced by all parties as collaborative (Todd L., 2007).

Establishing a good cooperation with the family with a child with a disability requires a lot of individual contact, knowledge of its functioning, a lot of time and patience, as well as connecting with experts in various fields. Parents believe that the teacher is the main source of information about the child's achievements in school, and therefore the need for a partnership at work arises. Teachers can contribute by maintaining regular contact with parents through telephone calls, home visits, home-school notes, weekly notifications and meetings with parents at school (Чичевска-Јованова Н., 2018). Many parents of children with disabilities often feel completely helpless because of lack of information about who can help them. Such parents, with all the difficulties of everyday life they face, become nervous, depressed, or hostile, showing a lack of understanding for the child, and can also show many other negative feelings towards schools and teachers. As a result, some children in school are tired, sleepy, without work supplies, unwritten homework. Some show fear and resentment, aggression. Many of them do not understand what is required and expected of them. All these children present their problems to their parents, peers, and teachers in a variety of ways.

There is a tendency for professionals, especially teachers, to view parents as adversaries. Professionals may have different goals and priorities to parents concerning the educational programs suggested for their children. This can create conflict and sometimes competition between parents and professionals. Competition can also be focused on children's achievements. For example, children will typically behave more appropriately before their teachers than they will before their parents. In contrast, parents often report that children do things at home that are not observed at school. In these situations, it is easy for either teachers or parents to feel doubtful or resentful about the others' success in getting the child to perform well. However, avoiding the tendency to view parents as adversaries is essential for the development of good relationships (Hornby G., 2011).

Creating opportunities for understanding means communicating to the parents that you want to know what they are thinking, what is important to them, and that you value their input. This means taking the time to listen. In a true partnership, we need to encourage more active

participation from parents in the formulation of possible solutions. One strategy for doing this is to postpone jumping in with solutions ourselves until after we have asked parents for their ideas (Coleman J., 1998).

The interaction amongst the three actors, i.e. the teacher, the students and the parent(s), largely determines the students' willingness and readiness to learn; predicts student satisfaction and commitment to school and learning and the level of achievement of the child. These interactions are alterable but not exclusively through the initiatives of the teachers. In general, educators hold decisive power in interactions with parents and students (Mc William R. A., 2010).

2. Methodology of research

The subject of this research is to review the attitude of teachers and parents for parental involvement in the educational process of students.

Purpose of the research

The study aims to determine the attitude of teachers and parents for the involvement of parents in the educational process of students.

Research hypothesis

X1 – It is assumed that both parents and teachers believe that every parent should be actively involved in their child's school.

X2 – It is assumed that both parents and teachers believe that every parent should be actively involved in learning with the child at home.

X3 – It is assumed that involvement of the parent is related to school success of the child.

X4 – Involvement of the parent helps in effective discipline and behavior

X5 – Involvement of the parents helps in greater effectiveness of the teacher

X6 – Parental involvement is important for a successful school and a positive climate

X7 – It is assumed that each school has a separate room for parents.

X8 – The involvement of the parent influences him to form a positive attitude towards teachers and the school.

X9 – Parents of students are important partners in education.

X10 – Teachers need training and support for successful involvement of the parent.

X11 – Teachers deserve recognition for their hard work in engaging the parents.

Research methods, techniques and instruments

- Descriptive method
- Method of comparative analysis

Research instruments:

- questionnaire for teachers and parents

Research sample

The research included 142 teachers of students aged 6 to 15 years, i.e. students from I-IX grades, from several schools, teachers from regular schools in whose classes there are students with special educational needs, special educators from special primary schools, as well as special educators working in combined classes within regular schools; and 115

parents of children with typical development and parents of children with special educational needs.

3. Analysis of research and results

		N	χ^2	df	P
Parental involvement in child's school	Parents	108	10,928	4	0.027
	teachers	141			
Parental involvement in learning with the child at home	Parents	107	9,673	4	0,046
	teachers	142			
The school has a separate room for parents	Parents	107	17,246	4	0,002
	teachers	141			
Parents of students are important partners in education.	Parents	104	8,221	4	0,084
	teachers	142			
Teachers deserve recognition for their hard work in engaging the parents.	Parents	106	10,391	4	0,035
	teachers	142			

Statistical testing, given the nominal nature of the two arrays of data, is calculated using a standard chi-square test (Table 1). The obtained results show that the indicated differences in the estimates between the parents on the one hand and the teachers on the other hand are statistically significant. More specifically, *parental involvement in child's school* ($\chi^2=10,928$, $df=4$, $p<0,01$), *Parental involvement in learning with the child at home* ($\chi^2=9,673$, $df=4$, $p<0,01$), *The school has a separate room for parents* ($\chi^2=17,246$, $df=4$, $p<0,01$) *Parents of students are important partners in education*, ($\chi^2=8,221$, $df=4$, $p<0,01$), *Teachers deserve recognition for their hard work in engaging the parents* ($\chi^2=10,391$, $df=4$, $p<0,01$)

This means that the attitudes and opinions of teachers and parents differ from each other regarding the parental involvement in child's school; Parental involvement in learning with the child at home; The school has a separate room for parents; Parents of students are important partners in education; Teachers deserve recognition for their hard work in engaging the parents.

4. Conclusions and discussion

Based upon the statistical testing of the first hypothesis according to which it is assumed that both parents and teachers believe that every parent should be actively involved in their child's school, there is a statistical significance, thus this hypothesis is confirmed.

Also, the second hypothesis according to which it is assumed that both parents and teachers believe that every parent should be actively involved in learning with the child at home, based upon the statistical significance of the testing.

The seventh hypothesis according to which both parents and teachers have stated that each school has a separate room for parents is also confirmed based upon the statistical testing which has a statistical significance.

The ninth hypothesis according to which both parents and teachers state that parents of students are important partners in education is also confirmed based upon the statistical testing which has a statistical significance.

Based upon the statistical testing of the eleventh hypothesis according to which both parents and teachers consider that teachers deserve recognition for their hard work in engaging the parents, there is a statistical significance, thus the hypothesis is confirmed.

Whereas, the hypothesis according to which both parents and teachers consider that

- X3 – involvement of the parent is related to school success of the child.
- X4 – Involvement of the parent helps in effective discipline and behavior
- X5 – Involvement of the parents helps in greater effectiveness of the teacher
- X6 – Parental involvement is important for a successful school and a positive climate
- X8 – The involvement of the parent influences him to form a positive attitude towards teachers and the school.
- X10 – Teachers need training and support for successful involvement of the parent.

are not confirmed because there is no statistical significance as no differences were found between the views of parents and teachers regarding these statements.

From the obtained results, it can be concluded that according to teachers, the role of parents is very important for the academic achievement of the students in the educational process.

Parents who support their children during the educational process play a major role in improving children's achievements and behavior. Active involvement of parents in school can help promote a learning environment in which students can communicate positively with school staff and their peers.

Achieving parental commitment in the educational process requires "investment" by both sides, but teachers play the key role on this process. The teachers are the ones who can and should organize, structure and develop this relationship in a professional context.

Parental involvement in the learning process should be identified as one of the indicators used to assess the quality of educational service, at the system level and especially at the school and teacher level. There is a need for professional development and teacher training for the development of relationships with parents, with a focus on their engagement in the learning process.

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