



THE NEED FOR PARENTAL SKILL TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR THE PARENTS OF THE CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

KEYWORDS

Learning disability, psychosocial well - being and parental training programmes

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ABSTRACT

Learning disabilities refers to a group of mental disorders characterized by difficulties in learning basic academic skills that are not consistent with the person's chronological age, educational opportunities or intellectual abilities (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Children with this disorder might often manifest disturbing behaviors such as agitation and temper tantrums, and these disturbances significantly interfere with their activities of daily living. The family environment and attitude towards child care is an essential component of the bio psychosocial development of children, especially those with special health needs such as children with SLD. Smythe et al. (2003) suggested that educational or clinical treatment of Learning Disabilities without considering familial contexts and needs, significantly reduces the chances of successful intervention outcomes. Parents play a crucial role in building up the positive psychosocial well being of the child with learning disability. Caring for a child with LD can be frustrating because of poor progress despite hard work. The best that a parent can do for the child is to become informed and aware about the child's condition. If the parents are not the child's side, who else will be? The drive of the study is to advocate the parents for their children in a constructive way by imparting parental training programmes.

Introduction

The birth of a child is an exciting, life changing event. Family members look at the new child and wonder: Will he/she be a football star, will she be a famous musician, and will she/he become Prime Minister of the India! But what happens when this new child has a disability? What if there are questions about the special needs this child may have? Many questions arise in the minds of the parents and they pass through the phase of gloominess and lose confidence in their child rearing.

Children with learning disability and related disorders puzzle parents because of their many abilities and disabilities. It can also be difficult to understand how much of their behavior the nature of the condition and how much is oppositional. Parenting approaches that include clear, concise instructions; structure without rigidity; nurturing a child's gifts and interests; and constant approval of positive behavior help parents feel better and help children feel safe. It takes time for both children and parents to embrace the concept that being different does not mean being inferior and, in fact, can be a good thing. Parents need to be empowered and praised to help them nurture and praise their children. It is critically important to reassure parents that these kids with learning disabilities are smart and can learn; that they often possess unrecognized talents that can help them thrive as adults.

Psychological Phases encountered by the parents

Being told that your child has a disability can be as traumatizing as leaning of a family member's sudden death. Many parents are stunned by such news. Receiving such a message can produce overwhelming emotions of shock, disbelief, anxiety, fear and despair. For some parents, just trying to comprehend the disparity between their desires for their child and the disability that exists compounds their emotional and intellectual efforts to adjust to the situation. They may feel grief, depression, or shame. Some may also ask questions of "why me" and conclude that they are being punished for sins or bad acts of the past. Depending on the severity of the disability and the magnitude of the demand for coping, a few parents may even contemplate death for the child or themselves. These thoughts re-

present an all-encompassing need to achieve inner peace.

Need for the study

Parents know their children better than anyone else and have the most complete understanding of a child's physical, social, developmental history. Parents' visions of a typical life for their children can come true when they develop a positive understanding of themselves and their children with learning disabilities. Exploring specific learning disability through the parental eyes is an important paradigm shift in the intervention program for the children with learning disability. Focusing on children alone will not resolve the problem. Emplanning the parents, knowledge about the learning disabilities and psycho educational will endure to travel the bumpy roads in a smoother way [Carol J. Dolan, 2009].

Importance of parent's psychological well - being

Parents are often the best advocates for their children especially children with a learning disability. The true parents advocacy is a largely positive process, which should build on the child's strengths and challenges and development in a constructive way. Patience, consistency, warmth, firmness, and individualized attention are some of the positive features that are often mentioned as requisites to parenting. However, these attributes are not always easily attained because parents often have numerous roles and demands that they have to fulfill in any given day. Parents of children with disabilities often experience higher levels of stress and less subjective well-being

Elevated stress levels have been associated with coercive parent-child interactions (Bor, Sanders & Markie-Dadds, (2002) and increased risk of family maladjustment (Turnbull & Ruef, 1996). However, strong parental-self efficacy has generally been found to translate into positive parenting behaviors (Coleman & Karraker, 2000). High parenting self-efficacy has been found to predict parental responsiveness to children's needs (Donovan, Leavitt & Walsh, 1997) and greater satisfaction with parenting (Coleman & Karraker, 2000). Parental psychosocial health can have a significant effect on the parent - child relationship with consequences for the later psychological health of the child.

Objectives of the study

1. To create an awareness among the parents on learning disability.
2. Work toward in building a positive relationship between the children and parents.
3. To assess need for parenting skill for the parents of children with learning disability.
4. To develop programme on parenting skills based on the need assessment theme.
5. Develop a parent's guide value while dealing with their children.

Methods & Materials

This paper deals with the precondition need for parental training programme for the parents of the children with learning disability. Descriptive research design was used to the study need for the training programme to the parents as they play key role in building up the psychosocial well being which in turn endorse self-esteem of the children with learning disability. Parents were selected whose children are attending the remedial intervention programme in Sambhav Foundation. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were framed to draw the sample size for the study. Implementing the criteria the sample size was limited to eleven adopting convenient sampling.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Parents whose children are identified as having learning disability recently period of 3 to 6 months
- Parents from Bangalore City age groups from 30 - 50 years.
- Both parents should live together along with the children.
- Those parents which children age group ranging from 7 to 12 years.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Avoidance of the respondents who lives single in rearing the children with learning difficulties.
- Children with IQ ranging below 70 are not taken into consideration.

The session began with icebreakers and then proceeded with open discussions on topic about parenting styles and the difficulties faced by the parents in day to activities. Adopting group discussion among the parents did data collection and concerns were noted down.

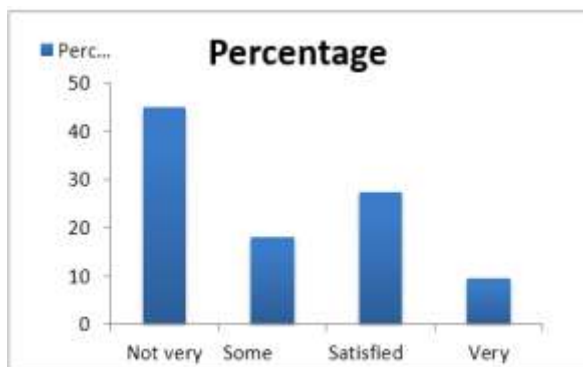
Results and Discussions

As far as the personal profile of the respondents is concerned, majority of the respondents (76 percent) were in the age category of 36 - 45 years. Analysis was also done on the basis of the level of support their children required in the daily living skills. The result shows that 54 percent of the respondent's children require little support in daily living skills and personal cares like checking requires in combing the hair and personal hygiene.

Percentage distribution of the respondents (parents) about confident about parenting:

Confident about parenting	Scores	Percentage %
Not very	5	45
Some	2	18
Satisfied	3	27.5
Very	1	9.5

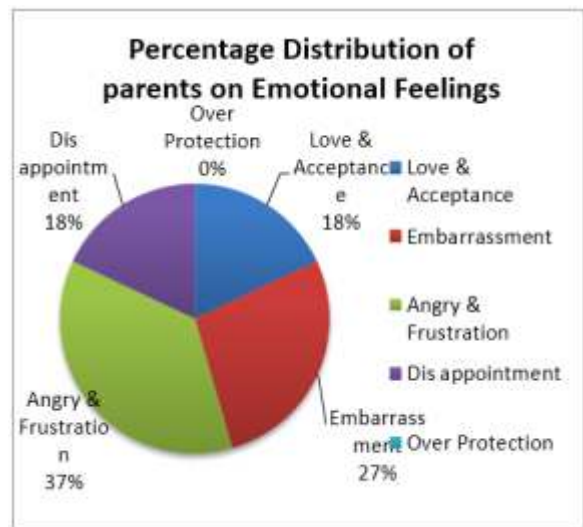
It was found that 45% of the parents are not very confident about parenting against 9.5% of very confident about parenting.



Parents having difficulty in accepting their child's disability experience pain and frustrations. Their full energies generally cannot be directed toward understanding the child's disability, level of development and readiness for the participation in the intervention process for the children.

Percentage distribution of the respondents (parents) on emotional feelings:

Emotional Feelings	Scores	Percentage %
Love & Acceptance	2	18
Embarrassment	3	27.5
Angry & Frustration	4	36.5
Dis appointment	2	18
Over Protection	0	0



The table shows that 37% of the parents expressed feelings of angry and frustration, which conversely influence mental health of the children with learning disability. Only 18 % of the parents expressed a feeling of love and acceptance that can pave a way to enhance positive emotional health and lead to better performance of the child. High stress levels among parents of children with disabilities can potentially have negative consequences for the child, the parent, and the family (Plant & Sanders, 2007).

Most of the respondent (parents) sensitized about the importance of psychosocial well being of the self and parenting strategies benefits their children to build a positive self-image.

Suggestions

It is often said when you are dealing with children: "Treat them as you want them to be, not how they are!" The group-based interaction on parenting training provides an excellent vehicle for helping parents to instill friendly family situation.

The non-punitive environment helps children and parents express their feelings and thoughts with the support of program facilitators. The goal of the family session is to increase the cooperation of all family members. There are parents who have lost faith in their child and consequently the child has lost faith in himself and his ability to learn. The barrier to self-confidence becomes so great that the child gives up.

The programme is to improve and enhance family togetherness and cohesion, promoting positive parenting practices and reduce negative, abusive parenting, as well as significantly reducing child behavior problems and increasing child competencies.

The Parental Skill Training Programme will be useful in

- Showing significant improvements in parents' use of discipline and children's behavior.
- Showing significant improvements in parenting practices and their satisfaction with their couple relationship.
- Showing significant improvement in the child's emotional well-being.

Conclusion

Children with learning disabilities grow up to be adults with learning disabilities. That is, many of the difficulties experienced in childhood continue into and through adulthood. Nevertheless, some individuals with learning disabilities follow a life path that leads them to success, becoming productive members of society and living satisfying and rewarding lives. Parental role-plays a vital importance to help the children with learning disability to arise up with positive life outcome. In this study the researcher acknowledged the need for emotional support and an intervention in training the parents of the children with learning disability in the child's developmental progress. More training on parenting styles, identifying the strength and weakness of the child's capabilities and in goal setting for the parents will enhance positive behavior and attitude change in the children.

How the parental Skill Training Programme will benefit the Child and Parent:

- Children will feel free to discuss their problems and concerns with parents instead of withdrawing.
- They will learn self-discipline, self-control and an inner sense of personal responsibility.
- Parents will learn how to work with each other instead of against each other.
- Parents will experience fewer angry outbursts and more problem solving.
- Everyone can participate in rule setting so all will feel motivated to comply with the rules.
- Fewer power struggles—less tension, less resentment, more fun, more peace, more love.

The parent-training programme emphasizes the parents' ability to learn and implement novel problem solving techniques. The programme helps the parents to pay attention to positive behaviours by the child and to utilize positive praise to ensure that the child knows his/her positive behaviors are being recognized. These in turn encourage the child in independent play activities and improve the parent-child relationship.

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