PARENT ATTITUDES TOWARD STUTTERING IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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Introduction: In Bulgaria most of the preschool children aged 2-6 years attend all-day kindergartens. Usually there are speech therapists working at these institutions. They work without parental attendance during the sessions. This could be considered as a hypothetical cause for lack of knowledge among parents about stuttering and the ways

Method: To meet the purpose of this study was used Parent Attitudes toward Stuttering Inventory (PATSII) which is a part of the Cooper Personalized Fluency Control Therapy for Children (PFCT-C) by Cooper & Cooper (2003). This inventory is a check-list with 25 statements relevant to awareness of stuttering, parental feelings and behavior. The parents have to put a check if they agree or do not agree with the statement. PATSII was approved at two kindergartens in Blagoevgrad town. In the study were included 10 parents of stuttered children.

Results: All the parents filled up required statements. There are no identical answers between parents regarding the 25 statements (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

Discussion:

1. All the parents are worry about their child's stuttering and they think that their children will be able to recover fluency: may be it is a normal reaction for each parent having a problem with his child; parents always want the best future for their children. Sometimes this may have negative result regarding stuttering. Yairi & Ambrose (2005) mentioned that parents of stuttered children are over-protective and experience higher level of anxiety about their children.

2. Like a positive could be discussed a fact that all the parents do not agree their children use stuttering to get attention. They do not think that in comparison with other stuttered children this child’s stuttering is bad and do not agree their child have to be encouraged to do things with little demand on speech. It is a proof that they are observing child’s speech behavior in different situations and are trying to get answers on many questions regarding child’s stuttering.

3. Nearly to 90% of them do not have doubts for necessity of treatment and do not believe that if they ignore the stuttering, it will go away. They do not believe it is best not talk about their child’s stuttering with the child and to help child avoid difficult speaking situations. As well, parents do not agree that the child should be punished each time after stuttered speech. The results are not surprising, because we know that usually parents are trying to find an own way for interaction with their children and through this way they could find some proper modes. However, it does not mean they will be able to help their children without professional advices, because half of them (50%) do not know what to do about their child’s stuttering. If we take into consideration the fact that children have received treatment because of the stuttering for 6-9 months, it means that parents were not advised how to proceed at home. In this way we could not expect positive results from the treatment offered by the speech therapist at kindergarten (see Yairi & Ambrose, 2005 for different modes of parental involvement).

4. Like another positive result would be discussed this concerning Statements 21 & 23: 90% of parents do not agree they feel embarrased in public when their child’s stuttering and there is little doubt that their child is emotionally different from other children because of the stuttering. A favorable attitude towards child’s stuttered speech and emotionality could be helpful in the process of treatment.

5. Both children and their parents will be able to communicate and interact with friends, relatives and strangers without negative feelings because of stuttering.

6. Most of them (70%) do not agree the child could stop stuttering if a little effort was put to it and if he/she stop worrying about stuttering it will go away but in contrast to this statement they have found (80%) that telling their child to stop and start over again when stutter is helpful way to reduce stuttering. Again, here we can find the important role of speech therapist: he/she has to give advices when and how parents can ask their child to “start over again” (see Onslow, Packman, Harrison, 2003; Yairi & Ambrose, 2005).

Conclusion: One of the problems in Bulgaria is that at kindergartens speech therapists work without involving parents in speech therapy. All of parents included in the study are clear about necessarily of logopedical treatment but they are not a part of it. Although data show parents found some proper ways for interaction with their children, they are not certain how to do the best for them. For all of these statements we can apply different opinions mentioned in the literature of Logopedics by the scientists (Bennett, 2006; Bloodstein, 1995; Johnson, 1959; Yairi & Ambrose, 2005, etc.).

Bibliography:


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