

THE CONTRIBUTION AND INVOLVEMENT OF FAMILIES IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Cazan Luminița-Magda¹
Colegiul Tehnic „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Suceava¹
lamaitza_07@yahoo.com¹

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Abstract: Inclusive education offers equal opportunities, accessibility, and the enabling environment in which children with special educational needs (SEN) benefit from a direct response to individual needs. Also, the collaboration of the family with the teaching staff is extremely important. Together with these, with the specialists of the field, they are involved in the creation of action plans applicable at home that will facilitate and produce positive effects in the child's educational experience. The purpose of the work: investigating the role of the family in the integration process of children with SEN in mainstream schools. The questionnaire was conducted on a number of 70 parents whose children are enrolled and attend school courses at the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Technical College Suceava. For confirmation, we conducted a survey with the parents of children with SEN, based on a questionnaire. Following the interpretation of the questionnaire, the conclusions were eloquent, the family is indispensable in the effort to integrate children with SEN in mainstream schools, in order to achieve success.

Introduction

The social, cultural and technological changes of the late 20th and early 21st centuries have had a significant impact on all areas of human activity, creating new conditions for the development of children, young people and adults [8,9]. The integration of children with SEN in mainstream schools through an inclusive education requires the achievement of an interdependence between legislative, educational, family, social, cultural and technological factors. "Special educational requirements are those requirements that derive from the special needs of some people, generated by the existence of dysfunctions at the intellectual, sensory, physical, psycho-affective, socio-economic, cultural level" [1]. The help and support of parents and other family members contributes directly to the process of school integration, influences the success of the integration of the child with special needs in mainstream schools. Family is the most important resource for children with SEN.

Most of the time, parents are the first to identify the learning difficulties faced by the child, begin the diagnosis and initiate the intervention process for an inclusive education.

The integration process of children with SEN in mainstream schools has many benefits (promotes diversity, acceptance, empathy, etc.), but also certain challenges (behavioral barriers, lack of teacher specialization, lack of resources, difficulties in adapting to an inclusive environment standardized. Integration as a process is complex and requires the involvement of several decision-making factors. Special Educational Requirements (SEN) represent educational needs, additional, complementary to the general objectives of education, adapted to individual particularities and those characteristics of a certain deficiency/disability or learning disorders/difficulties or of another nature, as well as complex assistance of a medical, social nature and/or educational" [2]. Inclusive education - "A principle that values the well-being of all students, respects their inherent dignity and autonomy, and recognizes their specific needs and their ability to be effectively included in and contribute to society." Art. 2, paragraph 10 (b) [3]. Achieving a positive result in this sense requires collaboration and a concrete involvement of all parties, starting from the family and the school to the national authorities and the community. Only through such cooperation can we obtain an inclusive school framework that supports all children regardless of their needs, that offers equal opportunities in education. The context of the integration of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) aims equally at:

1. National policy and legislative framework: The Ministry of Education proposes policies to support the integration of children with special needs, ensuring funding for teachers in the training process, for the purchase of additional resources used in the educational process, as well as for the need to adapt the curriculum.

The legislation of many countries has undergone changes aligning with international norms, in this case, "UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" [3] and the "Declaration of Salamanca" [4], adopted at the world conference "Access and Quality" organized by UNESCO and the Spanish Ministry of Education, from 7-10 June 1994.

2. Inclusive education - "A principle that values the well-being of all students, respects their inherent dignity and autonomy, and recognizes their specific needs and their ability to be effectively included in and contribute to society." Art. 2, paragraph 10 (b) [3]. Achieving a positive result in this sense requires collaboration and a concrete involvement of all parties, starting from the family and the school to the national authorities and the community. Only through such cooperation can we obtain an inclusive school framework that supports all children regardless of their needs, that offers equal opportunities in education.

3.Changes in the school framework: The school framework changes the curriculum, the teaching strategies, adapting the teaching-learning-evaluation styles to stimulate the participative-active activity of students with SEN.

4.Training and supporting teaching staff: The professional training of teachers is centered on inclusive educational strategies and methods. They are initiated on how to adapt the teaching materials used as well as how to create an inclusive learning environment. In the process of implementing individualized classroom plans for students with special needs, teachers receive help from counselors and itinerant teachers, and school psychologists.

5.Infrastructure and resources: Also, for success to be achieved in the total adaptation process, it is also important to adapt the buildings and school bodies so that they do not present movement barriers for students with physical disabilities. And of course, assistive technology and adapted teaching materials that support the learning process of children with SEN cannot be missing from the adaptation process.

6.Challenges and barriers: In the process of school integration, there are also situations that complicate or stop integration. The lack of empathy, acceptance of diversity, unfavorable attitudes, bad will, the shortage of human resources due to the lack of support teachers or the small number of specialists who collaborate with the teaching staff, insufficient funding, cultural and social differences are barriers with negative effects that can intervene on perceptions of students with SEN and implicitly on the appropriate implementation of integration programs.

7.The benefit and impact of integration: The integration of children into mainstream schools directly contributes to the emotional and social development of children with special needs, provides them with opportunities to learn and create connections with peers, opens the way for them to live as independently as possible adapting to society.

8.The role of the family in the integration process: The family's involvement and interest in the child's education is essential in the school integration process. Modern child-centered psychopedagogy is based on the belief that the family is the first educator and has the greatest potential for shaping [5].

The level of the family-school partnership is directly proportional to the success of the integration, to the achievement of the child's best results in school life. Achieving expected results in the integration process also depends on the involvement of parents in the realization of personalized intervention plans (PIP). These plans must meet the individual needs of the child as well as the needs of the family.

The results of parents' involvement in the education of students with SEN were convincing and were proven by the results obtained in the children's education, but also on the formation of positive attitudes and behaviors. Parents input is visible where the family-school relationship is active, collaborative, where the school makes

efforts to offer parents a wide range of curricular and extracurricular activities in which they can intervene. Parents will have the opportunity to choose the activities in which their child will participate and where to bring their contribution.

Of course, communication plays an important role in the integration process of children with SEN in mainstream schools: „Communication is now considered a much more complex process than the simple traditional sender-message-receiver model" [6].

The exchange of information about the mental, motor and emotional needs of the child must be permanent and, in both directions, family school and vice versa. The information received becomes necessary data in supporting and guiding the child towards participation in certain activities. Following the discussions and opinions, effective decisions can be made for the children and favorable to the integration process. The researchers argue that the results of children with SEN are clearly superior when the parents' input is participative-active in nature. The early collaboration with the school and with the specialists of the field offers opportunities in the development of new skills of the parents, increases their confidence that they can do more in the educational process of the child. Parents, as volunteers, can supplement the school's human resources when the child's behavior does not require the presence of a specialized teacher. Therefore, the realization of a family-school-community partnership brings qualitative benefits and a harmonious development of children with SEN, preparing them for society as independent and active individuals.

Material-method:The study was carried out using the following methods: The bibliographic study, stage in which existing information about the proposed topic in the relevant literature was verified and analyzed; The observation was carried out to gather data on the role and need for parents involved in the educational process and school integration of children with SEN in mainstream schools; Investigation based on a questionnaire designed from open questions.

The purpose of the work: investigating the role of the family in the integration process of children with SEN in mainstream schools. The questionnaire was conducted on a number of 70 parents whose children are enrolled and attend school courses at the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Technical College Suceava.

Results and Discussions

This study aims to analyze and discuss parents' perceptions of the integration of children with special educational needs (SEN) in schools. Using various questionnaires, we collected data on personal assistance, communication with teachers, curricular adaptation, feedback received, access to resources and the school's flexibility in responding to the specific needs of children with SEN. By

interpreting the results, we can get a clear picture of the challenges and progress made in the process of integrating children with SEN into the education system.

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Research items:

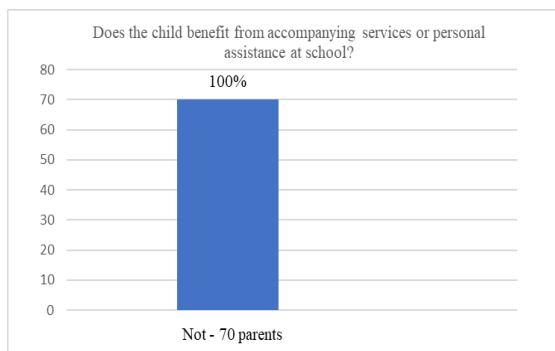


Fig.1. Does the child benefit from escorting or personal assistance at school?

Certain deficiencies involve a parent having the child swim in classes. There are situations in which these provisions are violated by the parents, a fact that complicates the school activity of the students. Most children with special needs do not need permanent support from one of their parents at school, but their involvement, not necessarily through physical presence in classes, brings obvious benefits in the integration process. In figure number 1, all 70 parents surveyed answered that their child does not receive personal assistance at school.

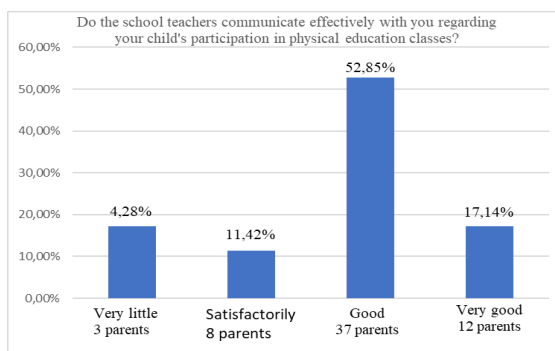


Fig. 2. Do the school teachers communicate effectively with you regarding your child's participation in class?

In order for the integration process to become as easy as possible, both the school and the family must have all the individual data of the children. Figure 2 highlights that, 3 parents claim that they communicate very little with teachers, 8 parents say that there is satisfactory communication, 37 of them claim that communication with teachers is good, while 12 parents have very good communication with teachers.

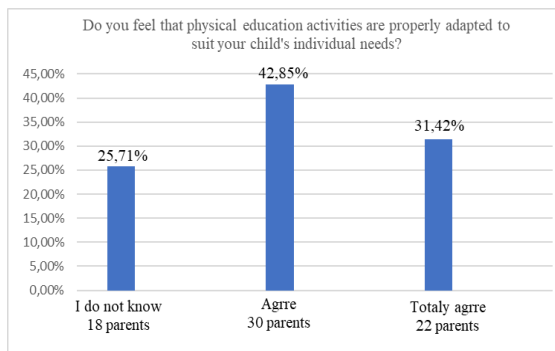


Fig.3. Do you feel that school activities are appropriately adapted to suit your child's individual needs?

Of the 70 parents surveyed, 25.71% of them do not know if the school activities correspond to the individual needs of the children, while 31,66% believe that they agree with the curricular adaptation for children with SEN, and 31,42% are completely according to school adaptation strategies.

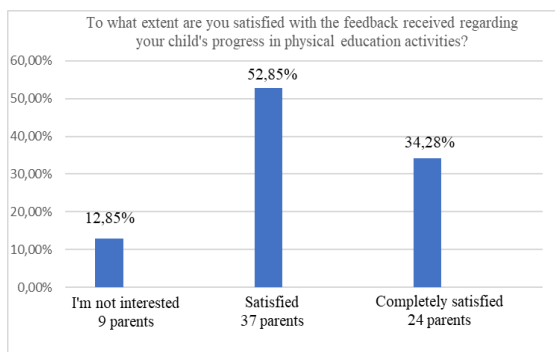


Fig. 4. How satisfied are you with the feedback you receive about your child's progress in school activities?

The feedback received by parents on the progress made by children following the application of the adapted programs is 12.85% satisfactory, 52.85% are completely satisfied, and 34,28% of respondents are not interested in whether progress has been achieved following the application of the programs adapted.

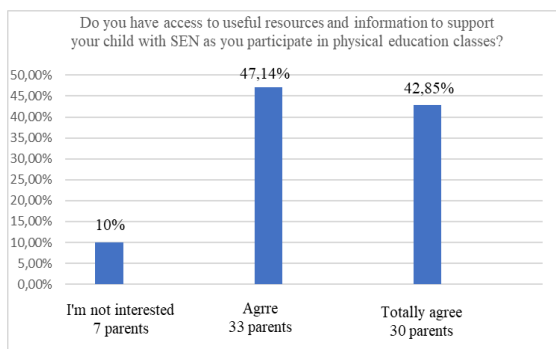


Fig.5. You have access to useful resources and information to support your child with SEN in attending school ?

The information and material resources support both the development of new skills for parents and are intended to help children with CES in the integration process of these students.

Among the parents surveyed, 10% are not interested in this aspect, 47,14% agree with the resources and information offered to them and 42,85% completely agree with the informational and material support offered.

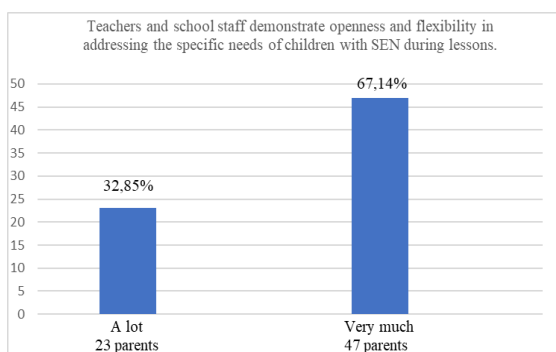


Fig.6. Teachers and school staff demonstrate openness and flexibility in addressing the specific needs of children with SEN during lessons.

The efficiency of the school integration process is based on the family-school-community partnership. These factors are interdependent and equally essential. Figure 6 highlights how the school staff is concerned with the integration of children with special needs in a school setting conducive to performance growth. Of the respondents, 32,85% answered that the school is flexible and willing to look for and apply the best school integration options for students with SEN, most, 67,14%, claim that the school fully submits to the needs of the students with everything this process entails, promoting and supporting diversity and acceptance regardless of disability or impairment.

Discussions: The survey results show a wide acceptance (91%) of adaptability and innovation in addressing the diverse needs of students. This openness can facilitate the improvement of pupils' physical fitness through the application of acmeological methodologies. PE and sport teachers show a positive attitude towards change and are willing to incorporate acmeological principles to optimize their educational practice [10].

Conclusions: For the process of school integration to be conducive and effective, several decision-making factors contribute. One of them is and is based on the family-school relationship. The family is essentially educational and emotional support for students with SEN. Parents are the spokespersons, the voice of these children. between teachers and family members. Many times, parents are the first to diagnose a situation involving their child's entry into the school integration process. They are the ones who have the most eloquent information on the child's disability, the context in which that disability appeared or developed. The idea that the parents are the cause of these disabilities must be ruled out from the very beginning, eliminating the possible blame of the parents. Therefore, it is indubitable to support ideas such as parents having a determining role in children's school education, in the process of school integration and, of course, socially, as an individual, an integral part of the society of which he is a part.

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