

The Importance of Utilizing Word and Character Instruction to Children with Mental Disabilities in Order to Support Further Development

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I. Preface

There has not been any advancement with mentally disabled children. Perhaps, it is because of the lack of an effective teaching technique. There has always been an aim for higher education, but no improvements were made. However, the overall standard of education has made progress. This was made possible because of the vast support from the community. In this study, the main consideration is the developmental support of children with mental disabilities (e.g. Down's syndrome). The utility and importance of guiding through words and letters were taken into account.

II. The Study's Goal

To see if a mentally challenged child's adaptation ability will improve within his society by having his development challenged through the guidance of words and letters.

III. The Study's Method

Confirming the child's guiding developments through teaching of words and letters. In evaluating the effectiveness of the child's developments, the parent(s) observe a session of the study. Afterwards an interview is conducted to see if his/her child's development is progressing. The Portage Early Educational Program and an I.Q. test evaluated the child's development.

IV. The Guidance's Theory and Method

The principle of reinforcement in the child's guidance is the applied action analysis, in which the Portage Early Stage Program is used. There is a set goal and the aim is to try and achieve it. The child was counseled in the National language (Japanese), arithmetic, P.E., and society matters. Promoting general development in this field of study with out being bias was another goal. The guidance session lasted from one to two hours. After the guidance session, the interview with the parents was given. The interview consists of questions about the contents of the guidance given, the child's actions at home, problems (e.g. development, school life, learning, counseling etc.) and principles for future guidance. In the next guidance session, to overcome problems the parent(s) take standard actions at home. Evaluate and setting new standards of the subjects taught happened after every session. Repeating the process of the child's guidance promoted his development.

V. Guidance's Progress

The context of the guidance is recognition of letters, sentences, numbers, and finger exercises. The guidance was given two to three times a month for about two years.

In the beginning of the guidance sessions, when the child failed at a problem the child lost motivation to continue. In addition, the lack of confidence to speak words clearly was also apparent. The exchange between a person close to the child was more effective than an unfamiliar person. The objective of learning letters etc. was incomprehensible as the needed exercises became difficult for the child to tackle.

In the first year, a good personal relationship continued throughout the guidance sessions. The motivation to communicate was strong, but the ability was immature. Therefore, there was this look of failure. The activity was to write a diary. That was assumed to be a challenge, but using a lower level method helped the ability gap. The parents would write a blog with pictures on it and make a diary sheet. Making it easy for the child to write a diary. Having the pictures helped the child be more eager in the activity, which formed a good foundation of learning. At home, the problem to overcome was the basic foundation of the Japanese language, hiragana. Hiragana is the basic alphabet in Japanese and was used to write the diary. Gradually, it was possible for the child to write a composition. With a card, the child tried to read aloud, but after receiving tips the child was able to do it successfully. In addition, using money as a numerical guide was also useful with everyday life situations. Approximately a year of being counseled, the reward was a movie at a friend's house and playing a game. The promise of reinforcement of society was enabled since the beginning.

Presently, the blog with pictures is still being continued, in which the child reflects on it. To see if characters were clear and polite, it was checked by doing sentence-making exercises. Many various useful teaching materials were developed throughout this study. To test the child's ability, picture cards, toys, and worksheets were used. In addition, the usage of a musical recorder helped manual skills and sense of rhythm. The musical recorder was effective on helping the child be more conscious of his mouth's formation and the movement of his tongue. Pronunciation began to improve. Improvements on writing characters and in his ability to write sentences were apparent, as the child got older. Learning arithmetic using commercial materials was a challenge because the child did not readily have the concept of number quantity, addition, or subtraction as was assumed. However, showing praise for actions without showing a feeling of fatigue helped the child's development. The child looks forward to writing a diary and tackles on-coming obstacles.

VI. Consideration

I think that, even if the child had an obstacle in his learning abilities. When trying to devise a guidance method for the child, each child is different therefore it was important to consider the characteristic of the child, to support his development. When having talks with the parent(s), it was important to have all the contents in order to make it understandable for everyone. The parent(s) could understand the guidance of his/her child by having the consultation session afterwards. The commercial teaching materials and guidance methods were developed in Japan. The materials were used well and it promoted the child's development effectively. Using the materials in a way that would work positively with the child's development was achieved.

VII. Conclusion

A child with a mental disability, in order to require a language takes a lot of mental concentration. With this brings changes, these changes make it possible for social relationships and opinions of neighbors. The internal and social developments influence a goal to achieve higher development. Down's Syndrome characteristics are getting better within personal relationships. This helps the development of social characteristics dramatically. The role of language was thought of as means of transmitting intentions to a partner and being understood, but it is also to keep good personal relationships and a tool used to put thoughts together. The brain can make good adjustments by writing and talking. Language guidance promotes more mental development in the child through effective guidance of words and letters. Guidance by the Portage program since infancy, piano, swimming, cram school, teachers from school, and parents will help with development. There were many people who were concerned with the child, not just the teacher. Development of the child was the results of these efforts from these people. And it is important to be satisfied with what children learned. I think that the satisfaction of children promote their development.