



Early Childhood intervention for babies and young children with blindness, low vision or any different optical problem, and additional difficulties: parents' experience

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Abstract:

In recent years, experts have highlighted the involvement of children in early intervention programs, as they are considered crucial to improving the mental health of participating children and their families. This research studies parents' experience of participating in an early intervention program aimed at children who have been diagnosed with visual impairment such as blindness, low vision, or a diagnosed problem of visual perception, and who also have some additional difficulty, such as other physical disability, mental retardation, etc. The aim is to describe their experiences, their feelings and their desires. This is a qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews in order to collect data. The participants are seven parents who take part with their child in the early intervention program of the Aymonis club, based in Attica. The interviews took place in the parents' room, transcribed by the researcher, followed by a content analysis of the resulting material. The findings that have been discussed in relation to the relevant literature are: a) everyday life, b) family relationships, c) experience with experts, d) participation in the program, e) benefits from participation in the program, f) program satisfaction, g) desires and needs. Practical extensions for practitioners working on early intervention programs, restrictions and ideas for additional research will also be discussed.



Biography:

Mando Lioni is a Developmental Psychologist, MSc and a Systemic Psychotherapy Trainee. She is experienced on providing psychosocial support to adults (Papanikolaou Psychiatric Hospital, SOPSY Thessaloniki- Family Association for Mental Health), as well as to children and adolescents (AHEPA Hospital- Department for Child and Adolescent, 45o and 107o Primary School of Thessaloniki, Merimna Paidiou- Zesti Agalia, Association of parents with children with neoplastic diseases- Lampsis). She is currently working at "Day Center Poreia", where she works with adults diagnosed with psychosis or/and mental retardation. Her research interest focuses on early childhood intervention, autism, and systemic psychotherapy.