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Parents' Feelings and Perceptions Towards their Child's Speech or Language Disorder

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Parents' Feelings and Perceptions Towards their Child's Speech or Language Disorder

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Honors Research Project

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Abstract

Throughout society, there remains a stigma in regards to a person's speech and language. While the stereotype that a person with a speech or language disorder may have a lower quality of life shines light on the perceptions of mainstream society, there has been research that provides insight into parent's feelings. The purpose of this project was to explore the research regarding parents' feelings and perceptions towards their child's speech or language disorder by conducting a literature review and a questionnaire that could be used as a measuring tool. The researchers used a questionnaire to focus on two main points: personal feelings parents may have regarding a child's speech or language disorder and their perceptions on how the child's speech or language disorder may affect his or her life. It was designed to take approximately 15 to 20 minutes and it included a variety of topics such as social relationships, education, and emotions to be answered on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. This project aims to provide better insight into how to better help parents cope with a child's speech or language disorder by giving a speech-language pathologist a better idea on how to counsel parents. It could also serve as a pilot study that could lead to future research in parents' feelings and perceptions towards their child's speech or language disorder.

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Introduction

According to ASHA, the American Speech and Hearing Association, a speech or language disorder is defined as the inability to produce sounds, understand language, or express language in a correct manner (2018). Communication is necessary for many life functions, such as asking for wants and needs, emotional regulation, and the development of relationships. Children who suffer from a speech or language disorder can be greatly affected by their “non-typical” functioning. Parents who have children with a speech or language disorder may face many obstacles regarding their child’s education, social skills, and emotional development. This paper provides insight by exploring parents feelings and perceptions in order to find ways to better assess and counsel as a speech-language pathologist, or SLP.

Nearly 1 in 12 children in the United States had some form of speech or language disorder during the year of 2016 (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communicative Disorders). Not only do the children that face a speech or language deficit have to overcome the side effects of that, research suggests they are at risk for emotional, educational, and vocational difficulties later in life. They will experience literacy difficulties and have a lower educational attainment at graduation age. In regards to emotional development, children with a speech or language impairment tend to have lasting social and behavioral problems during and after therapy for the specific disorder they have been diagnosed with (Dean and Markham, n.d.). Overall, a child’s quality of life can be vastly affected in many areas due to a speech or language disorder.

Successful communication is arguably the groundwork for other social and emotional areas in a person's life. Having the ability to communicate provides a person with the means to developing skills only attainable through communication with others. A parent's perception of his or her child's speech or language disorder can ultimately be a driving force for completion and successful therapy. Parent's concerns in regards to their child's speech or language disorder could include but are not limited to: educational difficulties, social skills and relationships, reasoning behind the communication disorder, and priorities on language intervention. The psychosocial effects that a parent may face could resonate through to the child as well. In order to investigate parents' feelings and perceptions about their child's speech or language disorder, a questionnaire was created that could be conducted as a study to obtain parents' feelings and perceptions. The purpose of this questionnaire is to give parents the ability to reflect on their feelings or perceptions they may be having.

Literature Review

Parent's View of Reason(s) Behind Language Delay

Whether a speech or language disorder is due to non-typical development or an anatomical deformity at birth, there are a variety of reasons that someone may experience a difficulty in communication. Family members and parents often times provide feedback on their opinions about a child's speech or language disorder and development in terms of a physical, biological or medical, personality and emotional, or cognitive standpoint (Marshall, Goldbart, & Phillips 2007). This means that a child's speech or language disorder can affect all aspect of his or her life and parent's notice this through the development of their child.

Research suggests that parents attribute a child's speech or language development to both external and internal factors. They tend to believe that the ability for their child to develop typical communication skills depends on their hearing abilities, gender, and personality. For example, according to Marshall, Goldbart, & Phillips (2007) a parent reported their beliefs on this by stating, "A more outgoing child will speak better." (p. 541). In regards to an emotional aspect, parents suggested that the child chose to not listen and learn but rather focused on non-language based activities. Laziness and a lack of confidence were also topics mentioned during parent interviews (Glogowska, 1998).

In studies of parental beliefs, some parents reflected on their own behavior as being a reason a child has developed a speech or language disorder. Often, it is questioned what could have been done differently in raising the child to prevent the disorder. Marshall, et al. (2007) found that parents feel like failures by suggesting they

should have placed more stress on communication development through interactions between the parent and child. Some parents have reported that there were also times in which the child was denied of certain opportunities because of the surrounding environment.

Educational Perceptions

Should children with a speech or language disorder be included in a mainstream school? Would a child receive the supportive help needed in a mainstream school that would be provided to them in a special education school? These are common questions that arise when parents are determining the best means of education for a child with a communication or language disorder. It is important that a child receives the most appropriate education in an environment that is best suitable for them.

Research suggests that parents sometimes feel their children's needs are not being met in a mainstream school after being diagnosed with a speech or language disorder. They often worry about the educational provision that the child is receiving. Paradice and Adewusi (2002) report, "Parents said their children found certain tasks too demanding and homework set was too difficult." (p. 259). This would frequently cause uncertainty and anxiety among parents in making decisions in regards to a child's education environments particularly during the transition from school-age to middle school, especially involving access to speech therapy (Band, et al., 2010). Parents noted that the children had more bouts of frustration, anxiety, and crying at the secondary level if enrolled in a mainstream school. Unfortunately, many parents felt as if a mainstream school was not beneficial to a child although it was where they had hoped their child to be placed (Paradice and Adewusi, 2002).

Social Skills and Relationships

Communication is essential for social skills and developing relationships with one another. Children who face a speech or language disorder may be at a disadvantage in regards to either of these domains involving everyday life. Without the ability to maintain an interaction with others, parents feel as if a child will not be accepted by their peers (Stephenson and Dowrick, 2000). Parents find that children have experiences with bullying and exclusion among their typical aged peers. Paradice and Adewusi (2002) found, "Any child that is slightly different is seen as a candidate for being picked on....." (p. 265). A child will often become a loner because of this and his or her lack of ability to communicate with others.

A common theme that arises involving social skills and relationships is other children's ability to recognize differences among themselves and a non-typical developing child. Parents overwhelmingly want a child to be included and feel as if there is not enough stress placed on children to understand that differences are not detrimental to relationships (Dean and Markham, 2006). This topic is very important when considering the future implications of a child with a speech or language disorder. It is important to give both the child and the parent skills to ensure the improvement of social skills and relationships.

An important issue to consider is a parent's concern for the safety of his or her child. Because of a child's inability to express pain or distress, parents find their child's safety to be threatened (Stephenson and Dowrick, 2000). Stephenson and Dowrick (2000) reported, "He has to be able to tell somebody that someone's doing something to him and who it is" (p. 8). This could be valuable in various situations for a child, such as

in school, on the playground, etc. when needing to draw attention to oneself.

Unfortunately, though, parents believe not much has been done to teach students how to better communicate discomfort they may be feeling.

Surprisingly, the research on this particular topic is broad, leaving much more to discover. Most of the research highlights on the exclusion of a child due to a speech or language disorder and the things that can occur because of the disorder. Further research could be conducted to delve into the emotional effects social skills may have on a child and his or her parents.

Emotional Difficulties

Due to the stress of having a speech or language disorder, children often have emotional difficulties that can also affect others around them. Parents specifically express that frustration between both them and the child exacerbates whenever the parent knows the child is trying to express him or herself, but he or she is unable to decipher the message (Dowrick and Stephenson, 2000). This can create an interactive effect on both communication partners. Further, the inability for communication between the parent and the child to be successful causes the child frustration that can lead to behavior problems such as tantrums. Stephenson and Dowrick, (2000) found, "If he wants something and I'm not sure what he wants, he gets frustrated..." (p. 7)

Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Parents express positive feelings towards augmentative and alternative communication devices for a child with a speech or language disorder. Ronski et al., describe augmentative and alternative communication, or AAC, as speech generating devices (2011). Parents find AAC devices to be non-burdensome and have reported

improved relationships among them and their child because of the device. Further, Ronski, et al., (2011) reported, "In addition to improvements in the child's communication, parents reported increased quality of life, independence, and a more promising future for their child." (p. 113). Research on AAC devices are becoming much more positive as more information becomes known on them. In recent years, AAC devices have been reported as devices that can hinder a child's speech and language development. According to research by Ronski, et al., they have actually found the opposite effect. AAC devices have been found to increase expressive communication and, in some cases, verbal communication (2011).

Priorities on Language Intervention

In regards to language intervention, there are many various opinions on what parents think is most important for their child who has a speech or language disorder. Parents found most important, though, the ability for their child the skill of asking for an object (Stephenson and Dowrick, 2000). Stephenson and Dowrick (2000) reported:

Other skills that were clearly important as they were highly ranked in each listing were: objecting to the actions of others, drawing attention to pain and discomfort, asking someone to do something, maintaining an interaction, making a choice, rejecting object or actions when he or she has had enough and asking someone to do something (p. 6-7).

The skills mentioned as important to parents are common intervention goals suggested in speech therapy with a child.

Concluding Thoughts

The information provided can be beneficial to not only speech-language pathologists but parents and children as well. It is important to explore not only the stigma among mainstream society, but also the perceptions of the parents. Further research could bridge the gap between some missing holes that have not been covered in regards to a parent's feeling and perceptions on a child's speech or language disorder. This project was designed for the potentiality of further research to be conducted in the future.

Methods

The creators of this project aimed to provide more insight into parents' feelings and perceptions towards a child's speech or language disorder. The questionnaire created, based on past research on parents feelings and perceptions toward their child's speech or language disorder, was intended to be given to parents at some point during a child's speech therapy treatment. The questions provided in the questionnaire include both questions that pertain to the research as well as questions that could be beneficial for future research.

While a child is receiving speech therapy, a speech-language pathologist spends less amount of time with a child than his or her parent does. It is crucial to assess a parent's feelings so that the speech-language pathologist can further provide him or her with advice or counseling on various topics regarding the child's disorder. Parents often have a child's best interest at heart and having the ability to openly speak on these topics will give them the ability to ensure that.

The target audience for this particular project was for parents who have children with a speech or language disorder. This questionnaire, though, could be modified and adapted to be provided to other people in a child's life. For example, teachers with students who has a communication disorder could benefit from taking a questionnaire such as this one. This would allow a teacher to gain some insight into feelings that may have not been previously thought about and give him or her strategies on areas to improve. The questionnaire could also be modified to include speech-language pathologists, whose everyday job is to treat those with communication disorders.

The questionnaire includes various topics relating to a child's communication disorder. Questions are strategically placed with two particular headings in mind: personal feelings a parent may have towards a child's speech or language disorder and perceptions about how the child's speech or language disorder affects their life. The first 13 questions aim to explore the first heading, personal feelings a parent may have towards a child's speech or language

disorder, whereas the remaining questions explore the second heading, perceptions about how the child's speech or language disorder affects their life. Responses are on a likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

The target age of a person completing a questionnaire would be someone with a child below eighteen years old. Parents with children under eighteen years old spend a majority of the time with their child making decisions based on their perceptions or feelings of aspects in their child's life. It is also important to note that this questionnaire would not be beneficial for a parent who has a child that has just been diagnosed with a communication disorder. Many of the questions relate to a demographic of those who have experienced a communication disorder for at least 6 months to a year.

The questionnaire would be best to be given by a speech-language pathologist who has worked closely with the family for the time the child has been diagnosed with a communication disorder. An SLP who has worked with the family for a long period of time would have a close working relationship with the family and may be able to provide more insight to the family. Providing a family with the questionnaire would give the SLP advice on how to better help both the parent and the child cope. The questionnaire would be provided to parents through volunteer means only but be highly encouraged for those seeking extra advice.

Discussion

Although no studies are being conducted including the questionnaire provided in this research, it is important to note various modalities for each question provided. Most questions were derived from previous research and others were included with hope for gaining further insight into topics relating to this matter. The questions reflect the overall well-being of the child and his or her quality of life. All responses would be beneficial to both the speech-language pathologist and a teacher working with the child for further knowledge on the child and his or her communication disorder.

Question #1: "I worry about my child's future."

The first question provides a parent with the opportunity to reflect on his or her child's quality of life at a whole. Although the question is broad, it will overwhelmingly provide a speech-language pathologist with an important piece to counsel a family during treatment. The researchers also hope that the question above will give more insight into parent's overall perception of a child's communication disorder.

Question #2: "I don't know how to react to some behaviors of my child."

According to research, children with a communication disorder often exhibit behaviors that may be uncontrollable and worrisome to parents. This question is important because it would allow the speech-language pathologist to recognize and address whether a child is having behavioral problems not only at home, but in others places as well. A means of self-coping could be included in the treatment plan to combat the behavior problems that may arise. The question above could provide more insight into whether behavior problems are a reflection of a communication disorder or whether it is a developmental age level that affects a child's behavior.

Question #3: "I notice myself and my child become frustrated when we are both unable to understand what the other is trying to say."

The question above is relatable to the research that suggests children become frustrated and irritable when having trouble understanding and speaking with a communication partner. Because research suggests that frustration can lead to behavior problems in children, it is important to ask the question above to gain insight into whether behavior issues may be relevant for a particular child. The question also touches on the feelings of parents when they are a part of a communication barrier.

Question #4: "My child's temper tantrums seem to occur more often and at a more severe rate than other typically developing children."

All children, at some point in childhood, face bouts of temper tantrums in the home, school, etc. The degree and extent to which typically developing children and children with a communication disorder have tantrums may differ, though. The question above could show a speech-language pathologist how often a parent is witnessing temper tantrums and his or her viewpoint on how often they believe a typical developing child experiences the same. Data based on the question above could shine light onto whether temper tantrums coincide with a communication disorder, or whether another factor is contributing as well.

Question #5: "I feel as if other people expect to make the decisions for my child rather than allowing them to make the decision on his or her own."

Independence of a child with a communication disorder can be an important topic for a speech-language pathologist to discuss with parents. Depending on the age of the child, it is crucial to provide a certain amount of independence ensuring that the child develops life skills for the future. The researchers included this question, not necessarily based from past research, but to gain knowledge into whether parents and caregivers are providing a child with a sense of independence. The question could create an interest into further research regarding a child's independence after being diagnosed with a speech or language disorder.

Question #6: "I feel as if my relationship with my child is affected because of their communication difficulties."

A relationship between two communication partners could be affected due to one or both having a communication disorder. The question above aims to gain insight into whether parents feel this is applicable to them. There is ample research regarding how a child's relationship with peers is affected by a communication disorder, but a lack of it involving parents. This question could spark an interest into further research being conducted on the relationships between both the parent and child.

Question #7: "I would be open to allowing my child to use a form of augmentative and alternative communication as a form of support. Explain why or why not."

Adamson, et al. (n.d.), states, "Historically, parents have often perceived that the use of AAC can hinder speech development..." (p. 113). Adamson continues to suggest that the data is changing to more positive perceptions, though. Giving a parent the opportunity to answer this question would allow for a speech-language pathologists to make a decision in regards to the possibility of providing a child with an AAC device. It is important to include a more subjective answer in this question to give insight into why a parent may or may not be okay with this particular means of communication.

Question #8: "I feel the need to help my child with certain things more often than I should."

The question above relates to the topic of independence in regards to a child who has been diagnosed with a speech or language disorder. A speech-language pathologist, from the data taken from the questionnaire, can evaluate how to counsel a parent to provide a sense of independence to their child that is age appropriate. Children, depending on their age, want to have a sense of independence and it is the job of the adults around them to ensure that that is possible.

Question #9: "I often find myself wanting to speak for my child if he or she is having trouble communicating with someone."

The previous two questions coincide with one another, involving a means of independence for a child. Both are strategically placed by one another to allow a parent to reflect on both one after the other. While they ask in different contexts, both questions will give the speech-language pathologist insight into whether the child receives the appropriate independence in settings outside of the therapy room.

Question #10: “I believe I could have done something differently in my child’s early development to prevent him or her from obtaining a speech or language disorder.”

Communication disorders can be the result of many different factors, ranging from a developmental delay to a biological disorder that affects speech and language. In saying this, though, parents have their own viewpoint on how or why their child has obtained a communication disorder. Some parents may blame themselves for what they did or didn’t do and reflect on possible failures they may have had. The possibility of psychosocial effects could arise for the parent and the child because of this. It is important for a speech-language pathologist to provide parents with the best possible methods and means for how the child obtained the communication disorder.

Question #11: “I worry sometimes that my child will never improve.”

A speech-language pathologist not only counsels the child through his or her confidence, but also a parent’s. The researchers determined that this question will highlight the need to which a parent would benefit from counsel. It is imagined that a child’s communication disorder is not only a stressor to the child, but also to the parent. Ensuring a parent’s ability to remain confident in the treatment of his or her child will allow for a better therapy and treatment process.

Question #12: “I think my child’s communication disorder could have been affected by his or her personality at a younger age.”

A child with a more reserved personality may not experience as diverse of a language environment as a child who is very outgoing and social. Although the researchers found no

evidence with ties between a communication disorder and personality at a young age, some parents may believe this is why their child developed a disorder. A speech-language pathologist would benefit from this information in order to provide a parent with the highest quality of education in regards to his or her child's speech or language disorder. From the question above, the researchers aim to validate the commonalities between parents and their feelings on this particular topic.

Question #13: "I feel as if I could have provided a more stimulating language environment for my child that could have prevented his or her speech or language disorder."

A more stimulating language environment can be described as an environment in which there is a higher quantity and quality of language being used. This could range from more words to more complex words and so forth. Children who are involved in these environments may have more success in communication related skills as they age. After a child is diagnosed with a communication disorder, a parent's concern may increase on as to whether the language environment was enriching enough for their child. This questions hopes to provide more insight into the psychosocial effects a parent may experience after a child is diagnosed with a communication disorder. It focuses on the "what ifs" of the child's early development and outside contributors.

Question #14: "I do not think my child will have the same achievements as other typically developing children."

There is wide debate into whether mainstream or special education schools are more beneficial for children with a communication disorder. From this question, the researchers are looking to find any commonalities between parents who have their children in both types of these schools. This will provide more insight into whether one is more beneficial to a child or not.

Question #15: “I think my child’s communication disorder causes them to have more severe behavior issues than typically developing children.”

The question provided above will allow parents to reflect on their child’s behaviors compared to that of a normal child. It would give the speech-language pathologist useful information for treatment and therapy of a child with a speech or language disorder. This question could also spark future research into why children who have a communication disorder may experience more severe behavior issues.

Question #16: “I feel as if my child is timid to speak up because of his or her communication disorder.”

A speech-language pathologist sees a child with a communication disorder for approximately 30 minutes to an hour per week, depending on a specific case. Although a speech-language pathologist is an expert on the child’s disorder, they are not always aware of psychosocial effects a child may be having. Because parents spend the majority of their time with their children, they can provide an SLP with good indicators on factors such as the one above. Confidence can be a major aspect of a treatment plan for a child and this would help the SLP to develop his or her treatment plan on a case by case basis.

Question #17: “I feel as if my child has less independence because of his or her communication disorder.”

This question, in particular, addresses the topic of independence straight forward. It provides the speech-language pathologist with the overwhelming idea as to whether the parents think their child exhibits any independence. The question above would be highly important for an older child who has been diagnosed with a speech or language disorder, because of the interest in independence at this age.

Question #18: “I feel as if my child is at a disadvantage for developing social relationships with children of his or her age.”

Childhood is a crucial time for the development of relationships with surrounding peers. Parents often feel as if their child is being singled out and deemed as “different” because of his or her communication disorder. Responses to this question could provide the speech-language pathologist with any concerns she may have to be provided to a teacher in regards to the child’s issues. It will also pave the way for future research on how to combat this disadvantage children with a communication disorder may face.

Question #19: “I would describe my child as a loner or someone who distances themselves from others.”

A lack of communication abilities may cause a child to distance themselves from others. A parent will usually have a good indication as to whether their child is experiencing this in various places. This question would also be beneficial for a teacher to respond to, as he or she can usually associate who the child is friends with. It is important to find resources for a child who may be experiencing this type of exclusion from others.

Question #20: “I feel as if my child’s communication disorder causes him or her to be singled out by others.”

The question above shines light on the perception surrounding peers may have about a child’s speech or language disorder. While a parent would be answering the question, it would give the speech-language pathologist an idea of how well the child is doing in school with his or her social relationships. Again, it would allow a teacher to make accommodations as best as possible for the child.

Question #21: “I feel like my child could be bullied by other students because they are seen as “different.”

Exclusion and bullying of a student is not a light topic to discuss openly, but it is very important for the well-being of the child. This topic absolutely needs to be addressed to ensure the safety of a child who may be experiencing something such as bullying. Both the parent and

the teacher need to be aware of any situation occurring and this question is provided to ensure that happens.

Question #22: “I feel as if my child does not receive the educational support needed for his or her speech or language disorder.”

Parents often assume that a child does not receive the support needed if enrolled in a mainstream school. Although they want them to be in the most inclusive environment, some do not find it feasible for their particular child. The question above hopes to provide a parent with the insight on their feelings about this and give an SLP an idea on ways to improve the inclusiveness of a child in a mainstream environment.

Question #23: “I am afraid my child could be placed in an educational setting that is not suited for his or her needs, specifically speech-language therapy services.”

A parent overwhelmingly wants to place their child in an environment that gives them the best opportunity to learn and grow. The decision as to where to place a child for their schooling and speech therapy is important for all those involved. It is understandable to be worried about the above question, giving it much more importance to be asked. Through this question, the researchers hope to gain valuable insight into what parents find to be a suitable setting.

Question #24: “I feel as if my children will have a harder time in school than other typically developing children.”

A communication disorder may impact a child's ability to academically excel. An SLP can help a parent find outside resources, such as tutoring, to give a child extra support where needed. This question may or may not be a concern to some parents, but it is important to support those who feel concerned by this.

Question #25: “I feel as if my child needs to be in a stable and supportive environment to ensure success for his or education.”

The researcher believes that this question is relatable to all children in the country, even those who do not suffer from a speech or language disorder. All parents should be confident

that their child is receiving the best education possible. Because children who have a communication disorder need more support sometimes, this question could be asked to understand and reflect on a parent's opinion about the environment their child is in.

Question #26: "I feel as if my child has a hard time paying attention in class due to the distractions surrounding them."

A parent who strongly agrees with this question may find it more suitable for their child to be placed in a special education environment. Mainstream schools are not suitable for every child and it is important for a parent to recognize that. This question may give a parent the notion to plan an adjustment for his or her child in regards to their schooling.

Question #27: "I feel as if my child struggles to express his or her feelings to others."

A parent could reflect on this question in a few different ways; they may relate it to his or her own relationship with his or her child or to their child's relationship with others, or both. An SLP could benefit from a response to this question and provide details and help in a treatment plan for the child about sharing feelings. It is important for a child to express his or her feelings, whether good or bad, as it gives him or her an identity. Without the identity, a child may struggle to develop friendships and a purpose.

Question #28: "I worry that my child will be in a harmful situation and be unable to communicate with anyone."

The researchers find this to be one of the most important questions in the questionnaire. A child's safety is always the main priority in any situation. A parent who is worried about this may need to consider various ways to ensure a child has the ability to communicate if a harmful situation to occur.

Future Research

The potential for research regarding this topic is promising, because of its broad nature with the ability to be broken down into specific parts. Also, the lack of research, especially recent research may mean there is an opportunity for growth within this topic. The questionnaire provided in this research could be given to parents who have a child with a communication disorder and could be evaluated further. The questions provided in the questionnaire highlight on past research with a few coming from the researcher's experience and thoughts, but more questions could be added to bring a more well-rounded feeling that parents have to light.

The questionnaire could be expanded demographically, including teachers, siblings, speech language pathologists, or even the child with the communication disorder. Some questions may need to be adapted, but would be beneficial for all areas previously named. Example questions could include, "I notice the child being singled out by classmates in the classroom," or, "I notice my brother or sister becoming stressed when having a hard time sharing feelings." It would be important to adapt the questions appropriately for the demographic population that would be completing the questionnaire.

After obtaining a wealth of responses from the questionnaire for various demographics, the results could be interpreted to obtain the highest rated feelings and perceptions of each demographic. Further research could be done to gather reasoning behind these results. For example, it may be beneficial to know why teachers may feel differently on certain topics than parents would. This could provide researchers with information on how an environment may affect a person's viewpoint on a child's speech or language disorder. A parent may be more concerned about the safety of a child, whereas a teacher could be more concerned about the peer relationships a child has. These findings would give a speech-language pathologist essential information when consulting with family members and professionals who interact with a child with a speech or language disorder on a daily basis.

The questionnaire could also be broken down, not only by demographic, but by topic. This questionnaire is broad and focuses on a well-rounded view of a child's quality of life who has obtained a speech or language disorder. After receiving feedback on this particular questionnaire, it could be valuable to adapt and create questions towards specific problem areas that the person noted. This would allow for a more in depth understanding of the particular topics that the child may be facing.

Finding methods and means for counseling and improving a child's overall quality of life who has obtained a speech or language disorder could be gathered through a study using the questionnaire in this research project. While each parent, teacher, or sibling have an individual viewpoint about the child's quality of life, there is a possible overwhelming goal each of them have for the child; they hope for happiness and success. As speech-language pathologists, it is crucial to counsel a family member to know and understand a child's speech or language disorder and how to address concerns accordingly.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a parent's perception or feelings towards a child's speech or language disorder is an important factor in the treatment process of the child. The questionnaire provided in this research aims to provide a speech-language pathologist with a better understanding on how to help parents cope with their child's communication disorder. More research needs to be completed to gain a more recent and overall understanding on parents' feelings and perceptions. The possibility for future research is applicable because of the broadness and importance of this topic and the variabilities involved.

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Appendix A

Parental Questionnaire

Background Information:

Child Age: _____

Diagnosed Disorder of Child: _____

How long has your child had a speech or language disorder? _____

Please Circle the Most Appropriate Answer in Regards to the Questions Below

1. I worry about my child's future.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. I do not know how to react to some of the behaviors my child exhibits.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I notice myself and my child becoming frustrated when we are unable to determine what the other is trying to say.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. My child's temper tantrums seem to occur more often and at a more severe level than typical developing children.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I feel as if other people expect to make decisions for my child rather than allowing them to make the decision on their own.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I feel as if my relationship with my child is affected because of their communication difficulties.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. I would be open to allowing my child to use a form of augmentative and alternative Communication (AAC) as a form of support.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please explain why or why not:

8. I feel the need to help my child with certain things more than I should.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. I often find myself wanting to speak for my child if she or he is having trouble Communicating with someone.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. I believe I could have done something differently in my child's early development to prevent him or her from obtaining a speech or language disorder.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. I worry sometimes that my child will never improve.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. I think that my child's communication disorder could have been affected by his or personality at a young age.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. I feel as if I could have provided a more stimulating language environment for my child that could have prevented his or her communication disorder.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

14. I do not think my child will have the same achievements as his or her typically

developing peers.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

15. I think my child's communication disorder causes them to have more severe behavior issues than typically developing children.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

16. I feel as if my child is timid to speak up because of his or her communication disorder.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

17. I feel as if my child has less independence because of his or her communication disorder.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

18. I feel as if my child is at a disadvantage for developing social relationship with other children of his or her age.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

19. I would describe my child as a loner, or someone who distances themselves from others.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

20. I feel as if my child's communication disorder causes him or her to be singled out by others.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

21. I fear that my child could be bullied by other children because they are seen as "different."

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

22. I feel as if my child does not receive the educational support needed for his or her speech or language disorder.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

23. I am afraid my child could be placed in an educational setting that is not suitable to his or her needs in regards to their communication disorder

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

24. I feel as if my child is having a harder time in school as his or her typical developing peers.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

25. I feel as if my child needs to be in a stable environment to ensure success in his or her education.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

26. I feel as if my child has a hard time paying attention in class due to the distractions surrounding them.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

27. I feel as if my child has a hard time expressing his or her feelings to others.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

28. I worry that my child will be in a harmful situation and be unable to communicate with anyone.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

