

A STUDY OF PARENTS' READINESS TO RAISE CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

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Abstract. The readiness of parents to raise children with intellectual disabilities is a set of emotional-motivational, cognitive and activity components, the formation of which ensures an adequate attitude of family members to the child and the choice of optimal methods of its upbringing. The article highlights the results of a study of parents' readiness for family upbringing of children with intellectual disabilities, the research methodology is described, and a detailed analysis of the results is presented. According to the results of the experiment, it was found that a significant part of parents raising child with intellectual disabilities accept the child and its disorders at the psychological level, but they are emotionally depressed that their child has developmental disabilities. The vast majority of parents are not sufficiently aware of the psychological and pedagogical characteristics of their children, the age dynamics of their development. This negatively affects the choice of tactics and methods of education, knowledge about possible problems in learning and further adult life.

Keywords: parents' readiness for upbringing; family education; family; children with intellectual disabilities; child's personality

Introduction

The family is the most significant social institution that affects the development of the individual. It is the natural environment of primary socialization of the child, the source of its material and emotional support, the means of preserving and transmitting cultural values from generation to generation. The family forms the life and moral values of the child, the attitude towards themselves and others, and lays the prerequisites for adult life. Family education is particularly important for the formation of the personality of children with intellectual disabilities, because in this case parents have additional responsibility associated with the correction of their child's development.

In foreign and domestic special pedagogy, various aspects of the problem of family education of children with developmental disabilities are studied. In particu-

lar, it takes into account the clinical and psychological characteristics of children with ID – Boyce G. C. (1991), Davis K., Gavidia-Payne S. (2009), Kyslychenko V., Konopliasta S. (2016), Pshychek M. (2006), Shulzhenko D., Andrieieva N. (2011); the study of emotional states of parents, socio-psychological characteristics of families raising children with developmental disabilities – Andreyko B. (2016), Blasher J. (1984), Dovling M., Dolan L. (2001), Seligman M., Darling R. (1989), Wilker L. (1981); psychological and pedagogical support of families raising children with psychophysical disorders – Eidemiller E. (2010), Kyslychenko V., Konopliasta S. (2016), Shevtsov A., Romanenko O., Khanzeruk L., Chebotarova O. (2013), Seligman M., Darling R. (1989). However, in Ukrainian science, there have not yet been separate studies of parents' readiness to raise children with ID. However, it is the readiness of parents that is a key condition for the quality family education. The lack of Special Research on this problem and its clear relevance led to the choice of the topic of our scientific search. ***The purpose of the article*** is to highlight the results of a study of the levels of parents' readiness to raise children with intellectual disabilities.

Methods and procedure of the research

We consider the readiness of parents to raise children with ID as a set of emotional-motivational, cognitive, and activity components that ensure an adequate attitude of parents to a child with ID and its development. The following methods were used to study all the components:

– Questionnaire 1 “Parent Readiness” to study general information about the family and determine the competence of parents in the family education of children with ID.

– Questionnaire 2 “Parents and Children” to determine the nature of relationships in the family (presented in the article Questionnaire 1 “Parents' readiness” and questionnaire 2 “Parents and children” are author's works).

– Questionnaire “Analysis of Family Relationships” (AFR) by E. Eidemiller (E. Eidemiller (2010) to study the participation of parents in the upbringing of a child and mistakes in parental education.

– Observation, conversation with parents and children to clarify certain information.

Questionnaire 1

Questionnaire 1 contained 25 questions, 7 on the study of general information about the family, 18 on determining the competence of parents in the family upbringing of children with ID, in particular:

– the nature of relationships between family members, their impact on the child's well-being, behavior, and academic success;

– attitude of parents and other family members to developmental disorders of the child;

- influence of the child's development characteristics on the type of upbringing;
- the degree of awareness of parents and other family members in the specifics of the development, training and upbringing of children with ID;
- content and forms of interaction with the child;
- problems and difficulties of parents in the process of raising a child with ID;
- interaction of parents with teachers of the educational institution;
- parents' compliance with specialist recommendations;
- the desire of parents to master competencies about the peculiarities of the development and upbringing of a child with ID.

Research procedure: parents were provided with questionnaire forms and instructions on the frankness and anonymity of responses. The results of the questionnaire were processed according to the following criteria: micro-social conditions of family upbringing; educational and cultural level of parents; the nature of family relations; parents' knowledge of the features of their child's development and capabilities, the desire to improve them; parents' attitude to cooperation with specialists; the effectiveness of parents' use of recommendations provided by specialists.

Questionnaire 2

Parents were offered forms with 10 Questions in which they noted the answers that most accurately reflect the nature of their relationship with their children. The results were determined after calculating the points.

If it is 0 – 20 points, parents do not pay enough attention to their children.

If it is 21 – 35, parents understand their children's problems, but solve them partly due to lack of opportunities / knowledge / time.

If it is 36 – 50, good relationships in the family allow to solve problem situations together, understand each other perfectly.

Questionnaire "Analysis of Family Relationships" (AFR) by E. Eidemiller

The AFR questionnaire contains 130 statements related to parenting. It contains 20 scales: 11 scales reflect the main styles of Family Education; 12, 13, 17, 18 scales allow you to get an idea of the structural and role aspects of family life; 14, 15 scales demonstrate the features of the system of mutual influences in the family; 16, 19, 20 scales demonstrate the work of family integration mechanisms.

Instructions: "Dear parents, We offer you a questionnaire containing statements about raising children. The statements are numbered. The same numbers are available in the response form. Read the questionnaire statements one by one. If you generally agree with them, then circle the answer number in the form; if you do not agree, cross out the number. If you find it difficult to choose an answer, put a question mark on the number. Try to have no more than five such answers. There are no "wrong" or "correct" statements in the questionnaire. Answer as you think".

Processing results. For each positive answer, 1 point is awarded. Points are calculated separately on each scale. If the sum of points on a certain scale reaches or

exceeds the diagnostic value, then the subject has a type of deviation in upbringing that corresponds to the scale. On separate scales, points on an additional scale are added to the obtained result. If there are deviations on several scales, you should refer to the table “Diagnostics of types of family education” to determine the type of incorrect family education.

Interpretation of results. The predominant type of family relationships and upbringing is determined according to the sum of points on each scale. The questionnaire provides scales that reflect the above indicators:

1. Hyperprotection.
2. Hypoprotection.
3. Connivance.
4. Ignoring the child's needs.
5. Excess of requirements (responsibilities) in relation to the child.
6. Insufficient responsibilities of the child.
7. Excess of requirements-prohibitions (dominance).
8. Insufficient requirements and prohibitions for the child.
9. Excessive sanctions (violent parenting style).
10. Minimum sanctions.
11. Instability of parenting style.
12. Expanding the scope of parental feelings.
13. The predominance of childish, infantile qualities in a child that do not correspond to its age.
14. Educational uncertainty of parents.
15. Phobia of losing a child.
16. Undeveloped parental feelings.
17. Projection of your own undesirable qualities on the child.
18. Bringing the conflict between spouses into the sphere of education.
19. Superiority of masculine qualities.
20. Superiority of female qualities.

Results and discussion

The study was conducted on the basis of 6 institutions of preschool and general secondary education in Khmelnytsky, Lviv, Ternopil, Chernivtsi regions. The study involved 79 parents raising children with intellectual disabilities: 49 of them are raising children of preschool age, 30 – primary school. This choice of respondents is due to the need for a comparative analysis of certain aspects of the research results. Let us describe the results for each method.

Results of questionnaire 1

Among the respondents, 82% were mothers and 18% were fathers, which indicates a greater activity of women in raising children. So, 55% of children with ID are brought up in full families; 45% – in incomplete ones. The 35% of the surveyed

families have one child, 40% – two children; 25% – three or more children. The 40% of respondents assess the material conditions in the family as difficult; 28% – the average standard of living. Only 25% of parents have higher education, 15% have incomplete higher education, 45% have vocational and technical education, and 15% have general secondary education.

To the question “What is the prevailing atmosphere in your family?” the following responses were received: 65% – friendly; 20% – unstable; 10% – depressing, 5% – unfriendly. Only 35% of respondents noted that family relationships affect the child's well-being and behavior, as well as their academic performance. Such a low indicator may indicate a lack of attention to children, ignoring their condition.

According to the indicator of the attitude of parents and other family members to a violation in the child's development, the following results were obtained: 75% of parents accept the child and his violation, try to adequately assess the child's capabilities; 55% noted that they are emotionally depressed by the fact that the child has an intellectual disability; 25% did not answer this question, which may indicate an uncertain or negative attitude to the child's violation. Parents' rejection of the presence of intellectual disabilities can hinder the creation of appropriate conditions for the upbringing and development of the child.

To the question “Does the presence of a violation affect the type of upbringing of a child in the family?” 50% of the surveyed parents answered in the affirmative; 35% noted that they raise their child in the same way as a healthy one; 15% of parents did not answer this question.

So, 40% of the surveyed parents noted that their family does not have a coordinated system of raising a child. Thus, in most families, the process of influencing the child is formal, not purposeful. Requirements in the family are not agreed upon. The 75% of parents are not sufficiently aware of the development characteristics of children with ID. Only 41% of parents know the degree of the disorder and the clinical diagnosis of their child, its main and concomitant disorders; 7% could not name it; 52% – understand the child's problems partially.

Mostly respondents are concerned about partial problems, in particular that their child: “*does not speak well*”, “*does not memorize*”, “*inattentive*”, “*nervous*”, “*does not sleep well*”, “*lazy*”, “*stubborn*”. Only 15% assess the child's problems and difficulties comprehensively, for example: “*poorly assimilates the curriculum*”, “*underdeveloped*”.

We asked what parents consider their child's advantages and disadvantages. So, 73% of respondents notice certain achievements, positive aspects in its behavior, character, in particular: “*hardworking*”, “*likes to communicate*”, “*kind*”, “*honest*”, “*obedient*”, “*diligent*”, “*dances well*”, “*knows how to serve yourself*”. But, 27% – do not see a positive thing. Among the shortcomings and problems, the respondents named the following: “*absent-mindedness*”, “*unstable*”, “*grumpy*”, “*aggressive*”, “*stubborn*”, “*shy*”, “*biting its nails*”, “*lack of attention*”, “*does not ask to go to the toilet*”.

Respondents were asked to talk about family games, recreation, favorite books, and entertainment. Note that the parents' responses were compared with the children's responses and our own observations. Analysis of the obtained results showed that in 46% of families, the mother is mainly engaged in raising a child; in 38% – both parents; 10% – grandparents; 6% – mother and grandmother. Respondents named the following types of joint activities: “reading”, “drawing”, “walking”, “playing”, “doing puzzles together”. The results showed that 44% of respondents read with their child every day; 28% read “often”, 6% read “every other day”, 16% read “on weekends”, and 6% read “rarely”. The answers to what the child likes to do most at home were distributed as follows: 56% – “watch TV/computer”; 12% – “play”; 12% – “clean up”; 8% – “listen to people read”; 6% – “listen to music”; 6% – “do a little bit of everything”. The difference in responses is significant. According to 88% of children, parents devote little time to them, do not play with them; 45% of adult family members believe that they are engaged with children enough.

Only 35% of parents follow the recommendations of specialists at home. The 58% answered that because of employment at work, they do not have time for this; 7% – believe that these are the responsibilities of specialists of an educational institution. To the question “Does your child communicate with peers with typical development?” only 15% of respondents answered in the affirmative.

Among the problems and difficulties that parents face in the process of family upbringing of children with intellectual disabilities, respondents noted: heavy emotional stress (85%), material problems (90%), fear of negative assessments of others (20%), insufficient understanding of the child's needs (25%), etc.

We suggested that parents indicate which specialists they need to consult. The 25% of respondents did not respond. The rest called different specialists: speech therapist, doctor, speech pathologist, psychologist, educator. Only 54% of respondents formulated questions that they would like to discuss with specialists. At the same time, it is paradoxical that parents of preschoolers either did not answer, or called some narrow problem, for example: “teaching a child to write”, “how to teach a child to speak correctly”. Parents of schoolchildren showed interest not only in individual problems, but also in the full socialization of their child, for example: “life prospects of my child”, “how to teach a child to communicate in society”, “how to develop a child at home”, “sexual development of a child with ID”, “children's fears”.

Analysis of the results of the study showed an insufficient level of competence of parents in the family upbringing of children with ID. Parents of younger schoolchildren had slightly higher generalized results. The results of parents with higher education were qualitatively higher, in particular, this concerns awareness of the peculiarities of psychophysical development of a child with ID, the desire to gain new knowledge about their children, the presence of a coordinated system of educational influence in the family, and emotional acceptance of the child.

Results of questionnaire 2

The 40% of preschool parents received from 0 to 20 points, which indicates that they should pay as much attention to their children as possible. This indicates that parents do not know their child's abilities, interests, and problems well enough; they are not aware of the impact of their own example and behavior on the parenting process. Among parents of younger schoolchildren, this indicator was slightly lower – 30%. The generalized result of the study of the two groups is 35%.

The 40% of the surveyed parents raising preschool children received the number of points in the range from 21 to 35. The same result was shown by parents of younger schoolchildren. This indicates that parents sometimes pay attention to their children's problems, but do not have the ability, knowledge or time to solve them. Especially low scores were obtained for the question “if the child did something wrong, do you understand that this may be the result of your incorrect upbringing?”. The 60% of parents gave a negative answer, which indicates that they are not sufficiently aware of the consequences of family education on the formation of the child's personality.

The 20% of parents of preschoolers and 30% of parents of younger schoolchildren received 36 – 50 points, which indicates good relations in the family, which allow them to solve problem situations; mutual understanding between family members, their understanding of the needs and abilities of the child.

Results of the questionnaire “Analysis of Family Relationships” by E. Eidemiller

According to the hyper- and hypoprotection scales, 50% of respondents are characterized by hyperprotection education, in which parents devote a lot of time and attention to the child, and its upbringing is the central matter in the life of parents. In 70% of this number of parents, hyperprotection is combined with indulging all the desires and needs of the child, that is, there is indulgent overprotection. In addition, overprotection among those parents who prefer this type of upbringing is combined with a phobia of losing a child. The reason for this is an exaggerated idea of the “fragility” of the child, its soreness and vulnerability. The attitude of parents to the child in this case is formed under the influence of the accumulated fear of losing the child. The phobia of losing a child is especially acute in cases where the child, in addition to the main disorder, also has chronic somatic or other diseases.

Hypoprotection-type parenting is inherent in 30% of the surveyed parents. This is a type of upbringing in which the child is out of the attention of parents, the father or mother “does not have time for the child”. It is given attention only from time to time when something serious happens. The 35% of parents in this group have high scores on the scale of “Ignoring the needs of the child”. In this case, the physiological needs of the child are usually met, and as for the spiritual needs of the child, its emotional contacts, communication with parents, the desire for love, the desire of parents to satisfy them is insufficient. The 50% of parents in this group have high scores on the scale of “Excessive requirements (responsibilities) for the child”. Such indicators are typical for parents of younger schoolchildren. The

requirements for the child in this case are very high and do not correspond to their capabilities. Parents expect their child to succeed in their training, require them to perform duties that are too hard for them, and do not take into account the presence of intellectual underdevelopment or difficulties of the child.

The 25% of respondents exceed the permissible number of points on the scale “Instability of parenting style”. The obtained result may indicate that there is no unified tactics for raising a child between family members and clearly formulated, purposeful educational requirements.

Almost 40% of the parents surveyed received high scores on a scale that reflects their child's preference for childish, infantile qualities that do not correspond to his age. If we correlate these results with the scale of “Hyperprotection”, then we can say that they complement each other, since it is excessive guardianship that leads to the emergence of infantile behavior of a child, delays in the formation of necessary skills and abilities inherent in a certain age.

The 50% of all respondents are characterized by rather high scores on the scale of “Educational uncertainty of parents”. They “follow” the whims of the child, give in even in those matters in which, in their opinion, it is impossible to give in. The child manipulates the parents, they seem to feel guilty that the child has violations, and in everything they concede.

In 20% of the surveyed parents, there is an underdevelopment of parental feelings, that is, the driving forces of family education are not love and acceptance of the child, but rather duty and the desire to avoid judging other people. The child is rather a burden for parents, although they formally fulfill their duties.

The introduction of conflict between spouses in the sphere of education is typical for 20% of respondents surveyed. This is such a mistake in upbringing, which is characterized by a mismatch of the educational potential of the family, that is, the father and mother make different, and sometimes opposite requirements for the child. In one case, there is a combination of indulging overprotection of the mother with ignoring the father.

A generalized analysis of the results of the study showed a low level of development of family relationships, mistakes in raising children.

Conclusions

So, a general analysis of the results of the study of families raising children with intellectual disabilities allows us to draw the following conclusions:

- the families of the children who participated in the study are average;
- not all parents adequately assess the condition of their children, do not imagine possible problems in school education or independent life associated with disorders of psychophysical development;
- parents almost do not show any initiatives in cooperation with specialists of the educational institution, although they do not refuse to cooperate;

– there are significant differences in the attitude to the problems and opportunities of their children among parents of preschoolers and schoolchildren: most parents of preschool children do not seek to understand the problems and difficulties of their child, pay insufficient attention to it, are sure that the problem is temporary, and are determined to teach the child in a regular school; parents of school-age children are already more realistic in assessing the prospects and capabilities of their child, show a slightly higher interest in cooperation with specialists;

– in general, most families formally follow the recommendations for raising a child provided by the institution's specialists, and do not understand the role of the family in the correctional impact on the child.

These results indicate an insufficient level of readiness of parents for family upbringing of children with intellectual disabilities. The reasons for unavailability, as evidenced by the results of an experimental study, are:

– insufficient awareness of parents about the development of children with intellectual disabilities;

– low motivation of parents to get more information about the specifics of their children's development;

– lack of understanding about taking into account the peculiarities of psychophysical development of children in family education;

– lack of partnership interaction between parents and specialists in the development, training and upbringing of children with intellectual disabilities;

– mistakes in choosing family education tactics;

– the presence of parents' need for psychological help.

The results of the experimental study indicate the need to develop psychological and pedagogical support for preparing parents for family education of children with intellectual disabilities, which will be a promising area of our scientific research.

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