AWARENESS AND COOPERATION WITH PARENTS AND FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH SPEECH DISORDERS AS A CRUCIAL PREREQUISITE FOR SPEECH THERAPY WORK

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ABSTRACT

Speech disorders in children represent a significant developmental challenge that can affect communication, academic achievement, social interaction, and emotional well-being. The effectiveness of speech therapy depends not only on the professional intervention provided by a speech therapist but also on the active involvement and awareness of the child's family. This study examines the role of parental awareness and family participation in the speech therapy process for children with speech disorders. Particular attention is given to the forms of parent–specialist collaboration, the integration of speech therapy techniques into everyday family communication, and the factors influencing the effectiveness of such cooperation. The literature review demonstrates that family-centered intervention, systematic communication between specialists and parents, and the creation of a supportive home environment contribute to the consolidation and generalization of speech skills acquired during therapy. Parental education and active participation may also reduce anxiety and helplessness, increase parental confidence, and promote more positive parent–child communication. The study emphasizes that effective speech therapy requires a continuous, collaborative, and trust-based partnership between the child, family, and specialist. Strengthening parental awareness and integrating families into therapeutic and educational processes can contribute to improved speech outcomes, social inclusion, and the child's overall developmental well-being.

Keywords*: speech disorders, speech therapy, logopedics, parental awareness, family involvement, parent–specialist collaboration, family-centered intervention, speech development, early intervention, inclusive education.*

INTRODUCTION

Speech disorders represent one of the most critical developmental challenges in children, significantly impacting not only their communication skills and academic progress, but also their social and emotional development. These issues are often combined with various psychological, cognitive, and social difficulties, requiring comprehensive and systematic work that engages both professional and family resources. Logopedics, as a scientifically grounded profession, aims to improve the speech and communication skills of children with speech disorders (Bessonova, 2010; Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Center, 2022; Volkova, 2018). The family serves as one of the primary environments for a child's development, and its involvement in the speech therapy process is essential for ensuring the continuity of the specialist's work, reinforcing the child's achievements, and applying improved communication skills within a natural environment. Parents' awareness and active participation not only improve the effectiveness of speech therapy interventions, but also contribute to building trust and partnership between the family and the specialist—which constitutes an ethical and professional responsibility.

The present research aims to identify the level of awareness among parents and families of children with speech disorders, the types of their participation, and the impact of intervention effectiveness on speech therapy. This research is important not only from a scientific perspective, but also practically, as it can serve as a foundation for enhancing the effectiveness of speech therapy services, parent training, and the improvement of inclusive education programs (Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Center, 2022; Kuznetsova, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In modern logopedics and special education, speech disorders are viewed as complex, multi-factorial phenomena that affect not only the formation of a child's speech system, but also their entire cognitive, emotional, and social development. The reviewed literature emphasizes that speech disorders are often accompanied by secondary disorders – such as reduced self-esteem, communicative and social avoidance, and restricted interpersonal relationships – which necessitate a comprehensive and systemic organization of corrective work. From this perspective, overcoming speech disorders is no longer viewed as an isolated professional influence, but as an ongoing process involving the child's entire social development environment, primarily the family (Antonyan et al., n.d.).

According to socio-cultural developmental theories, the fundamentals of which were formulated by sociocultural scholarship, speech formation and development are driven by social interaction. A child's communicative abilities develop not only through targeted instruction, but also during everyday communicative experiences where adults act as mediators. Related perspectives emphasize that supportive adult participation in a child's daily activities fosters the natural development of communication skills. In this context, the family is seen as the primary environment where speech is used in natural, emotionally rich, and semantically meaningful situations. Consequently, the effectiveness of speech therapy work largely depends on how well corrective interventions are integrated into the home environment (Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Center, 2022).

In modern speech therapy approaches, the concept of family-centered intervention holds a central place, grounded in the active involvement of parents and family members in the child's speech development. The literature notes that parents - being the child's daily communication partners - actually exert a greater influence on reinforcing speech than even the most effective professional sessions if the latter are not continued at home. This approach assumes
that a parent should not only be informed about the child's speech difficulties, but also have a clear understanding of their own role and potential. The reviewed literature stresses that active parental involvement in the speech therapy process significantly increases intervention efficacy (Ivanova, 2024).

The reviewed sources suggest that family-centered programs contribute not only to speech progress, but also to building parental confidence and responsibility. Parental awareness is currently viewed as a structural component of speech therapy. The literature highlights that parental education fosters a shift in attitude, reducing fear, feelings of helplessness, and denial mechanisms (UNICEF Armenia & Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University, 2019; Kukushina, 2010). By understanding the patterns of speech disorder development, the parent begins to perceive the child's difficulties not as an insurmountable problem, but as a developmental characteristic that requires time, consistency, and professional support. This shift positively impacts both parent-child relationships and the quality of collaboration with the specialist.

Family-specialist interaction in modern theoretical models is characterized as a partnership. The reviewed literature emphasizes that effective collaboration is possible only when the specialist moves away from a hierarchical stance and regards the parent as an equal partner (Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Center, 2022; Volkova, 2018). Parents possess insights regarding the child's developmental history, behavioral characteristics, and daily communicative experience that cannot be fully captured through standard tests or evaluations. A similar position is found in the reviewed literature, where parent-specialist collaboration is viewed as a process based on mutual trust and shared responsibility. Integrating this information into the planning of corrective work allows sessions to become more individualized and targeted (Tadevosyan, 2006; Antonova, 2015).

At the same time, authors note that difficulties often arise in parent-specialist relationships due to communication asymmetry, complex professional jargon, and the neglect of the parent's emotional state (Ageev, 2016; Charchyan & Movsisyan, 2019; Eliseeva, 2024). The literature emphasizes that an empathetic approach, active listening, and simple, clear communication from the specialist are key conditions for building a trustworthy relationship. Without this trust, parent participation often remains formal, and corrective work yields unstable results.

In the context of parent-child relationships, speech disorders can become a source of tension. The reviewed literature notes that some parents tend toward overprotection and speaking on behalf of the child, which limits the child's communicative initiative, while others may exhibit emotional distance due to psychological defense mechanisms (Antonyan et al., n.d.; Amanatova et al., 2010). Both extremes can negatively affect speech development. Conversely, a supportive, accepting, and encouraging family environment promotes the child's communicative activity and natural speech growth.

METHODOLOGY

The article is a literature-based conceptual analysis of parental awareness and family–speech therapist collaboration. Its discussion draws on the published works and methodological sources listed in the references. The original manuscript does not report an empirical study design, recruitment procedure, or a separately collected dataset; therefore, no participant-based findings are claimed here.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Not applicable. This article examines published literature and professional approaches rather than reporting interviews, surveys, or observations with recruited participants.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The material consists of the Armenian- and Russian-language publications and methodological resources cited in the original manuscript. The discussion organizes their ideas around parental awareness, cooperation with speech therapists, continuity of home-based support, and interdisciplinary participation. This is a narrative synthesis; no systematic-search protocol or quantitative analysis is reported.

RESULTS

The literature-based synthesis in the original article identifies the following recurring areas of practice and concern:

Within modern inclusive education frameworks, the role of the family is re-evaluated as a core component of both the educational and corrective process. The reviewed literature highlights that family involvement not only improves a child's speech progress, but also aids their social integration, academic motivation, and emotional stability. Families that participate in planning and implementing their child's development serve as guarantors of intervention continuity (Istratova & Porfireva, 2024; Smirnova, 2018).

The effectiveness of collaboration with parents and families of children with speech disorders is also shaped by organizational formats and methodological approaches. Modern authors stress that parental involvement should not consist of isolated consultations, but must be systematic and continuous (Eletskaya & Gorbachevskaya, 2005; Mazanova, 2009). The reviewed literature notes that cooperation is most effective when it includes not only informational support, but also joint planning, discussion of outcomes, and progress monitoring, making the parent a full participant in the process.

When organizing speech therapy work, it is essential to consider the social, cultural, and educational characteristics of families. Various studies show that parental education levels, family communication styles, and expectations for the child significantly influence collaboration effectiveness (Antonyan et al., n.d.; Antonova, 2015; Kuznetsova, 2017). Therefore, the specialist must flexibly adapt their work to the needs of each specific family, avoiding rigid or superficial approaches. This stance helps prevent parental passivity or resistance and raises the quality of their participation.

Modern approaches also place high value on interdisciplinary collaboration, where the family is not an isolated element, but the central component of the entire system. Interaction between the speech therapist, educator, psychologist, and other specialists with the family helps create a unified framework of expectations and approaches, preventing contradictory messages and ensuring stability in the developmental environment. The success of this collaboration heavily relies on the level of family involvement and the establishment of a collaborative culture among specialists (Amanatova et al., 2010; Harutyunyan & Hovyan, 2018; Kukushina, 2010).

The early intervention factor also deserves special attention. Many authors note that early detection of speech disorders and timely collaboration with the family significantly increase corrective effectiveness. Raising parental awareness during early childhood helps prevent the worsening of speech difficulties and the formation of secondary disorders (Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Center, 2022; Volkova, 2018). Thus, parent awareness is viewed not just as a supporting element of corrective work, but as a preventative measure.

DISCUSSION

Finally, the success of working with families of children with speech disorders depends on how effectively the specialist fosters a sense of responsibility in parents. Parents who view themselves as active participants in their child's development demonstrate greater consistency in the corrective process, pay closer attention to the child's speech, and remain committed to continuing the work even during temporary setbacks. This approach helps sustain long-term intervention results.

Taken together, the reviewed arguments position family participation as a continuing partnership rather than a one-time consultation. These are interpretations of the cited literature, not measured outcomes from a new participant sample.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the most essential prerequisites for effective speech therapy support for children with speech disorders is targeted, continuous, and trust-based collaboration with the family. Speech therapy work cannot be limited solely to sessions between the specialist and the child, because the formation and reinforcement of a child's speech abilities continue within the family and daily environment.

Increasing the awareness of parents and family members enables them to properly understand the nature of their child's speech difficulties, the potential avenues for overcoming them, and the importance of implementing the techniques suggested by the specialist. An informed parent responds more constructively to speech challenges, avoids negative evaluations, and creates a supportive, encouraging communicative environment.

Effective collaboration between the family and the speech therapist facilitates the consolidation of skills acquired during therapy sessions and their transfer into everyday communication. Simultaneously, active parental involvement allows the specialist to gain a comprehensive understanding of the child's developmental traits, communicative behavior, and existing difficulties, leading to more tailored and successful intervention planning.

Thus, raising parental awareness and collaborating with families is not merely an optional addition to speech therapy work, but a core condition for its success. Through the unified partnership of specialist, child, and family, it is possible to create a supportive, safe, and stimulating environment that ensures the steady development of speech skills and promotes the child's full social and educational inclusion.

A limitation of the present article is that it provides a narrative, literature-based discussion and does not present original empirical data or a systematic review protocol. Accordingly, the conclusions should be understood as practice-oriented synthesis rather than causal evidence of intervention effectiveness.

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