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Importance of Family Characteristics for Psychomotor Development of Children with Developmental Dysphasia

Extended summary

Difficulties in sensory processing can represent the risk not only for the development of language and speech, but also for cognitive and motor abilities of children. Developmental dysphasia can be defined as specific language and speech disorder which is characterized by the impossibility of an adequate language development, despite an average or above average nonverbal intelligence, proper auditory and visual apparatus functioning, and absence of neurological problems and stimulating environment, without sensory, emotionally and other deprivations. It results from a brain dysfunction that significantly limits understanding, language development, and speech, thereby inhibiting the ability of children to communicate verbally and perform activities appropriate to their age and environment. Apart from the child, the consequences of various developmental disorders also have an impact on the family. The aim of the research was to investigate the relationship of sensory and psychomotor abilities of children with developmental dysphasia with socio-demographic characteristics of their primary families. Sex, education, number of children, and birth order are some characteristics which can be

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significant for the developmental difficulties caused by the developmental dysphasia diagnostics and treatment. The sample consisted of 47 parents of preschool children with the developmental dysphasia diagnosis, which were included in logopedic treatment. In the research, the Modified Sensory Profile (Dunn & Brown, 1997) and a questionnaire about socio-demographic characteristics of the family were used. The data were processed by descriptive statistics, t test for independent samples, and ANOVA. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences on psychomotor dimensions of sensory processing according to educational level of parents, as well as the birth order and the number of children. Children who are second born and in families with more than one child are under greater risk of sedentary life style and have worse results on the Low Endurance Tone subscale. The data indicate that there is a great need for a wider spectrum of opportunities for intervention and support for parents by including them into different workshops, but also for the inclusion of the whole family in the physical activities which focus on the importance of the coordinated abilities and fine motorics, especially when it comes to the preschool children. The work should also be directed towards including other logopedic specialists into this work with children (surdologists, somatopedists), additional methods and techniques such as sensory rooms, but also additional work and introduction of physical activities adjusted to the age and disorder, as well as additional work of teachers of nonstandard subjects at the beginning of schooling, e.g. PE teachers, music and art teachers. Inclusion of children with developmental dysphasia would enable them to return to the safe field of nonverbal communication where they could express their creative potential and skills, unspoiled by the poor speech skills. That would contribute to improving their self-image, raise motivation and interest in work, and enable them to show to themselves and others that they can be equally hardworking and successful. In this way, children could widen the circle of social contacts, which would contribute to a better social integration and socialization, development of communication skills, enable them to understand the wishes and needs of other children, and encourage them to form cooperative relations and mutual help. On the other hand, especially PE teachers would have a space for introducing a child into a zone of the following development (according to the view of Vygotsky), where the good results, skills and abilities in the domains of sports and physical abilities (especially those which focus on different levels of coordination ability) could bring into connection with verbal contents and in that way improve children's vocabulary, as well as their perception of certain terms through their application in practice. It would be wise to consider some opportunities for an integration of adapted team sports with ball in the PE curriculum. An additional possibility for such activities was introduced by the option of the extended stay in schools, where it is possible to spend additional time doing these activities, especially by teachers and PE teachers, because they have much more opportunity to cater for individual needs of children with developmental dysphasia disorder.

Keywords: motor abilities, learning difficulties, parents, sedentary lifestyle

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