PARENTAL DILEMMAS OF EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (CWSN)

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Abstract

No parent is ever prepared to be the parent of a child with special educational need. When a parent comes to know about the disability of his/her child, she/he undergoes serious traumatic experience. This paper deals with the dilemmas facing by the parents regarding education of their child with special needs. This paper attempt to explain the problems and pressures faced by a parent to produce ‘perfect’ babies and to meet all their needs. The presentation suggests the additional help need to be provided to such families to avoid making families of disabled children in to “disabled families”.

Key words: Parental Dilemma, Children with Special Needs (CWSN)

Parental dilemma

A circumstance faced by the parent in which a choice must be made between two or more alternatives that seem equally undesirable. Here it means a difficult circumstance or problem situation facing by a parent at all stages of the education of their children with special need.

Children With Special Needs (CWSN)

Children with special needs are those children who differ from the average to such an extent that their differences warrant some type of special instruction, either within the regular classroom or in special classes.

Introduction

The education of the differentially able children never received consideration as per their needs neither by the government nor non-government agencies for many years. During the last decade much stress was laid on children with special educational needs. It is encouraging that in recent times not only the government but also the non-government organizations have come forward with zest and zeal to do something substantial for those children. It is now realized that a disabled child should not kept aloof from other children and
the rights of the child have opened doors to come to the rescue of those children, so far as academic progress in particular and general well being of those children are concerned.

Accepting a child with special need becomes difficult to parents and the whole family particularly when competence and achievement are very much valued in modern world. Thus when it suddenly becomes necessary for parents to love someone who has a very limited capacity the parents are put in conflicting situation and result in a great deal of stress.

Reactions of parents after diagnosis

Four important factors influence how a child with a special need affects a family. First, the characteristics of the disabled child (i.e.; nature and severity) help shape the family’s reactions. The degree of problems that parents experience is highly related to the care-giving demands of the child and the age of the child. Second, the characteristics of the family influence the reaction, e.g.: size and form, cultural background, and socio economic status all can affect a family’s adjustment to disabled child. Third, the personal characteristics of each family member, finally the special circumstances (like poverty, families in rural areas, families that experience abuse, parents with disabilities) influence the family’s reaction to a disability.

Parental adjustment may involve the following steps. Shock, grief, mourning, recognition of the problem, search for a cause, search for a cure, acceptance of the child, recognition of the possible potential and coping with the community reactions.

Pressure arises from both internalized norms and societal expectations and in the face of these pressures; parents may feel shock and disappointment. These feelings may lead, in turn, to denial, anxiety and conflict. Without the right levels of support and understanding, having a child with special need can disable the whole family.

Major dilemmas of a parent of CWSN

- Day care dilemma for special need parents

One of the biggest challenges for parents of children with special needs is how to find appropriate child care. Whether Mom or Dad will stay at home with the special baby or entrust someone else with the care of their child; a very big decision. This choice is very difficult for the parents with a special child. Day care options can diminish considerably, especially if the child has extensive medical needs.
Where do I send my child with disability- Kindergarten placement Dilemmas

Choosing a kindergarten for young children is a highly demanding process. For parents who have children with disabilities this process can be particularly challenging, given the choice between special and inclusive kindergartens. While there has been wide ranging research on parental concerns of kindergarten practices involving children with disability, there is a little attention paid to how parents who have children with disabilities negotiate kindergarten choice dilemmas.

Toilet Training Children with special Needs

The issue of when and how to begin toilet training can be particularly challenging for parents of CWSN. While no parent wants to push an already challenged child to perform in ways that are impossible, the sense of accomplishment experienced when he does succeed in this important aspect of self care can make an enormous difference in his level of self esteem.

Expensive children in poor families

Children who have exceptional needs because of a physical disability, chronic health problem, or mental or developmental impairment often require exceptional levels of care. When poverty and disabilities intersect the costs associated with children’s care have particularly important implications for their families. Poverty –related compromises in living conditions and health care elevate the risk that children will suffer from chronic and disabling conditions. At the same time, the care of a disabled or ill child can increase the risk that the family will be poor by imposing direct costs for medical and other care and indirect costs in the form of forgone earnings.

No one to play with

The social problems experienced by special children can be as or more devastating than the learning problems. They are often not well accepted by their classmates or peers and are frequently neglected. Peer acceptance promotes social competence and self esteem. On the other hand, low peer acceptance causes problems and makes the student misfit.

Dilemmas of Special Education

Special education means specifically designed instruction that meets the unusual needs of special children. The different views taken on special education have ignited spark of
controversies over segregating some children from the main stream and providing them with extra opportunities. The issues in special education are how to define specific exceptionalities? How students are categorized, grouped and discipline? How to train teachers of CWSN? How teaching and learning is organized? How to provide funding for special education programs? How curricula and teaching is developed so that such difficulties are reduced?

There aren’t enough qualified teachers to handle rising challenge, according to special education needs. The number of students with special needs in the country is going up, while the number of teachers to help them is going down.

➢ To include or Not?

Inclusive education is the attempt to educate persons with intellectual disabilities by integrating them as closely as possible in to the normal structure of the educational system. Proponents of inclusion say that children with disabilities have a right to be afforded equal educational opportunities, and should not be denied based on disability. But will equal educational opportunities teach these children in a manner in which they can learn? Few regular education teachers are trained for full inclusion. Special education teachers trained in approaching educational tasks with flexibility. If one method is not working they can quickly change to another method within the curriculum. A special education teacher must have the various strategies and techniques needed o help her students learn content area material.

- The first dilemma is to explain educational difficulties in term of the characteristics of individual pupils.
- If there is no legal basis for inclusion in schools, should these schools address the needs of the moderately to severely learning disabled, of those on the higher end of the autistic spectrum, of children with moderate to severe ADHD, and of children with mild to moderate developmental disabilities?
- Educational difficulties in term of a mismatch between the particular characteristics of particular children and the organization and curriculum arrangements made for them.

➢ As parents age, the future of the disabled adult children becomes cloud.

Every parent of a tiny baby looks forward to the time when that child will grow up, get a job, get married and raise a family. But what about the child with Downs’ syndrome, severe physical disability or various other problems? Will that child get married and raise a family?
Isn’t that what all parents look forward to as they see their children entering the teen years? How do the parents prepare their child for the time when others their age are being courted or are dating with plans to marry the girl or guy of their dreams? Who will take care of them, after their parents’ lifetime?

**Conclusion**

Parents are subjected to greater psychological stress in day-to-day management. Strain of caring for the handicapped child, readjustment of family’s daily routine, additional time involved in caring for the child, the possibility of neglecting other family members and the difficulty to maintain harmony and integration in the family are common. Additional help need to be provided to such families to avoid making families of children with handicaps into ‘handicapped families’.

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