Improving Therapeutic Outcomes by Increasing Parent Involvement in Schools

Importance of parent involvement in speech services in the school setting
1. Parents are the most consistent language models in a child’s life
2. Studies have found that parents can be effective at implementing speech intervention if trained by a professional SLP (Tufts & Holliday, 1959; Sommers, 1962)

What may lead to barriers
1. Parents differ from one another in many ways, i.e., ability to express feelings and concerns to professionals and colleagues (Case-Smith, 1991, 1993), roles within families (Case-Smith, 1993), and in interactions with their child (Case-Smith, 1993)
2. Emotional responses to their child’s disability (Anderson & Hinojosa, 1984; Case-Smith, 1991)

Review research identifying barriers to parent involvement from the SLP perspective
1. Workplace - service delivery model, administrative support, sped team
2. Caseload size/time constraint
3. Follow through
4. Perceived lack of interest from parents
5. Therapist (lack of) confidence or experience in involving parents in intervention (Pappas et al., 2008).
6. SES & ethnic/cultural/linguistic factors (Hanson & Carta, 1995; Humphry, 1995)

Review research identifying barriers to parent involvement from the parent perspective
1. Perceive role differently from the SLP
2. Previous negative experiences in the schools with teachers and/or SLPs
3. May not know how to get involved
4. SES & ethnic/cultural/linguistic factors
5. Therapists fail to consider other demands or roles that were not related to the direct provision of therapy (Thompson, 1998)
6. Feeling their concerns were ignored by professionals (Fyffe et al., 1995)
7. Parents or professionals not following through with activities as agreed (Dinnebeil & Rule; Lawlor & Mattingly, 1998)

Overcoming barriers
1. Development of positive and supportive relationships with parents has been widely advocated as a key component of effective collaboration in family-centered practice (Dinnebeil & Rule, 1994; Humphry & Case-Smith, 1996; McWilliam, Tocci & Harbin, 1998; Thompson, 1998). McWilliam et al. argued that the concept of family centeredness revolves around the quality of the relationship between professionals and family members.
2. Family-centered practices
Provide effective strategies for increasing families’ participation in students’ language development outside of the therapy room

1. Provide specific, clear and simple instructions and techniques
2. Provide rationale behind what we do in the schools and what we are asking parents to do at home
3. Take into consideration what is feasible and practical for families to implement
4. Empowerment
5. Self-efficacy

Effective strategies for parent involvement in school

1. Phone call in the beginning of the year
2. Letter introducing yourself & detailing goals
3. Invite parents to observe & participate in session(s)

Resources:


Disclosure:

Financial – Salaried employee of Bilinguistics

Nonfinancial – No relevant nonfinancial relationship exists