AN EDUCATIONAL AUDIOLOGY SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL:
NEEDS OF TEACHERS OF CHILDREN WITH HEARING LOSS

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: An educational audiology service delivery model: Needs of teachers of children with hearing loss

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In South Africa, the current movement towards the inclusion of children with disabilities, including children with hearing loss, is likely to have far-reaching consequences for both teachers and learners. Undoubtedly, needs will arise from teachers during the transition, especially in the areas pertaining to the audiological and educational management of children with hearing loss. A hearing loss often negatively impacts on the development of the child’s auditory, language, speech, communication, literacy, academic, and psychosocial skills. The educational audiologist is uniquely skilled in managing the effects of hearing loss on the child’s educational development, and is a crucial member on the educational team. The educational audiologist as specialist in the management of children with hearing loss, is able to offer a wide range of support and assistance to teachers as well as children with hearing loss in the inclusive educational system. When teachers receive appropriate educational audiology services, they are enabled to provide quality education that strives to reach the full potential of every child with hearing loss. Therefore, an urgent need existed to determine the needs of teachers of children with hearing loss regarding an educational audiology service delivery model for use within the inclusive educational system.

In order to comply with this need, a descriptive research design was developed comprising of a questionnaire survey followed by focus group interviews. The questionnaire survey explored the needs of 664 teachers of children with hearing loss. Focus group interviews were conducted with 19 teachers of children with
hearing loss and these results were used to substantiate findings from the questionnaire survey.

The results of the study indicated that the needs of teachers differ according to the sub-groups found among teachers, namely those teachers who mainly promote the use of spoken language and those who mainly promote Sign Language. Findings revealed that, although participants realised the importance of various aspects of development of the child with hearing loss, they generally did not realise the importance of receiving support from an educational audiologist. With respect to specifics in term of support, participants strongly recommended that teachers receive support in the acquisition of knowledge re the trouble-shooting of hearing aids, advocacy for the implementation of FM systems in inclusive classrooms and the development of speech production skills of the child with hearing loss in the inclusive environment. In addition, various suggestions were made regarding the structure of services rendered within the educational context.

These findings were utilised in order to propose an educational audiology service delivery model for South Africa in the current timeframe.

*Key words: children with hearing loss, educational audiologist, educational audiology, inclusion, inclusive educational system, needs of teachers, service delivery model, South Africa, teachers of children with hearing loss, teacher support.*
Die huidige oorgang in Suid-Afrika ten opsigte van die opvoedkundige inklusie van kinders met gestremdhede (insluitend kinders met gehoorverlies), sal moontlik verrykende gevolge vir beide onderwysers en leerders hê. Ongetwyfeld sal behoeftes by onderwysers gedurend die oorgang, veral op die gebied van oudiologiese en opvoedkundige hantering van kinders met gehoorverlies, ontstaan. ’n Gehoorverlies werk dikwels negatief in op die ontwikkeling van die kind se ouditiewe, taal, spraak, kommunikasie, geletterdheid, akademiese en psigologies-sosiale vaardighede. Die opvoedkundige oudioloog is uniek bekwaam om die invloed van gehoorverlies op die kind se opvoedkundige ontwikkeling te hanteer en is ’n onmisbare lid van die opvoedkundige span. As ’n spesialis in die hantering van kinders met gehoorverlies, is die opvoedkundige oudioloog in staat om ’n wye verskeidenheid ondersteuning en bystand aan onderwysers asook kinders met gehoorverlies in die inklusiewe onderwysstelsel aan te bied. Wanneer onderwysers toepaslike opvoedkundige oudiologiese dienste ontvang, sal hulle in staat wees om kwaliteit opvoeding, wat poog om die volle potensiaal van elke kind met gehoorverlies te bereik, te verskaf. Dit is derhalwe noodsaaklik om ondersoek in te stel na die behoeftes van onderwysers van kinders met gehoorverlies ten opsigte van ’n opvoedkundige oudiologiese dienstesmodel vir gebruik binne die inklusiewe onderwysstelsel.
Om aan hierdie behoeftes te voldoen is ’n beskrywende navorsingsontwerp ontwikkeld wat uit ’n vraelysopname, gevolg deur fokusgroeponderhoude, bestaan het. Die vraelysopname het die behoeftes van 664 onderwysers van kinders met gehoorverlies ondersoek. Fokusgroeponderhoude is met 19 onderwysers van kinders met gehoorverlies gevoer, en hierdie resultate is gebruik om die bevindinge van die vraelysopname, te bevestig.

Die resultate van die studie het getoon dat die behoeftes van onderwysers, volgens die verskillende subgroepe tussen die onderwysers, naamlik onderwysers wat hoofsaaklik gesproke taal bevorder en onderwysers wat hoofsaaklik gebaretaal bevorder, verskil het. Alhoewel deelnemers die belangrikheid van verskeie ontwikkelingsaspekte by die kind met gehoorverlies besef, het die bevindinge getoon dat hulle gewoonlik nie die belang van ondersteuning deur ’n opvoedkundige oudioloog, besef nie. Met betrekking tot die besondere in terme van ondersteuning, het deelnemers sterk aanbeveel dat onderwysers ondersteuning vir die verkryging van kennis insake probleemidentifisering van gehoorapparate, die implementering van FM-sisteme in insklusiewe klaskamers en die ontwikkeling van spraakproduksie vaardighede van die kind met gehoorverlies in die inklusiewe omgewing, ontvang. Bykomend is verskeie aanbevelings ten opsigte van die strukturering van dienste wat binne die opvoedkunde konteks gelever is, gemaak.

Hierdie bevindinge is gebruik om ’n opvoedkundige oudiologiese diensleweringsmodel binne die huidige tydraam in Suid-Afrika, voor te stel.

Sleutelwoorde: kinders met gehoorverlies, opvoedkundige oudioloog, opvoedkundige oudiologiese, inklusie, inklusiewe onderwysstelsel, behoeftes van onderwysers, diensleweringsmodel, Suid-Afrika, onderwysers van kinders met gehoorverlies, onderwyserondersteuning.
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