

Parental Competence with Autism's Children: Current and Perspective Research

(Hanna Khvorova)

Institute for Social and Political Psychology National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine

Introduction. This research presents and tests the theoretical model of parental competence with autism's children. Autism is a special type of functioning of the nervous system that results in a deficit of social functions (which is not primarily connects with a decrease in intelligence), has a varied effect on many systems of the organism (cognitive, communicative-speech, sensory, basal systems (food, sleep, etc.) and requires significant and highly specialized care services in all spheres of life. Parents raising children with disabilities are faced with additional problems, compared with parents of normotypic children. They include stigma, lack of acceptance by the larger society as well as additional daily hassles specific to the child's mental or physical condition (Burlaka, Shevtsov, & Lundquist, 2007). Parents caring for a child with ASD tend to experience additional stress that affects their ability to parent (Baker-Ericzen, Brookman-Fraze, & Stahmer, 2006). In addition, parents of children with ASD have to avoid intrusiveness that may hinder children's development of independent living (Wood, 2006) and communication skills (Siller & Sigman, 2002).

We have determined that under the condition of transformation of parental functions (child's autism, for example), the competence of parents has five levels (from very low to the highest – according to the ability to formulate problems and find resources for its solution) and consists of three components – the ability to interact with the child, the ability to interact with the social environment (at the micro and macro levels of social communication), the ability to provide a level of quality of their own lives.

Purpose. The main question of the study: what kind of parent's behavior and parental social and psychological characteristics provide a positive direction for the development of a child with autism, and how the social environment at the micro level (family, teachers of special education, friends, acquaintances) and at the macro level (civil society organizations, state organizations and services, public authorities) of social communication affect this ability.

Design / Methodology / Approach. In the framework of the study, 21 parents of children with autism aged 4-16 years completed the Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) questionnaire, which is widely used to study parenting practices.

Results. There was a tendency of growth of parental involvement (a positive characteristic that reflects the degree of parental involvement in the child's life) as the child grows up, whereas in the case of parenting with normal-type children this trend is reversed (the involvement of parents falls as the child grows, which is favorable for a timely upbringing of a child (Burlaka, V., Graham-Bermann, S. A., & Delva, J., 2017). The use of positive educational practices and the low level of physical punishment have been noted.

Limitations and strengths of the study. The described survey was pilot, but there were a few limitations: a small number of respondents, a discrepancy in a number of APQ questionnaires questioning the situation of paternity with a child with autism, the use of only one diagnostic tool.

Practical / Social value. With the results of this stage of the study, it is planned to conduct parental training for 12 weeks (functional stages of emotional development of the child and means of promoting the development of child-parenting interaction, communication, speech (guided by the approach DIR-Floortime), training in the method of unfinished situations, parent supervision from using parent video materials) with the diagnosis of children's development on the Vineland-3 scale and characteristics of child-parenting and parenting practices of parents of children with autism (for a modification of questionnaire for parental attitude (A. Vargas, V. Stolin) for a family that cares for a particular child, PARI (parental attitude research instrument), modified for the case of paternity with children with autism by the APQ questionnaire and the authoring questionnaire "Measures of care" to determine the level of parental intrusiveness). Measurements will take place at the beginning and after the completion of parenting education.

Originality /Conclusions. Extensive research on parental practices with children with autism and child's and parental characteristics will help improve parenting education, improve the level of interaction between parents and teachers of special education, facilitate the removal of parental education programs into the level of public health programs and promote the introduction of parenting programs in general protocols of intervention, care and autism support.

Keywords: ASD, community-based services, parental intrusiveness, parent education, parent training, parent-mediated interventions.

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