



Measures to enhance the effectiveness of social work in raising teacher's awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder

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Abstract

In order for children with autism spectrum disorder to be integrated, they not only need early intervention but also require an environment with love, understanding and special support from kindergarten teachers. When kindergarten teachers are equipped with basic knowledge about this group, it will be more favorable in the process of caring, educating and supporting children with autism spectrum disorder to integrate with their peers. This paper proposes several measures to enhance the effectiveness of social work activities aimed at raising teachers' awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder at Ngo Thi Nham Kindergarten, Ha Dong District, Ha Noi City.

Keywords: Social work, awareness, teachers, children with autism spectrum disorder, kindergarten

Introduction

Social work has developed very early and become a professional occupation worldwide and is now beginning to develop in Vietnam. Social work is a professional activity carried out based on specialized scientific foundations to assist individuals, groups and communities in solving social issues and restoring their social functions. As society develops, more issues emerge, therefore requiring increased participation from the Social Work sector.

One of the target groups that need support is children with disabilities. Among groups of children with disabilities, children with autism spectrum disorder are a common group. Currently, the proportion of children with autism spectrum disorder shows an increasing trend.

Ngo Thi Nham Kindergarten in Ha Dong district, Ha Noi accepts children with autism spectrum disorder to study. However, due to the lack of basic knowledge, skills and experience working with children with special educational needs, the teachers and staff at the school still feel unfamiliar and face many difficulties in the process of caring for and educating these children. Therefore, raising awareness for teachers at the school about supporting children with autism spectrum disorder in inclusive education is essential. This ensures the development of a friendly, inclusive environment for children with autism spectrum disorder, helping them maximize their potential. Simultaneously, it also enhances the capacity of teaching staff, reducing pressure and stress due to difficulties encountered while working with special students.

Content

1. Some concepts

Autism spectrum disorder is understood as a developmental disability that persists throughout life with core deficits in social interaction and communication, stereotypical behaviors and narrow interests that limit and impair daily functions. Autism spectrum disorder includes disorders with common characteristics but differs in scope, severity, onset time and progression over time.

Social work activities in raising awareness for teachers of children with autism spectrum disorder are understood as professional activities aimed at increasing awareness for

teachers of children with autism spectrum disorder, helping teachers acquire knowledge and skills to address issues of children with autism spectrum disorder, such as helping autistic children make positive mental changes, assisting them in learning and training to help them receive and enhance their personal capabilities. Thereby, they can self-serve and solve some problems encountered in life using the knowledge and skills they have learned and practiced.

2. Research methods

The article uses document analysis method, observation method, questionnaire survey method and in-depth interview method with the main survey tools being: Questionnaires for teachers teaching children with autism spectrum disorder in inclusive kindergarten classes, observation forms for teachers' methods of supporting children with autism spectrum disorder and in-depth interview forms for teachers teaching children with autism spectrum disorder in inclusive kindergarten classes.

Survey objects: We conducted surveys with 40 teachers at Ngo Thi Nham Kindergarten, Ha Dong district, Ha Noi city and 1 social worker currently working at the school.

Basic information about surveyed teachers: The average age is 32.5, with the youngest being 24 years old and the oldest being 43 years old. Teachers' working experience ranges from 2 years to 19 years, with an average of 4.3 years of early intervention experience (standard deviation = 6.52). Teachers graduated from universities and colleges in various specializations including special education (47.3%); early childhood education (26%); primary education (8%); social work (14.7%); educational psychology (4%).

3. Current status of social work activities in raising teachers' awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder at Ngo Thi Nham Kindergarten, Ha Dong District, Ha Noi City

School teachers have recognized the importance of caring for and educating children with autism spectrum disorder. Most teachers have proper awareness of the importance of social work activities in raising teachers' awareness about

supporting activities for autism spectrum disorder. However, teachers still have limitations in both awareness and skills when working with children with autism spectrum disorder, specifically:

Teachers' level of understanding about children with autism spectrum disorder: still incomplete, most teachers rate themselves at "basic understanding" level, with no teachers self-rating at "very comprehensive understanding". Notably, there are still teachers who rate themselves as "knowing nothing" or "knowing just a little" about children with autism spectrum disorder.

Teachers' awareness of integration capabilities of children with autism spectrum disorder in kindergarten: Most teachers do not have proper awareness of integration capabilities of children with autism spectrum disorder in kindergarten. Survey results show that only 42.5% of teachers believe children with autism spectrum disorder can study together with normally developing children, while 52.5% of teachers disagree with having children with autism spectrum disorder study with normally developing children. Teachers' awareness in developing and implementing individual education plans for children with autism spectrum disorder in inclusive kindergarten classes: Nearly 50% of teachers still do not clearly recognize the importance of developing individual education plans for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Teachers' assessment of proficiency in educational activities and intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder: The assessment content regarding teachers' proficiency in educational activities and intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder remains low, with average scores ranging from 1.95 to 3.38 points.

The current status of resources supporting awareness raising for teachers teaching children with autism spectrum disorder in inclusive kindergartens remains poor and monotonous. From survey data about forces participating in supporting teachers teaching children with autism spectrum disorder, it can be seen that currently, the role of social workers is still unclear and lacks profound significance in this issue. Teachers rate the effectiveness of social work activities in raising teachers' awareness about supporting activities for children with autism spectrum disorder at an average level. The current status of social workers' task implementation in supporting awareness raising for teachers about children with autism spectrum disorder has been carried out but has not comprehensively covered all awareness outcomes. This shows that the implementation of social workers' tasks in supporting awareness raising for teachers about children with autism spectrum disorder is at a low level.

4. Measures to enhance the effectiveness of social work activities in raising teachers' awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder at Ngo Thi Nham Kindergarten, Ha Dong District, Ha Noi City

Measure 1: Enhancing awareness and skills for social workers to effectively fulfill their roles and tasks in supporting teachers to implement inclusive education for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Purpose and significance: Raise teachers' awareness about activities helping children with autism spectrum disorder. They take important responsibilities for determining the effectiveness of social work activities to raise awareness for teachers teaching children with autism spectrum disorder.

Content and implementation methods: The school facilitates social workers in terms of time and funding to participate in seminars where special education experts, doctors, psychologists and social work experts share and exchange the latest information about children with autism spectrum disorder, raising teachers' awareness about supporting activities for children with autism spectrum disorder. Compile materials and flyers to help social workers recognize the importance of early intervention and raising teachers' awareness about supporting activities for children with autism spectrum disorder. Additionally, materials and flyers can also provide social workers with methods to raise teachers' awareness about supporting activities for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Organize thematic activities on contents related to social work activities in raising teachers' awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder. These can be organized in-depth, specifically for this content, or integrated into the school's professional thematic activities.

Encourage social workers to seek relevant information and guidance materials to gain deep understanding and effectively fulfill their roles and duties.

Conditions for implementing the measure: Social workers need to be ready to learn to effectively perform this role. Allocate time to participate in seminars, training courses and professional development. Be ready to share experiences and difficulties in implementing the role of raising teachers' awareness about supporting activities for children with autism spectrum disorder. Closely coordinate with the school and other forces to implement the task of raising teachers' awareness about supporting activities for children with autism spectrum disorder.

The school needs to identify resources and necessary conditions such as time, funding, human resources and facilities to implement plans for raising awareness for social workers, helping them effectively fulfill their roles in the school.

Measure 2: Developing and implementing social work activity plans in raising teachers' awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder and methods of caring for and educating children with autism spectrum disorder

Purpose and significance: Raising teachers' awareness about the necessity of developing and implementing social work activity plans in caring for and educating children with autism spectrum disorder will help improve the quality and effectiveness of these activities.

Content and implementation methods: Planning is the process of establishing objectives and appropriate action methods to achieve goals. Social workers need to implement each step in the process of developing and implementing plans to raise teachers' awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder. This planning process needs the participation of many stakeholders including: teaching staff, parents, psychologists, therapists. Among these, teachers'

participation plays a very important role. Teachers and social workers need to coordinate closely with each other in the process of developing and implementing plans to ensure effectiveness in raising teachers' awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder.

Social workers gather and carefully study current legal documents on state education regarding the education and intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Social workers research and analyze the teaching staff situation: quantity, qualifications, professional training, capacity and needs of teaching staff in educating children with autism spectrum disorder; facility conditions meeting the education of children with autism spectrum disorder, school's economic conditions. To do this, social workers need to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school; rely on annual assessment results to identify limitations of teachers at their educational institution; consult proposals from professional groups and teams, organize information collection by surveying teachers' needs in caring for and educating children with autism spectrum disorder; check the school's facility conditions.

Determine objectives for raising teachers' awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder: Based on the requirements for educating children with autism spectrum disorder and the analyzed school context, the principal chairs the identification of objectives for raising teachers' awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder, or the expected results for teachers when their awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder is raised. Requirements for determining objectives to raise teachers' awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder need to be specific, measurable, understandable, practical and feasible.

Conditions for implementing the measure: Participants must recognize the necessity of developing and implementing plans to raise teachers' awareness about supporting activities for children with autism spectrum disorder. Clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in developing and implementing the plan.

The plan for raising teachers' awareness about supporting activities for children with autism spectrum disorder needs to be strategic and timely; within the general plan, there should be specific plans for each organization, department and individual participating in coordination activities; the plan should be feasible, effective and achieve high consensus among participants.

Measure 3: Enhancing teachers' awareness and skills in caring for and educating children with autism spectrum disorder

Purpose and significance: Help teachers understand the communication abilities, learning capabilities and autonomous development patterns of children with autism spectrum disorder, thereby enabling them to develop appropriate care and education plans.

Content and implementation methods: Establish and enhance the capacity of teachers' associations for children with autism spectrum disorder to promote inclusion. Continue developing the capabilities of teachers working with autistic children to provide assistance and education for

children with autism spectrum disorder and support organizations helping in the development of children with autism spectrum disorder to ensure their participation in learning, development and rights protection.

Social workers need to collaborate with teachers of children with autism spectrum disorder to develop action plans and programs to communicate about the rights of children with disabilities in general and children with autism spectrum disorder in particular and their need for equal treatment. Additionally, to ensure a friendly and positive school environment, teachers of children with autism spectrum disorder should receive counseling and training to enhance their implementation capacity, classroom organization and problem-solving abilities.

Enhance skills in caring for and educating children with autism spectrum disorder through regular annual training courses and specialized training sessions with diverse enrichment programs and varied learning resources.

Conditions for implementing the measure: School administration and social workers need to diversify educational activities to raise awareness among social workers about the role of educating children with autism spectrum disorder.

Social workers need to have the skills to propagate, guide and support teachers who face difficulties with skills or have misconceptions about educating children with autism spectrum disorder.

Measure 4: Fostering teachers in organizing play activities and collective activities for children

Purpose and significance: Provide skills and understanding of the psychology of children with autism spectrum disorder for teachers to build a professional environment that maximally supports the integration of children with autism spectrum disorder with their peers.

Content and implementation methods: The school needs to organize diverse training activities such as group activities, demonstrations, visual aids and images so teachers can learn from practical experience, making it easier to remember and practice, thereby equipping teachers with new skills and techniques to address children's difficulties during intervention and integration.

Provide counseling and training to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in caring for and encouraging children with language and communication deficits, helping them gradually participate in collective play activities and integrate with peers.

Coordinate with teachers to develop specific programs and action plans to ensure children with language and communication difficulties can participate in collective learning and play activities appropriate to their abilities.

Coordinate with teachers to communicate and change awareness and behaviors of other children in supporting children with autism spectrum disorder during learning and collective activities. Collaborate with teachers to monitor the implementation of integration capabilities among children with autism spectrum disorder.

Guide teachers in establishing and coordinating with children's families: Ensure cooperation and participation of

children, families, communities, local authorities and other social forces.

Conditions for implementing the measure: Social workers need to assess teachers' skills in educating children with autism spectrum disorder and design appropriate training content based on this assessment.

Social workers need to have the skills to propagate, guide and support teachers who face difficulties with skills or have misconceptions about educating children with autism spectrum disorder.

Measure 5: Mobilizing participation and coordination of forces in supporting teachers of children with autism spectrum disorder

Purpose and significance: Coordinating various forces to support teachers will help make inclusive education for children with autism spectrum disorder more effective, creating opportunities for children to learn and develop skills.

Content and implementation methods: Regarding coordination between teachers of children with autism spectrum disorder, social workers and parents in all stages and processes of implementing intervention programs for children:

1. Parents provide complete and accurate information
2. Parents participate in developing and implementing intervention plans as well as evaluation and transition planning;
3. The center conducts activities to guide parents, helping them acquire necessary knowledge and skills to actively participate in the intervention process through social workers and expert team activities
4. Maintain communication between families and the center: direct (daily during pick-up and drop-off, individual education plan meetings, parent meetings, phone calls) and indirect (through communication books, intervention diaries, letters, announcements)

Conditions for implementing the measure: Social workers play a pivotal role in mobilizing and connecting services and ensuring the participation of various forces in early intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Intervention specialists, therapists, kindergarten teachers and families of children with autism spectrum disorder should be considered resources to mobilize and ensure the participation of various forces in early intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Conclusion

Children with autism spectrum disorder face limitations in all aspects of life. Intervention activities for children with autism spectrum disorder are influenced by factors such as: the degree of impairment, accompanying syndromes, reduced concentration ability and the organization of early intervention measures. The measures to enhance the effectiveness of social work activities in raising teachers' awareness about children with autism spectrum disorder at Ngo Thi Nham Kindergarten, Ha Dong District, Ha Noi City will contribute to supporting both the teaching staff and children with autism spectrum disorder.

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