

Transition from Early Education to Pre-School Education in Children with Hearing Loss in Turkey: Problems and Recommendations

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Abstract : It is known that there are policies that will support the early special education (ESE) for children requiring special care including the children with hearing loss (CHL) in many countries that give importance to early childhood (0-6 years) education, accordingly ESE services have been gradually increasing and these services provide positive contributions to the child and family. These services begin with medical diagnostics, provision of the use of assistive technologies for hearing and the orientation of children towards early education program (EEP) for the CHL. In 0-3 years of age EEP, education and support services are provided to the children and their families. In 3-6 years of age, children are supported in a pre-school education program (PSE) in which their peers and teachers are present. Therefore, the children with hearing loss and their families are going through a series of medical, educational and social transition process after diagnosed with hearing loss. Depending on their age and development, CHL also go through a transition period from hospital to home, from home to EEP and from EEP to PSE. It is seen that there is no legal regulation regarding the transition process in Turkey and hence different processes have been carried out in the transition process from EEP to PSE. The aim of this study is to reveal the problems confronted by the CHL during the transition period from EEP to PSE and the solution proposals for these problems. In this study, a document review was made by reviewing the national and international studies about transition processes of the CHL in Turkey from EEP to PSE. Accordingly, in the study carried out in two stages, firstly, a review of the body of literature was performed by creating key words related to the subject. Secondly, the problems confronted by the CHL in Turkey during the transition period from EEP to PSE and the solution proposals for these problems were demonstrated by analyzing the obtained data. According to the body of literature, it is seen that there are no laws concerning the transition processes of the children who require special care including the CHL in Turkey from EEP (sending) to PSE (receiving), and correspondingly numerous problems have been experienced during the transition period. It seems that the EEP adopts family-centered approaches for strengthening the families of the CHL. However, PSE program aims to prepare the children to school life by focusing on their social and academical development rather with the adoption of children-centered approaches. Therefore, while the families feel an inseparable part of the team in EEP, they indicated that they felt like a stranger in the school team after their children have started to PSE. Therefore, families find the transition processes worrisome and state that they are not satisfied with the process. We discovered that in the process of transition from EEP to PSE, families are not informed, there is a limited number of PSE options available, children cannot adapt to the new educational environment and cannot benefit from the existing PSE.

Keywords : early education program, early special education, children with hearing loss, transition

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