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THE ROLE OF ART THERAPY PRACTICES IN THE TEACHERS' WORK WITH PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

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The article is devoted to the study of the role of art therapy practices in improving the interaction of parents raising children with cerebral palsy together with their other children. The author focuses her work on the fact that art therapy is an effective method of working with parents of children with cerebral palsy, which allows them to express emotions and feelings through creativity. The material contains a theoretical review of scientific and methodological literature on identifying the main problems of parent-child relationships in families raising children with cerebral palsy. The author highlights key difficulties of interaction between teachers and parents raising children with cerebral palsy, while paying attention to the inclusion of art therapy practices in the joint work of specialists and families. Art therapy practices can help teachers reduce parental expectations, help parents accept the characteristics of their children in an environmentally friendly manner, and generally stabilize the emotional background in the family. The work is interdisciplinary in nature, written at the intersection of special pedagogy and special psychology. The article will be of interest to specialists in the field of special pedagogy and special psychology.

Keywords: *childhood, parenthood, child-parent relationships, cerebral palsy, family, family relationships, pedagogical support, family support, art technologies, art therapy, art practice.*

ROLUL PRACTICIILOR DE ARTTERAPIE ÎN LUCRUL PROFESORULUI CU PĂRINȚII COPIILOR CU PARALIZII CEREBRALE

Articolul este dedicat studiului rolului practicilor de art-terapie în îmbunătățirea interacțiunii părinților care cresc copii cu paralizie cerebrală împreună cu ceilalți copii ai lor. Autoarea își concentrează munca pe faptul că terapia prin artă este o metodă eficientă de lucru cu părinții copiilor cu paralizie cerebrală, care le permite să-și exprime emoțiile și sentimentele prin creativitate. Materialul conține o trecere în revistă teoretică a literaturii științifice și metodologice privind identificarea principalelor probleme ale relațiilor părinte-copil în familiile care cresc copii cu paralizie cerebrală. Autorul evidențiază dificultăți-cheie de interacțiune dintre profesori și părinți care cresc copii cu paralizie cerebrală, acordând totodată atenție includerii practicilor de art-terapie în munca comună a specialiștilor și a familiilor. Practicile de art-terapie pot ajuta profesorii să reducă așteptările părinților, să-i ajute pe părinți să accepte caracteristicile copiilor lor într-o manieră prietenoasă cu mediul și, în general, să stabilească fundalul emoțional din familie. Lucrarea este de natură interdisciplinară, scrisă la intersecția dintre pedagogia specială și psihologia specială. Articolul va fi de interes pentru specialiștii din domeniul pedagogiei speciale și psihologiei speciale.

Cuvinte-cheie: *copilărie, parentalitate, relații copil-părinte, paralizie cerebrală, familie, relații familiale, sprijin pedagogic, sprijin familial, tehnologii artistice, terapie prin artă, practică artistică.*

The modern system of education and upbringing for children with various developmental disorders, including cerebral palsy, guarantees maximum possible

The modern system of education and upbringing for children with various developmental disorders, including cerebral palsy, maximizes the adaptation of children in the society. Nevertheless, achieving comprehensive personal, cognitive, and communicative development requires paying attention to the conditions in which each child is raised and the nature of parent-child relationships in the family.

Parents are the closest individuals to a child. The family shapes the child's personality and influences their intellectual, social and emotional development. Therefore, it is crucial to actively involve parents in various forms of cooperation and interaction with specialists to achieve the highest possible socialization outcomes for children. Parental care is especially important for children with cerebral palsy. However, parents themselves are in need of urgent psychological and pedagogical assistance. Many specialists overlook the significance of psychological and emotional state of parents raising children with disabilities. There-

fore, in organizing the interaction between specialists and families raising a child with cerebral palsy, it is important to separate the goals of improving the children's education and socialization status from those of supporting the parents. Research by E.S. Dyachkova, I.V. Karpenkova, E.M. Mastyukova, and other authors shows that the families of children with special needs are exposed to a constant psychological trauma, subjectively perceived as never-ending. Many families face social isolation, alienation, and a reduction or complete absence of social contacts. A significant number of parents lack the skills to support each other and their child. They lack competence in psychological and pedagogical matters [6; 7; 10].

I.I. Mamaichuk and L.M. Shipitsyna point out that all parents raising children with disabilities need specialist help and support. Today, this assistance is provided to the majority of those in need [10; 16]. Nevertheless, despite the significant amount of research in the field of social, pedagogical, and psychological support for parents of children with disabilities, there is still a need to explore new forms of interaction between specialists and parents, such as evaluating the effectiveness of incorporating art therapy practices.

The art therapy practices can be integrated at almost every stage of therapeutic and developmental programs, as well as in various forms of work with parents. Today, the most relevant forms of work for specialists with parents raising children with CP are as follows:

1. Individual consultations. Educators hold one-on-one meetings with parents to discuss the child's development and education. During these consultations, the educator can provide information on the child's specific needs, offer recommendations on how to apply methods and techniques of education, and respond to parents' questions.

2. Parent meetings (trainings, gatherings, round tables). At the trainings and seminars for parents, family members can learn about various methods and approaches to working with children, share experiences, and reinforce their interaction skills. Some trainings may include several specialists from different fields to provide consultative support. These trainings are helpful not only in improving parents' theoretical knowledge about the education and upbringing of a child with cerebral palsy, but also assist them in addressing personal psychological issues.

3. Parent support groups. A specialist can organize groups where parents communicate, share their experiences, and receive support and advice from other parents in similar situation. Often, informal communication is initiated in these groups during the preparation and implementation of sports, entertainment, and other events. In this atmosphere, parents can find understanding and develop a support network.

Art therapy is a direction in psychotherapy and psychological therapy based on the use of art and creativity [4]. It offers an opportunity to use various types of artistic activities (such as drawing, painting, sculpture, music, and dance) as a means of self-expression and self-analysis. Art practices help people express their emotions, convey experiences, explore their personality, and address psychological and emotional issues. They are widely used among various age groups and populations, including children, adolescents, and adults with various psychological and mental conditions [3].

I. A. Kopytin notes that art practices are especially important for parents who struggle with verbal communication and cannot fully express their feelings. The symbolic language of art and creativity allows for a more accurate expression of experiences and offers a new perspective on situations and problems, facilitating their resolution [8].

K. V. Novikova *et al.* notes art practices are effective in correcting anxiety, fears, and aggression due to being gentle on a person's awareness of their feelings and experiences, creating prerequisites for regulating emotional states. The authors believe that art practices represent specific techniques and methods implemented through artistic creativity, allowing individuals to actualize a psychologically traumatizing situation, understand their inner world, relax, and get rid of negative emotions [12].

The use of art practices by educators offers parents raising children with cerebral palsy a creative environment for expressing the emotional side of their personalities. Art practices are used in cases where a parent cannot clearly articulate to the educator the issues negatively impacting their raising of a child with cerebral palsy, establishing a favorable family environment, and maintaining positive parent-child relationships. Furthermore, by being introduced to art practices, parents receive an opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of parent-child interactions and relationships between spouses. These activities help parents

develop a deeper understanding of their children, their needs and abilities, and find creative approaches to solving problems and improving their communication skills with the outside world.

L. N. Azarova, L. N. Antilogova, K. V. Novikova, and other authors note that one of the key tasks of using art therapy practices in the interaction between educators and parents raising children with disabilities is to provide additional emotional resources to parents, improve their quality of life, develop essential parenting components, and improve their competencies. Various art therapy directions, such as visual art therapy, music therapy, sand therapy, etc., are widely described by authors in the context of psychological assistance to parents of children with cerebral palsy. All art therapy methods are multifunctional and can be applied to various tasks, ranging from social and psychological adaptation to personal capacity-building, providing an opportunity for adults to express their mental state through different forms of creative activity [1; 2; 12].

A. I. Kopytin points out that visual art and other manifestations of creative expression are universal mechanisms for restoring psychological homeostasis and adapting to changing environmental conditions at different life stages [8]. V. N. Nikitin suggests using such art therapy practices as therapy using visual and plastic art mediums (mask therapy, expressive art therapy), drama therapy („dell’arte therapy”, „two-faced Janus”), plastic-movement, and transpersonal voice therapy [11].

Using art therapy practices will be more successful if the range of problems parents face is studied before and after the psychological therapy work. It is necessary to preliminarily investigate the emotional state of fathers and mothers, their stress resilience, anxiety levels, and stress levels, and examine parent-child relationships and parenting styles. Additionally, it is important to conduct regular verbal interviews to identify the main factors influencing the psychological and emotional state of family members [5].

E. S. Dyachkova believes that the first stage of using art therapy practices in the work of specialists and parents is aimed at locating resources. The educator asks the parent to remember something that gives them resources and positive emotions. It can be a pleasant and peaceful place where the parent felt good harmony. It can be natural landscape or any other place that evokes positive feelings and associations [5].

A. I. Kopytin notes that meeting the simplest human needs at the initial stage. In this case, it is crucial for the educator to find out how to help the family if they have difficulties in meeting basic physiological needs (housing, food, etc.), finding safety and social approval. If necessary, the educator should facilitate preventative action [8].

Then, according to E. S. Dyachkova, the main stage of work follows, which includes addressing the emotional sphere. The application of art practices is associated with working through the trauma related to the birth of a special needs child. This choice of starting point is not accidental, as if this traumatic experience remains unresolved, it continues to affect various aspects of the parent’s life, reflecting in their actions and relationships [5]. At this stage, A. I. Kopytin recommends adjusting and strengthening a person’s psychological defense mechanisms by creating a positive image of the world and themselves, relying on personal resources [8].

The third stage of the program is characterized by the release of accumulated tension. The educator conducts activities aimed at creating an optimistic outlook, strengthening self-confidence, developing a sense of the ability to overcome difficulties, and forming a positive outlook of the future [5]. Long-term objectives are also addressed, including the development of coping resources and the formation of effective coping behaviors in the parent [8].

Thus, conclusion can be made about high relevance of the application of art practices in the work of educators with parents raising children with cerebral palsy. Art therapy practices are methods and approaches based on the use of creative activities and artistic expressions for pedagogical and psychological support and self-awareness enhancement. Incorporating these practices into the cooperation process between families and specialists contributes to creating a supportive and inspiring environment where parents can unlock their potential, develop parenting skills, improve relationships with their child, strengthen connections with specialists, and learn to express their needs for support more accurately.

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