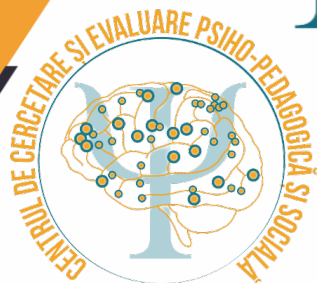




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The role of parents of students with disabilities in the special school in the process of communication development

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Abstract. Through this paper we aim to emphasize the advantages and benefits of parental involvement in the development process of communication of their own child, as well as other behaviors Adaptive. Having the following objectives: 1. Identifying parents who are effectively (intensively) involved in the process of developing communication of children with disabilities. 2. Identifying the relationship between parents' involvement in the communication development process and school development. 3. Identify the relationship between school-parent collaboration and the process of communication development.

Keywords. Communication, language, students with disabilities, School speciala, development, role Parents

1. Theoretical aspects

1.1. Communication and language – part of the human psyche

Communication is defined (briefly) as the exchange of information between two or more people.

Communication is the process by which one organism transmits information to another organism and thus influences one another (Shaffer and Kipp, 2010).

Language is "the psychic activity of communication between people through language" (cited by Zlate, 2009, p. 188)

Language is a series of individual meaningless symbols, taken separately (sounds, letters, gestures) but which, once combined, according to predetermined rules, produce an infinite number of messages (Shaffer and Kipp, 2010).

The purpose and role of communication

We can establish five essential purposes of communication (De Vito, apud Zlate, 2009, p. 190):

- a) personal discovery (through social communication - evaluating oneself by relating to others);
- b) discovery of the external world;
- c) establishing meaningful relationships;
- d) changing attitudes and behaviors;
- e) Game and fun



1.2. Language development in children with disabilities

Language performance depends extremely much on both the level of intelligence development and social and cultural factors. Thus, language analysis both in neurotypical children, but especially in those who have certain disabilities, must be performed in terms of complex behavior. In the case of children with disabilities, upon entering school, "the verbal behavior of these children should be analyzed by reference to the characteristics of language development in the normal child, of the same chronological age, because his language follows, in most cases, the same stages of development, taking into account of course the fact that there is a delayed evolution of language compared to normal" (according to Popovici, 1994, p. 84).

There is a very close and complex relationship between language and personality. Popovici (1994, p. 84) believes that *"language intervenes decisively in the structure of psychic processes, from primary to secondary, interacting at the level of consciousness"*:

- perception is enriched and gains in clarity,
- images are outlined at the memory level,
- the various representations are combined and constructed to produce original images at the level of imagination,
- the ends and means involved in the will or needs underlying the motivation are represented.

Attention also becomes more focused and focused on the object with the help of the word.

- affectivity transpires from the structure of phrase, accent and intonation that provide us with essential information about the emotional reactions of the person.
- „thinking produces language by developing through language” (Delacroix 1930, p. 293, quoted by Popovich 1994, p. 84).

Human thinking is fully verbal and that language participates in different ways at all stages of the formation of mental actions (Galperin, 1975, cited by Popovich, 1994, p. 84).

The verbal conduct of children with deficiencies is dominated by emotional-affective characteristics, which most often blur cognition; Learning to read and write plays a role in cognitive development by broadening the horizon of knowledge and organizing one's thinking.

1.3. The role of the family in the personality development of the disabled child

Based on the literature we can say that the small family (in the immediate vicinity) has the strongest influence on the entire development of the child. But it is also fair to say that, directly or indirectly, there are several influences on a child's development that we should reflect on (ethnic and cultural origins, environmental events, individual relationships and personal and collective experiences of family members, etc.). Therefore, when thinking about the development of a child, one should consider all positive and negative influencing factors.

„Early experiences in the family environment, as well as in the school environment, can have an impact on the child's self-organization, expectations, approach to learning by children” (quoted by Măria Anca, 2001, p. 184)

1.4. The role of the family in the development of communication of the disabled child

The development of a child depends enormously on the joint efforts of the child, parents and therapists. While therapists are a crucial part of therapy, parents also play an essential role as they inspire, motivate, and incorporate functions taught in therapy into everyday life. When parents learn the techniques taught in therapy and practice them with their child, it helps the overall improvement of the child. When a parent is not involved in the child's therapy, it can take much longer for the child to achieve favorable outcomes.



Family involvement is an important aspect in any child's development. The parent is their child's best guide and role model.

Both in the case of the child with neurotypical development and in the case of the child with deficiencies, stimulation is very important, it is all the more necessary in the case of the child with disabilities *"to diversify the range of concerns for the development of verbal behavior, as a decisive factor in organizing and ranking behaviors"* (Verza E., 2003, p. 91).

The family should provide the child with disabilities with an adequate family, conducive to an appropriate education adapted to his/her capacities.

2. The purpose, objectives and hypotheses of the research.

The purpose of the paper is to highlight the need to involve parents of children with disabilities in the process of communication development.

2.1. Research objectives.

Objective 1. Identifying parents who are effectively (intensively) involved in the process of developing communication of children with disabilities.

Objective 2. Identifying the relationship between parental involvement in the process of communication development and school development.

Objective 3. Identify the relationship between school-parent collaboration and the process of communication development.

2.2. Research hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. We assume that most parents report effective (intensive) involvement in communication development activities.

Hypothesis 2. We assume that students whose parents are actively involved in the process of communication development score better results in terms of school development than those whose parents do not engage.

Hypothesis 3. We assume that the child's evolution in the process of communication development is better as the school-parent collaboration is better.

3. Research participants and tools.

3.1. Subjects and organization of research

The group of participants consists of 20 caregivers (mother / father, foster parent or grandfather / grandmother) for students with disabilities from the School Center for Inclusive Education "Delfinul", Constanta, they were administered an opinion questionnaire regarding their involvement in the development of communication and other behaviors.

Another questionnaire targeting aspects of parents' involvement in children's education was administered to four teachers, involved in the therapeutic education of the 20 children with disabilities mentioned above.

The 20 students with disabilities study in different classes of the special school, as shown in the table below (age, class, diagnosis, caregiver):



Table 1. Presentation of batch of participants

Cod Identify	Age (years)	Class	Diagnostic(coded according to ICD 10):	Caregiver
AM12	12	3rd	F71, G40	Mother
DN11	11	3rd	F80, F70	Asistent Maternal
TA17	17	A 9-A	F84, F72	Mama
EA16	16	A 9-A	F84, F71	Mama
PAIR10	10	The 3-A	F84, F70	Mama
PO16	16	A 9-A	F84, F71	Mama
II16	16	A 9-A	F84, F71	Tata
BA8	8	1	F84, F72	Mama
TAA9	9	A 2-A	F84, F72	Mama
CD10	10	A 2-A	F84, F72	Mama
BMN14	14	A 6-A	F84, F72	Mama
VM17	17	A 9-A	F84, F72	Mama
CAM18	18	A 9-A	F84, F72	Mama
CMA19	19	A 9-A	F84, F72	Mama
IA17	17	A 9-A	F84, F72	Tata
DMG14	14	A 6-A	F84, G40	Mama
NS12	12	The 3-A	F90, F40, F80, F81, E41, Q43, E35	Grandma
EU12	12	The 3-A	H54, H35, F70	Mama
SAT12	12	3rd	H54, H35, F84	Mother
SME8	8	1	Q90, F84	Mother

3.2. Tools used in research

The questionnaire for teachers consists of a total of 22 items formulated according to observable behaviors as follows:

- factual questions, which require objective data about the subject (in this case: initial of the first name, year of birth, professional experience with students with disabilities in years, name and surname of the student for whom it is filled in (information that is anonymous), age of the student and family atmosphere and climate);

- closed questions, with answers on the 3-step scale (with forced choice, with a series of answers going from one extreme to another), when asked to evaluate the student's school progress (regression, stagnation, evolution) and items with a 5-step scale, when asked to assess the degree of involvement of the parent (completely uninvolved, little involved, so and so, involved, very involved).

- Open-ended question – the last question, in which the teacher is asked to give advice on how to support the parent, the child, in the process of developing communication.

How to interpret:

The degree of involvement of the caregiver – minimum score 0, maximum score 20.

o score 0-8 – completely uninvolved or little involved;

scores greater than or equal to 9 – engaged and highly engaged;

School evolution of the student – minimum score 0, maximum score 16.

o scores between 0-8 – stagnation or regression;

o scores equal to or greater than 9 – evolution;



The teacher-parent relationship, minimum score 0, maximum score 12.

o score 0-3 – very bad or non-existent relationship;

o scores between 4-6 – "so and so" relationship;

o scores between 7-9 – good relationship;

o scores between 10-12 – very good relationship;

The questionnaire for the caregiver was applied in the form of a directive interview, one to one, consists of predetermined questions, with a rigid structure and focuses on the same aspects: parental involvement in the child's developmental process, school evolution and attitude towards school (of the child and parent).

I used:

- factual questions (to obtain objective data on the subject, such as: initial letter of the first name, age, place of work, age of the child, diagnosis of the child, etc.);

- closed questions, where we combined items with a 4-step polychotomous scale (to establish the number of hours the parent spends with the child), answers that go from one extreme to another on the Likert scale for questions referring to the child's evolution and the relationship with school and teachers.

- Open-ended questions, where the caregiver can talk about their personal wishes, those related to the child or fears and the measures they take to remove the fears.

Given that the interview was in the form of social interaction, conducted with the aim of exchanging information between participant and researcher (De Vos et al. 2011), data analysis involved a process of bringing order, structure and significance to the mass of data collected (Padgett, 2016). Qualitative data from interviews and in-depth observations, were analyzed according to themes arising during brief direct observations and discussions with participants, we then classified the information by grouping similar responses - a process called coding (the process of combining data for themes, ideas and categories and marking similar passages of text with a code tag, so that they can be easily retrieved at a later stage for comparison and further analysis (Padgett, 2016).

How to interpret:

The degree of involvement of the caregiver – minimum score 0, maximum score 20.

o score 0-8 – completely uninvolved or little involved;

scores greater than or equal to 9 – engaged and highly engaged;

The teacher-parent relationship, minimum score 0, maximum score 8.

o score 0-4 – very bad or non-existent relationship;

o scores between 5-6 – good relationship;

o scores between 7-8 – very good relationship;

4. Presentation, analysis and interpretation of results.

4.1. Hypothesis 1

We assume that most parents report effective (intensive) involvement in communication development activities.

Subjectivity is part of our nature, of the parent, our children are the most beautiful, the best, the smartest; The ugliest form of offense you can issue to a parent is to tell them that they didn't do their job properly, that because of them the child hasn't developed to the level that society, entourage, community, etc. expect them to be, according to their age.

As we have established in the previous chapters, parents of children with disabilities go through several phases and experience a series of emotions and feelings when they find out the child's diagnosis. Most often they feel guilty and wonder what they did wrong, what were the causes that led to the appearance of the deficiency, then they feel shame, their child is not what



he should be, friends and family seem to avoid him or on the contrary, they ask nagging questions, to which he does not feel ready to answer or simply does not have an answer yet. On the other hand, there are parents who, after many questions, finally find answers (once the diagnosis is known) and thus manage to remove guilt or shame regarding parental education, for example, diagnosing a child with ASD, finally makes it possible to interpret his disruptive behaviors, becomes from an "agitated, uneducated, strange, spoiled, etc.", child to an autistic child, If until then he was considered a "stupid" parent who was unable to educate his child, suddenly he is a parent who deserves compassion and empathy for having an autistic child. (Farrugia, 2009)

And then, with this in mind, we assumed that the caregivers interviewed would maximize their effort and involvement in the upbringing and education of children. And to counteract these effects, we chose to compare the results of the interview given by the parent with the results of the questionnaire completed by the teacher, who should have a much more objective vision of the parent's involvement in the communication development process.

Table 2.

Results of questionnaires on parental involvement in the development of communication and other adaptive behaviors

Student identification code	<i>Parental Involvement score (measured by caregiver survey)</i>	<i>Parental Involvement score (measured by teacher questionnaire)</i>
AM12	16	12
BA8	17	16
BMN14	2	9
CAM18	9	12
CD10	13	12
CMA19	10	14
DMG14	10	12
DN12	7	8
EA16	4	10
PAIR10	0	15
IA16	3	4
II16	8	2
NS12	10	2
PO16	17	16
SAT12	16	16
SME8	9	11
TA16	17	12
TAA9	11	12
EU12	2	5
VM17	14	12

We notice, first of all, that the perception of parents' involvement in the development of communication, as well as other adaptive behaviors, is about the same, both in the teacher and in the caregiver.



Only one parent declares more involvement than the teacher appreciated, instead there are 3 caregivers who underestimated themselves - where the teacher observed a parent involved in the child's upbringing and development, rather than an uninvolved one.

At the same time, we notice that our hypothesis is confirmed, most caregivers declare effective (intensive) involvement in communication development activities, and the surveyed teachers are of the same opinion, people who care for children with multiple disabilities are intensively involved in their education and upbringing. Thus, the number of involved parents (65% and 75%, respectively) is much higher than those who are least or completely disinvolved (35% and 25%, respectively).

Table 3.

The number of caregivers and the degree of involvement in the development of communication, as well as other adaptive behaviors, according to the results of the two questionnaires applied

According to the results of the questionnaire belonging to the caregivers	
caregivers involved	13 (65%)
Little or uninvolved caregivers	7 (35%)

According to teacher questionnaire results	
caregivers involved	15 (75%)
Little or uninvolved caregivers	5 (25%)

In the literature we find numerous studies demonstrating that being the parent of a child with disabilities involves greater responsibility and effort, and every day becomes a real challenge for the parent (and for the family) in an attempt to make him evolve and obtain some autonomy. Researchers Brian Tigere and Jabulani C. Makhubele (2019) concluded that raising a disabled child is expensive, time-consuming, and exhausting; All problems faced by children have an effect on their primary caregivers.

Mothers' experiences vary from country to country. A study conducted in Australia showed that mothers of children with autism have poorer health compared to neurotypical mothers (Safe, Joosten & Molineux, 2012). Mothers in the United Kingdom report that with the onset of autism in their lives, they have experienced continuous stress, have noticed the deterioration of relationships between family members and isolation from friends, colleagues, relatives, etc. (Bessette, McAlpine, Garwick, & Wieling, 2016).

One thing is certain, parents of children with intellectual disabilities become a key factor in the behavioral-adaptive development of their children. According to the latest guidelines on therapy and rehabilitation of children with ASD (daily life therapy is recommended) and in order to achieve harmony in all aspects of the child's life, parents assume a very important role in the child rehabilitation process (Benjak, Vuletić Mavrinac and Pavić Simetin, 2009).

In a study by Djirackor (2017, after Bagadood, 2022, p. 259) focused on understanding the role of parents with children with DI, regarding the education of their children, they concluded that they play four main roles:

- monitor the progress of the child,
- inform school authorities about their living conditions,



- pay school fees,
- provider of educational materials

In the same study, it was found that parental involvement leads to academic performance, and for effective education, a parent-teacher relationship is essential.

The results of our study are not at all surprising, parents who have children with disabilities enrolled at CȘEI Delfinul, are really involved in the development of the communication process, are those parents we meet in the hallways of school, who gave up their professional life, gave up friends and relatives who did not understand them or who rejected and marginalized their child. There are those parents who accepted the child's diagnosis, understood that there must be support and support for the child – besides the role of parent, they assumed the role of educator, therapist and maybe even that of nurse.

At a survey conducted on the professional Facebook page, psychotherapist Monica Zinca, asks parents with children with disabilities, the question *What would you do to get your child talking?* He receives more than 100 answers, the most common answers are *patience, love, treatment and therapy*, of course there are also answers that denote that the parent calms himself by passing the responsibility to someone else (eg: *he will speak when God wants him* - in this case God, but there are cases when the person blamed, for the stagnation or regress of the child, is a teacher or therapist.

The result of this survey makes us conclude that parents make efforts to understand their children and help them overcome the obstacles posed by their disabilities, which translate into therapeutic activities for language acquisition, continuing therapy at home (through homework and applications proposed by the therapist for home) and encouraging the child to participate in activities and meetings for the purpose of socialization and human interaction. And the teachers from special schools are of the same opinion, they clearly convey through their answers that the caregivers of children with multiple disabilities allocate necessary and important resources (time, money, energy, etc.) in order to offer the best chances of development to the children they care for, the fact that there are some exceptions only strengthens our hypothesis.

4.2. Hypothesis 2

We assume that students whose parents are actively involved in the process of communication development score better results in terms of school development than those whose parents do not engage.

The specialized literature repeatedly highlights the importance of the role played by the family in the physical, mental and spiritual development of the child, which leaves its mark for a long time on the little people. Their formation as members of society, begins from the first days of life, "through the parent's way of talking to the child, behaving with him, relating to him, but also through the way parents behave among themselves, or with other family members or in society" (Bulet, 2021, <https://edict.ro/rolul-parintilor-in-educatia-copiilor/>).

It is the parents who must ensure that they meet their physiological, psychological and social needs, so that the family connects the child with the environment and society. Parents are the most handy model that the child has, he will copy behaviors and attitudes, observed within the family, so it is very important both the relationship that the two parents have with each other, as well as the relationships they have with others, the way they manage difficult moments and the way they approach certain situations.

The child needs love, affection and security; For proper emotional development, the constant presence of the mother and father in the child's life is essential. Together they provide an environment conducive to child growth.



Family involvement in children's education is essential for their harmonious development. Studies show that when parents are actively involved in their children's education, they perform better academically, are less likely to have behavioral and emotional problems, and have healthier social relationships.

In recent years, this topic has been in the spotlight, and researchers have "focused on the purpose and roles of family involvement in key service sectors for children and young people" – in this way complex and real solutions can be provided for useful services (e.g. child protection, juvenile justice, health, mental health and behavioral health services, etc.) – information taken from the <https://www.kinderpedia.co.ro/beneficiile-implicarii-familiei-in-educatia-copilului> website.

Of course, all of the above applies to both children with typical development and children who have multiple disabilities. We showed in the previous chapter how important is the presence and involvement of parents in the process of physical and mental development of their own children (children with multiple disabilities).

Table 4.

The results regarding the involvement of the parent in the development process of communication and other adaptive behaviors and the evolution of the student, observed by the teacher

Student identification code	Parental Involvement score (measured by teacher questionnaire)	School Progress Score (measured by the teacher questionnaire)
AM12	12	10
BA8	16	15
BMN14	9	8
CAM18	12	5
CD10	12	11
CMA19	14	15
DMG14	12	9
DN12	8	13
EA16	10	11
PAIR10	15	14
IA16	4	5
II16	2	8
NS12	2	15
PO16	16	14
SAT12	16	13
SME8	11	4
TA16	12	12
TAA9	12	11
EU12	5	5
VM17	12	13

We notice in the table with the results of the questionnaire addressed to teachers that there is a link between the degree of involvement of the parent in the process of developing communication, as well as other adaptive behaviors and the degree of evolution registered in school activities.



We have 15 students who have made progress, 12 of them coincide with the involvement of parents in the child's development process; And in 5 students there was stagnation or regression, and in 2 of them conical with the lack of involvement of parents. So, it follows that for 14 (70%) students out of the 20 participants in the study there is a link between the degree of involvement of the caregiver and the progress or regress registered by him.

Table 5

Number of students depending on the scores obtained for evolution in school activities and parents' involvement in communication development

Number of students	
Parents who get involved → students with progress	12 (60%)
Parents who get involved → students with regression or stagnation	3 (15%)
Parents who don't get involved → students with regression or stagnation	2 (10%)
Parents who don't get involved → students with progress	3 (15%)

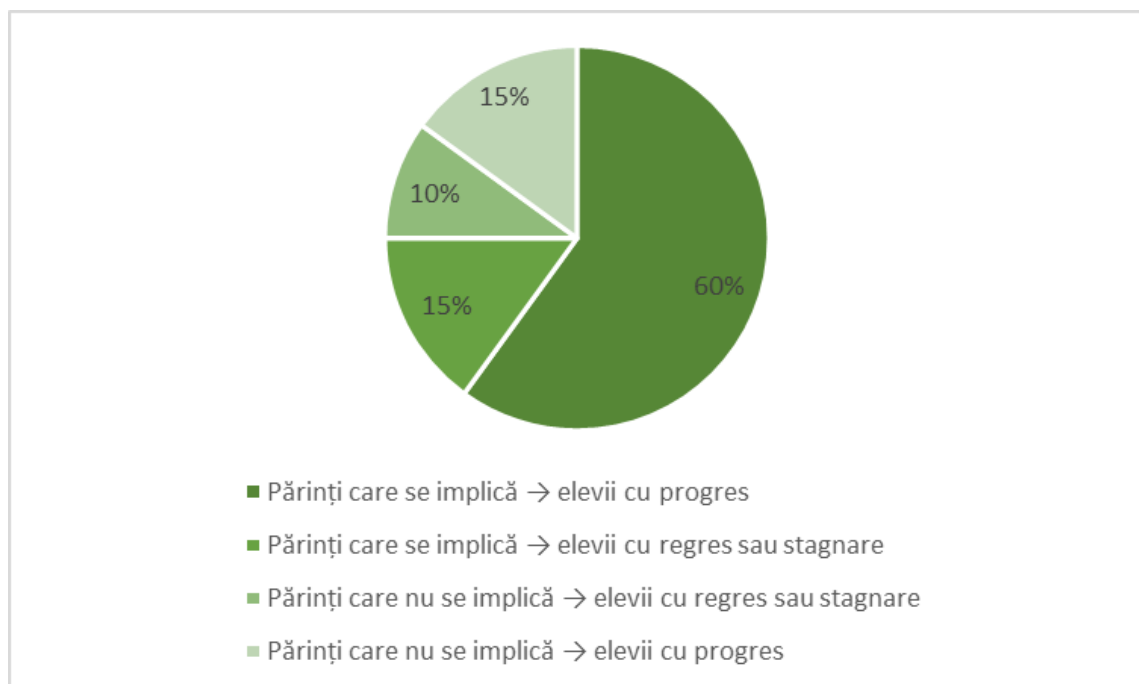


Figure 1. Graphical representation of the results in Table 5.

Therefore, analyzing the data in the tables, we can affirm that our hypothesis confirms that there is a relationship between parental involvement (lack of parental involvement) and progress (stagnation or regression) registered by the child; So we can say that a student who has multiple disabilities and who is constantly supported by the caregiver is more likely to develop desirable behaviors and gain some autonomy, but we cannot say that students whose caregivers are not involved will not have this success (at least not as a result of our study).

Analyzing the literature, we find many studies referring to the relationship between parental involvement and academic performance, but most of them are conducted on a group of participants with typical development, only a small part of researchers have highlighted this relationship in people with disabilities:

- Midori Otani (2019) - *Relationships between parental involvement and adolescents' academic achievement and aspiration* : Study results show that both maternal and paternal



involvement are associated with adolescent academic outcomes. The adolescent's educational aspiration mediates the association between parental involvement and school performance.

- Avnet, M.; Makara, D.; Larwin, K. H.; Erickson, M. (2019) - *The Impact of Parental Involvement and Education on Academic Achievement in Elementary School* : Students whose parents had lower levels of involvement in the classroom achieved better academic results, the explanation being that if the child makes progress, the parent has no reason to get involved in activities, Whereas, if the student does not perform satisfactorily, the parent is motivated to get more involved in creating a good relationship with the teaching staff.

- Ateş A. (2021) – *The Relationship Between Parental Involvement in Education and Academic Achievement: A Meta-analysis Study* : within this study, the basic conclusion is that the relationship between parental involvement and academic performance is moderate and there are no differences between populations on different continents, subjects taught or school.

- Akellot J., Bangirana P. (2019) - *Association between parental involvement and academic achievement of deaf children at Mulago school for the deaf, Kampala, Uganda* : The results showed that parental involvement helped reduce anxiety for math and that parental involvement was a significant positive predictor of early development of reading skills. Although this prediction would not be considered an association with academic ability, it indicated how parental involvement in the deaf child's education program could strongly contribute to school performance.

In the view of Bakken and Obiakor (2016), the ideal form of parental involvement in children's education should be a dynamic and continuous engagement, which begins with the choice of the appropriate school. The parent should continue the training process (or therapeutic activities) at home, this being crucial for consolidating the notions or skills acquired at school. Other specialists and researchers are of the same opinion (Jafarov, 2015) - the involvement of families in the educational process is crucial for effective student learning, and children's educational skills are positively influenced (Roberts and Webster, 2020).

In its study on *Parental Involvement and Education of Children with Intellectual Disabilities*, Bagadood 2022, found that parental involvement in children's education can be very positive.

The same idea is supported by Mantey (2020) in his study on parental involvement and education of children with disabilities, the results he reached reinforces the view that parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities leads to positive learning outcomes and academic achievement. Also through this study, the researcher highlights that the lack of parental involvement is due to financial incapacity, so poverty can become a significant factor for parents' disinterest in their child's education and in serious situations leading to school dropout.

Senosi (2014, p. 1634), at the end of his study, on the involvement of parents in the education of children with disabilities, points out the following aspects:

- lack of parental involvement leads to discontinuity of school curricula during holidays and regression.

- it is necessary for the parent or caregiver to understand the possibilities and limits of the student, consequence of the disability and not to disregard him by calling him retarded or handicapped (and limiting him even more, through this labeling); They should be allowed to do things for themselves when they want and be used when they are helpful.



4.3. Hypothesis 3

We assume that the child's evolution in the process of communication development is better as the school-parent collaboration is better.

The involvement of parents in their children's education is a crucial factor for their success in school and life. Parents are the first and most important learning models for children, and collaboration between parents and teachers can lead to a better understanding of the child's needs and abilities, identify and solve problems, and increase motivation and self-confidence of the child. Education is a continuous process and involves the collaboration of all actors involved in the child's life. Parents have an important role to play in providing their child with a positive and stimulating learning environment at home, and at the same time, parents should be involved in extracurricular activities, such as volunteering or organising events in school, to create a closer community and set positive examples for children.

So, we can say that education does not end at home nor does it start at school, but represents a continuous interest of the two environments.

The benefits of a close relationship between school (represented by teachers), parents and students have been revealed by numerous studies and researches:

- Frequent teacher-family communication led to an immediate increase in student engagement

- measured by rates of homework completion, task completion, and class lesson attendance (Kraft and Dougherty, 2013).

- When parents and families are involved in their children's education, everyone benefits: "Involved parents report better attitudes about their child's education; their children experience better academic, behavioral and social outcomes; and schools receive better ratings in terms of atmosphere and culture outcomes." (Benner & Quirk, 2020)

- „The best predictor of student success is the extent to which families encourage learning at home and engage with their child's education” (according to article „*How family engagement leads to student success*” published on the <https://www.waterford.org/education/how-parent-involvement-leads-to-student-success/>) website

- strong partnerships between the two institutions, family and school, support children's learning and develop their ability to acquire skills and create lifelong connections, while strengthening parents' ability to engage with their children's school experience (Iheoma Iruka, quoted by <https://xello.world/en/blog/resources/for-k12/parent-teacher-relationships/> website)

- The collaboration between school and parents allows - at community level - personalized assistance and interventions according to the needs of each family. This increases the chances of identifying the real needs of a family and offering unique, personalized solutions, developing intervention plans and "relevant and socio-culturally appropriate services that meet needs, build on family strengths, rely on community support and use resources more efficiently, constantly" (Doolan, 2005, cited by website <https://www.kinderpedia.co/ro/beneficiile-implicarii-familiei-in-educatia-copilului.html?format=html>, 2022, accessed April 2023).

In the table below (table 6.) we extracted the results of the questionnaires applied on the one hand to caregivers and on the other hand to teachers, both having the possibility to evaluate (through the questionnaire items) the relationship between family (represented by caregiver) and school (represented by teacher).



Table 6.

The results of the questionnaires applied to analyze the relationship between the teacher and the caregiver and the results regarding the student's school evolution

Cod identify elev	Relationship score (parent's perspective)	Relationship score (teacher's perspective)	Evolution score
BA8	7	12	15
CMA19	7	12	15
PO16	7	12	14
SAT12	8	12	13
PAIR10	8	11	14
DMG14	8	10	9
VM17	6	10	13
AM12	8	9	10
CAM18	7	9	5
CD10	6	9	11
TAA9	5	9	11
BMN14	6	8	8
EA16	7	8	11
TA17	7	8	12
DN11	7	6	13
IA17	7	6	5
SME8	8	6	4
II16	7	5	8
EU12	6	5	5
NS12	8	4	15



Very good relationship

Good relationship
„So and so” relationship

● Evolution
● Stagnation or regression

First of all, we note that caregivers consider that they have at least a good relationship both with the institution itself and with the teacher (figure 2), the second aspect that draws our attention is that teachers appreciate that the trust of caregivers in their professional decisions is very high and high (figure 3), which reinforces the idea that, There is a close relationship, based on communication, trust and support between the families of students in the special school and the institution.

Bandura (1997) emphasizes the importance of teachers' sense of effectiveness, which influences parents' level of participation. Teachers who are confident in their instructional abilities are more easily able to invite and support parents' educational efforts.



Figure 2. The answer to the question "How do you assess your relationship with the child's teachers and therapists within the school?" from the questionnaire dedicated to caregivers.

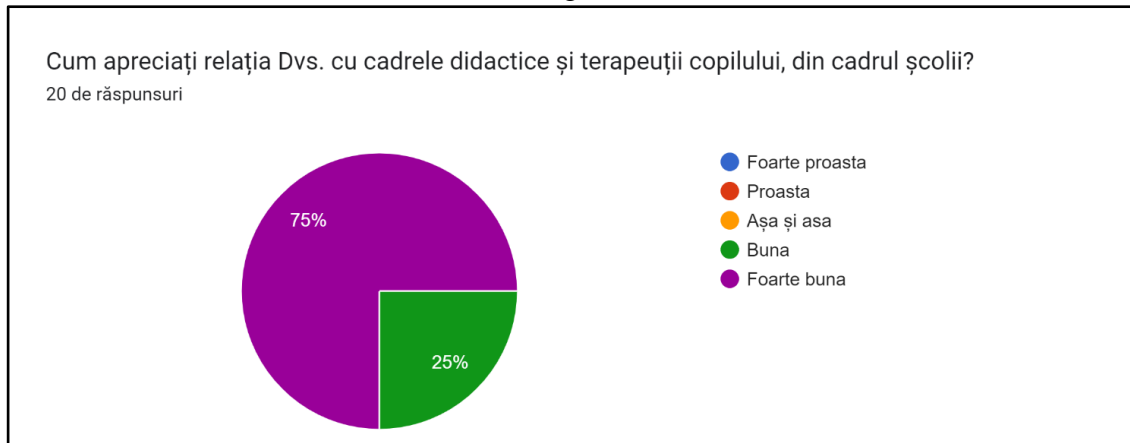
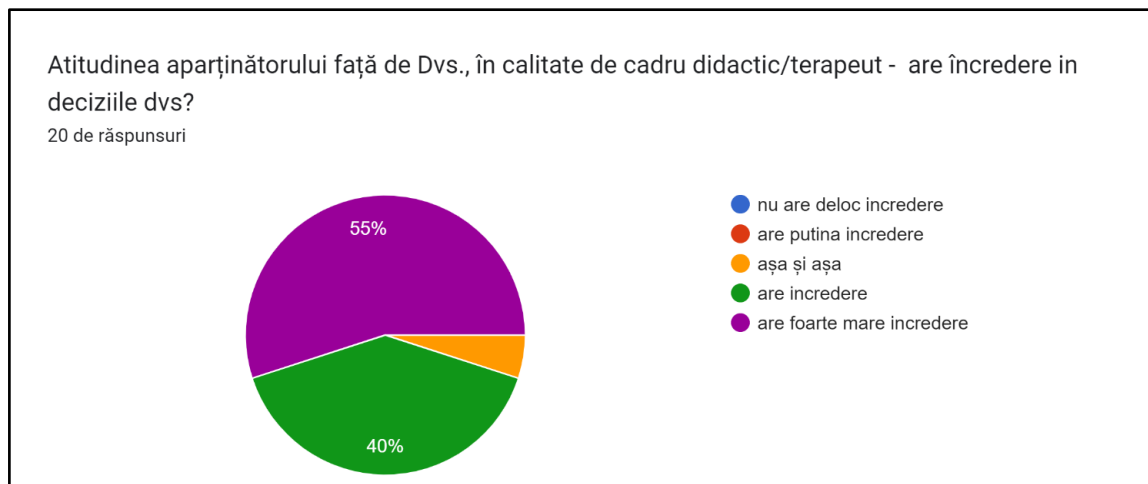


Figure 3. The answer to the question "The attitude of the caregiver towards you, as a teacher / therapist - does he trust your decisions?" from the questionnaire dedicated to teachers.



This conclusion does not surprise us, because the Romanian state legislates the right of the child with a degree of severe disability to a personal assistant – a person employed (usually this person is even the mother, father or a very close relative) especially to accompany the child everywhere, including school, so these parents naturally create closer bonds and connections with the teachers of their own children than parents who have children with normal development. by the simple fact that they meet daily (like co-workers).

In Table 7. And the graph in figure 4, we see once again that both caregivers and teachers consider the relationship between school and family to be a good one.



Table 7.

The parent's vision regarding the type of relationship between teacher and parent, in relation to the teacher's vision regarding the relationship between the two

Teacher-caregiver relationship	Number of caregivers (parent's perspective)	Number of caregivers (teacher's perspective)	Scor total
very good	15 (75%)	9 (45%)	7 (35%)
hi	5	6 (30%)	12 (60%)
so and so	0	5 (25%)	1 (5%)
Bad	0	0	0
very porous	0	0	0

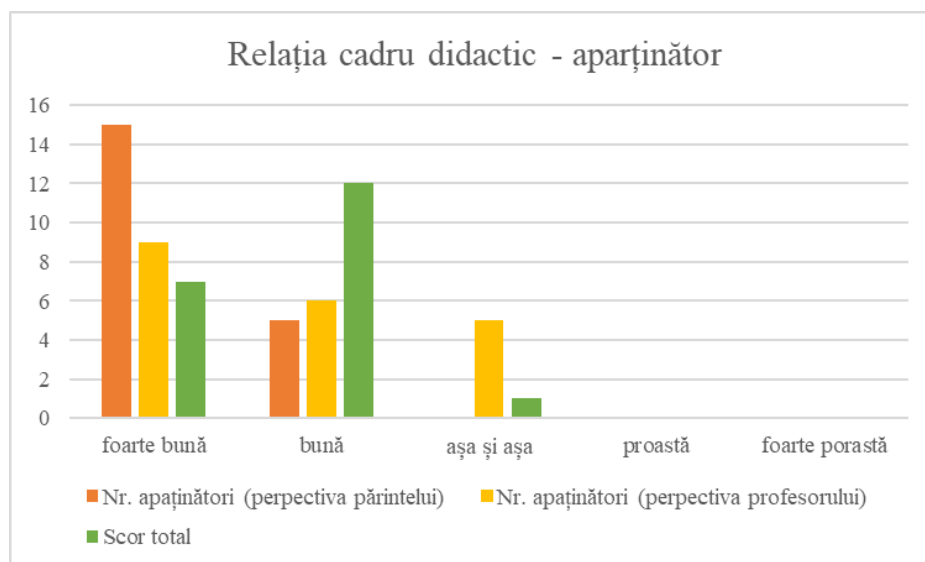


Figure 4. Graphical representation of Table 7.

Returning to our hypothesis and analyzing the data below, we notice that the number of students who register evolution in the process of developing communication and other adaptive behaviors and whose family and teachers are involved in obtaining favorable results regarding its autonomy, is 12, representing 60% of our respondents; On the other hand, the number of students who have regressed or stagnated and whose parents do not have a solid connection with school is 4, representing 20% of all respondents. So, we can conclude that our hypothesis is confirmed and the evolution of the child in the process of communication development is better as the school-parent collaboration is better (80% of respondents fall into this category, figure 5).



Table 8.

The connection between the relationship of the two institutions and the evolution of communication,
both from the teacher's perspective

students whose parents have a good or very good relationship with the school and who at the same time are evolving	12 (60%)
students whose parents have a "so-and-so" relationship with the school and who at the same time regress or stagnate	4 (20%)
students whose parents have a "so-and-so" relationship with the school and who are also evolving	2 (10%)
students whose parents have a good or very good relationship with the school and who at the same time regress or stagnate	2 (10%)

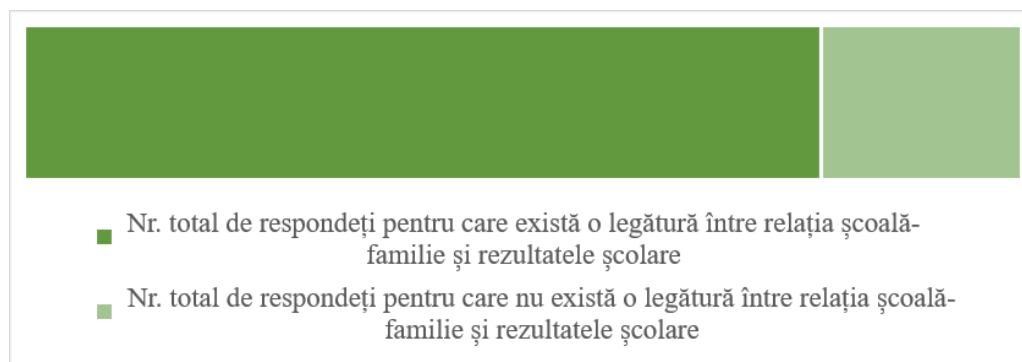
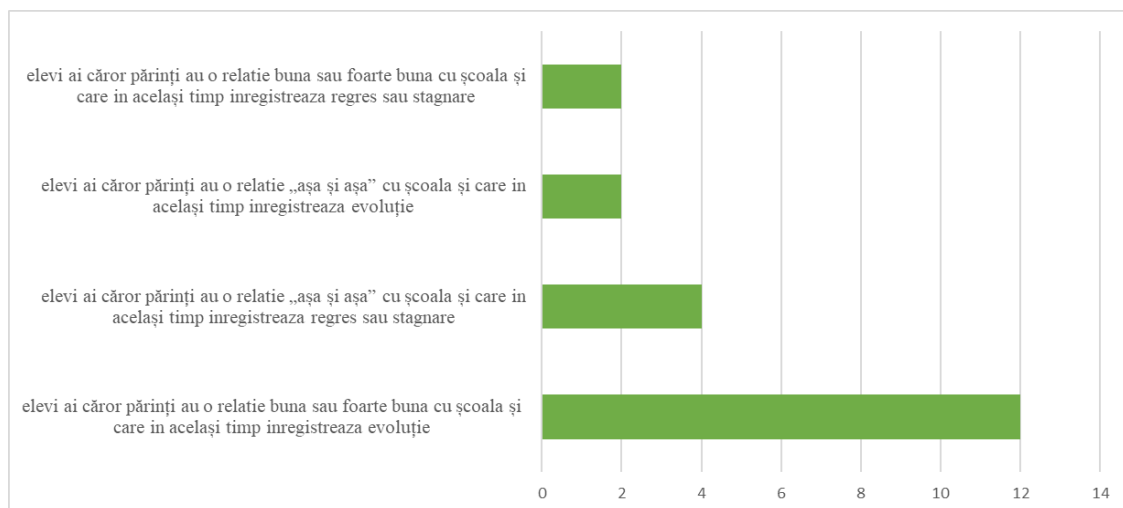


Figure 5. Graphic representation of the connection between the family-school relationship and the results obtained by the student in the process of developing communication and other desirable behaviors, necessary for the development of personal autonomy



The way parents get involved in activities related to the education of their children influences the results (both in the process of communication development and in the case of other behaviors necessary to obtain a higher degree of autonomy) obtained by the child.

This hypothesis has been confirmed in several researches:

- In the study conducted by Fan and Chen (2001) they state that parents can choose a specific form of involvement, depending on their skills, their availability and requests or invitations from the school; The chosen model assumes that engagement affects child development through mechanisms such as modeling, training, and providing responses.

Thus, the mechanisms by which parents work work in parallel with mechanisms used at school and thus I continue the instructive-educational process outside school.

According to the two authors, parental involvement has a corresponding influence on students' school outcome, its quality being influenced by the socio-demographic characteristics of parents as well as the level and training of teachers and school therapists.

- Henderson and Berlas (1994, cited by Adams, 2018) after examining 85 studies found three common elements within different types of parent engagement programs and within which positive outcomes were recorded on students, so improvements were observed: in patterns of family interaction, at home, in attitudes towards parents and in social interactions at school.

- Other specialists have explored comprehensive models with the aim of school reform, based on the implementation of parental involvement in school management and collaborative decision-making models - these shared decision-making models involve "providing services for the development of a cohesive community of parents, teachers and students" (Desimone et al., 2000, p.270, cited by Adams, 2018, p. 29).

- Regarding the relationship between teachers and caregivers, Senosi (2014), in his study, on the involvement of parents in the education of children with disabilities, concludes:

- there is no emphasis on training teachers, on how to request the support and support of parents in relation to their own students,

- for improved school performances it is necessary to educate and encourage parents to participate in school activities.

Although our hypothesis is confirmed, we must take into account that the students analyzed in our study have an atypical development, and measuring their results in terms of progress both in the sphere of communication and the acquisition of traits and abilities necessary to achieve autonomy, is an imprecise process, since it is known that people with multiple intellectual disabilities occasionally register stagnation or even regression. And no matter how much involvement, dedication, love and support the family provides, the child is limited by his own disability.

4.4. Additional information from the study

Starting from the questions we initially asked, we managed to compose the two questionnaires so as to find answers to as many of them as possible.

In recent decades, even on the territory of our country (where psychology is still considered a pseudo-science by many countrymen) researchers have begun to pay more and more attention to the study of the relationship between parental involvement and student performance. However, inconsistencies persist due to different definitions that researchers use to explain the concept of engagement and the different behaviors measured in this regard by researchers.



Epstein, in his work, *School and family partnerships* (1992) defined six types of parental involvement in schools:

- assisting parents in the process of acquiring child-rearing skills,
- school-parent communication,
- involving parents in school volunteering actions,
- involving parents in continuing the instructive-educational process, at home after school (by participating in homework, for example),
- involvement of parents in decision-making at school level,
- involving parents in school-community collaborations.

Therefore, to the question *What is the degree of involvement and how do parents of students with disabilities from special schools in Constanta get involved in the communication development process?* The answer is: we meet the caregivers of children with serious, multiple intellectual, sensory or ASD disabilities in the hallways of the special school, waiting for the 45 minutes of each hour spent by the child with the teacher or school therapist to pass, hoping that with each passing hour his child, he will get as close as possible to the much desired autonomy. Most of them declare that they spend almost non-stop time with the disabled child, encouraging him to get out of the comfort zone and socialize, involve him in group activities / extra-curricular / recreational / complementary therapies: ludotherapy, art therapy, occupational therapy, etc. for social interaction purposes, ask / accept help for household chores.

Parents who have young children (not in adolescence) put more emphasis on carrying out therapeutic activities for the development of communication, outside school hours, where the parent is the "therapist" or is accompanied to a specialist.

For parents with children who have reached the age of adolescence (16-19 years), I noticed a certain resignation, their support, now being limited to encouraging inter-human relationships and involvement in practical, domestic activities, in order to acquire skills necessary for self-support. It was also in these parents that I noticed more authority and determination in enforcing limits.

The teachers who answered in our questionnaires confirm that the involvement of the caregivers of the children in the special school is manifested by their communication with the teachers, by actively participating in extra-curricular activities (events, celebrations, trips, etc.) and when they ask for ideas about activities, with which to develop the child's communication and language.

At the same time, to the question *How do you think the parent could support the child in the process of developing communication?* The teachers recommended:

- *"To encourage them to become more independent by giving them the space they need*
- *The child is spoiled, he would have a visible progress if the cuddle at home would be overcome*
- *To be stimulated through social interaction activities*
- *More extracurricular activities, social integration*
- *Be more involved in the child's developmental process*
- *Bring your child to school more often*
- *Force him to follow the rules imposed*
- *Ensuring a balanced, peaceful family climate*
- *The child would have stages of progress, if the cuddle from the mother was overcome (being the only breadwinner in the family, with the mentality "I know everything", my child is very small and very sick and cannot)."*



In this study we found out, among other things, how parents of children with disabilities see the future, what their expectations and fears are, what they want to change at personal (family) level, at school level, at municipal and national level so as to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities.

Most (parents) say they don't want to think about the future, they are very afraid, that one day they will no longer be able to support their children, that they may be too sick or too old to support them, and that children will continue to depend on the adult at all times for basic needs (at worst) or will not cope with the challenges of daily life (at best). Thus, the greatest desire of the parent is for his child to become autonomous, to have some independence in satisfying his own needs, to manage to integrate into society, to be able to speak, communicate (for non-verbal children) and "to evolve medicine or technology so that these children have a chance of integration".

In terms of changes, parents of children in special schools want the focus to be on the child, on his unique peculiarities and needs, to make special centers for therapeutic but also leisure purposes, dedicated camps, qualification courses and vocational schools, actions with the purpose of integration into the labor market, to focus on the education of people with typical development on how to approach and integrate people with special needs.

Conclusions

The care and education of a child with neuro-motor disabilities generates continuous stress and can lead to problems in the social sphere (we are talking here about intra-family or extra-family relationships, access to services, work, etc.), economic, medical (occurrence of somatic or psychiatric diseases, especially in mothers of children with disabilities, etc.), psychological (emotional), behavioral (changes in parents' behavior), both in the case of the child and his/her family. Although in recent years a series of measures have been discussed and implemented to support children and their family members, there is still a need for high-performance medical, educational and social services that contribute to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities.

By approaching this topic, involving parents in the process of communication development, of children in special school, we wanted to find out what is the real degree of involvement of caregivers, if there is a stable relationship, based on communication and trust between the two institutions – family and school – and how important this relationship is for obtaining favorable results by the student, in the development of communication.

We believe that we have reached all these points and we have managed to know certain dimensions of life as a parent of a child with multiple disabilities, to find out their fears, desires, aspirations related to the child, their person or their family. They shared their worries with us, and we felt at one point that they were trying to excuse themselves, that maybe they hadn't done enough.

To conclude, parents of children with disabilities experience emotions and feelings of guilt, maybe they end up feeling inadequate, that maybe they could give more, themselves or others; They feel pushed aside, excluded by community, family, relatives, friends, or self-excluded, ignore their own health, pleasures and feelings, allocate significant resources of time and money out of devotion to the child.

Our first hypothesis - we assume that most parents declare effective (intensive) involvement in communication development activities - is confirmed, most caregivers declare effective (intensive) involvement in communication development activities, and the surveyed teachers are of the same opinion, people who care for children with multiple disabilities are intensively involved in their education and upbringing. Thus, the number of involved parents



(65% and 75%, respectively) is much higher than those who are least or completely disinvolved (35% and 25%, respectively). The results are supported by other studies conducted on similar topics, which concluded that being the parent of a child with disabilities involves greater responsibility and effort, and every day becomes a real challenge for the parent (and family) in trying to make him evolve and gain some autonomy; growing is expensive, time-consuming and exhausting; All problems faced by children have an effect on their primary caregivers, one of the most common being the deterioration of relationships between family members and isolation from friends, colleagues, relatives, etc.

And the second hypothesis - we assume that students whose parents are actively involved in the process of communication development, register better results in terms of school evolution than those whose parents do not get involved - it is confirmed, for 14 (70%) students out of the 20 study participants there is a link between the degree of involvement of the caregiver and the progress or regress registered by him, so there is a link between parental involvement (lack of parental involvement) and progress (stagnation or regression) by the child; So we can say that a student who has multiple disabilities and who is constantly supported by the caregiver is more likely to develop desirable behaviors and gain some autonomy, but we cannot say that students whose caregivers are not involved will not have this success (at least not as a result of our study).

Being a popular topic among psychology specialists, the results of our study coincide with the results of other researchers, Bakken and Obiakor (2016), I believe that the parent should continue the training process (or therapeutic activities) at home, this aspect being crucial for consolidating notions or skills acquired at school; Bagadood (2022) found that parental involvement in children's education can be very positive, Mantey (2020) reinforces the view that parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities leads to positive learning outcomes and academic achievement, and at the same time highlights that the lack of parental involvement is due to financial incapacity, so poverty can become a significant factor for parents' disinterest in their child's education and serious situations leading to school dropout.

The third hypothesis – we assume that the child's evolution in the process of communication development is better as the school-parent collaboration is better – it is also confirmed, the number of students who register evolution in the process of developing communication and other adaptive behaviors and whose family and teachers are involved in obtaining favorable results regarding his autonomy, is 12, representing 60% of our respondents; On the other hand, the number of students who have regressed or stagnated and whose parents do not have a solid connection with school is 4, representing 20% of all respondents. So, we can say that our hypothesis is confirmed and the evolution of the child in the process of communication development is better as the school-parent collaboration is better (80% of respondents fall into this category). The conclusion is also supported by the results of research done by Fan and Chen (2001) -they state that parents should continue the instructive-educational process outside school, because parental involvement has a corresponding influence on students' school outcome; Henderson and Berlas (1994) observed improvements: in patterns of family interaction, at home, in attitudes toward parents, and in social interactions at school, once teacher-parent communication improved

This study has shown once again that involving parents in their children's education can be very positive for their children's development.

Unfortunately, there are still many parents who believe that the child's education should fall exclusively to the school, neglecting the fact that the parent should be a reliable partner, the teacher and together act for the good of the child. The parent or caregiver must understand the possibilities and limitations of the pupil as a consequence of the disability and not disregard



him by calling him retarded or handicapped (and limiting him even more, through this labeling); They should be allowed to do things for themselves when they want and be used when they are helpful.

Just as the teacher should provide counseling and instruction to the parent on how to help their child in carrying out school tasks.

Employees of school institutions have the obligation to act in the interests of all parents in the best possible way; They should determine which child does not have adequate support at home and what needs to be compensated by providing additional support for the child. The school should encourage parents to get involved in volunteer activities, organized by the institution, to participate in celebrations, trips, camps, etc.

Through this work we also want to convey that the involvement of the parent – meaning, love, patience, therapy, activities, commitment, limits, support – in the child's development process (including the development of communication and language) is the cornerstone of any recovery or compensation process.

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