Parents’ and Teachers’ Attitudes on the Integration of Children with Down syndrome in Early Childhood Education in Liberia

Nada Ajami-Tondo *, **, Dr. Efi Stolarski *, and Shirly Yerachmiel*

* The Center for the Study of Child Development, University of Haifa, Israel, ** Ministry of Education Liberia

INTRODUCTION

- Knowledge about Down syndrome and attitudes, including that of parents and teachers, towards the educational inclusion of children with Down syndrome in regular education has become an important matter for discussion worldwide (NDSS, 1997).
- Research shows that with proper support and adequate communication between parents, teachers and professionals, inclusion is a favorable educational placement for children with Down syndrome (NDSS, 1996).
- Inclusion into regular schools provides an opportunity for close interaction with peers without disabilities and has a positive impact on the quality of life of these pupils in the long term (Dolva et al. 2010).
- The current study will examine parent’s and teachers’ attitudes towards the educational inclusion of children with Down syndrome and teachers’ knowledge of Down syndrome in Liberia.

SAMPLE AND QUESTIONNAIRES

- Sample
- 30 parents of 3-5 year old children attending three randomly selected special needs preschools and 30 teachers of three randomly selected regular preschools. Preschools will be selected from the database of the Bureau of Early Childhood Education list of preschools.
- Questionnaires
- Survey of Parents’ Attitudes and Opinions About their Children with Special Needs and their Support (van Kraayenoord et al., 2003) (63 items)
- Survey of Teachers’ Attitudes and Opinions About Students with Special Needs and the Types of Support for Integration/Inclusion (van Kraayenoord et al., 2003) (114 items)
- Teachers’ Knowledge of Down syndrome Survey (Gilmore et al., 2003) (28 items)

IMPLICATIONS

- This is a preliminary study for a future intervention program that will feed into policy issues relating to the inclusion of children with Down syndrome into integrated early childhood education preschools in Liberia.
- Findings from the survey proposed will be used by the Ministry of Education (MOE) to strengthen strategies for Integrated Early Childhood Inclusive Education. This will provide an understanding of parents’ and teachers’ attitudes towards integrative and inclusive Early Childhood Education and help in implementing the MOE’s strategies.

REFERENCES


Email: nadaajamit@yahoo.com
nadaajamit@gmail.com