

PSYCHOLOGICAL SPECIFICITIES OF FAMILIES RAISING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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Abstract

Families raising children with disabilities face unique psychological and social challenges. This article explores the emotional dynamics within such families, highlighting the stressors experienced by parents, especially mothers, and the need for structured psychological support. Using data from Uzbek national sources and theoretical perspectives from scholars like M.N. Guskova, the article emphasizes the importance of social integration and inclusive policy support. The article also outlines the necessary institutional and psychological support mechanisms and explores the impact of inclusive policies on parental well-being.

According to online sources, the term “disabled” (nogiron) has evolved in meaning over the years. The word “nogiron” is derived from Latin, where *invalidus* means weak or someone in need of assistance. The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution on December 20, 1993, adopted the “Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities,” which introduced two terms: disability and impairment. These terms encompass various types of functional limitations or the inability to carry out typical activities, essentially referring to a lack or restriction of participation in societal life and labor.

In our view, just as the well-being of a healthy individual is considered important in life, it is equally vital to support children with disabilities — such as those who are visually impaired, hearing impaired, or have limited physical abilities — in establishing their place in society. This is one of the most pressing issues facing modern communities.

Keywords:

Disability, family psychology, inclusive education, parental stress, Uzbekistan, emotional adaptation

Introduction

Parenting a child with disabilities imposes significant emotional and psychological strain on families. According to Guskova (2002), the wellbeing of a family is deeply connected to the health of the child. When health challenges arise, the entire family structure undergoes stress, potentially leading to social isolation and psychological breakdown, particularly among mothers.

Addressing these issues requires not only systemic support but also deep psychological insight into family dynamics and coping mechanisms.

Psychological Impact on Families

If a child is born with physical or intellectual impairments, parents—especially the mother—require not only emotional endurance but also an environment of support and understanding. Guskova argues that parental readiness, emotional patience, and empathy are vital to the development and education of such children.

However, many parents experience depressive symptoms, with drawal from social activities, and decreased motivation for any external engagement. In extreme cases, parents may avoid social contact entirely and disconnect from long-standing personal relationships.

To support their child effectively, parents must engage in personal psychological growth and gain a comprehensive understanding of their child's condition. However, without guidance and support, parents are at risk of developing chronic emotional exhaustion, which can severely impact both the child and the family's quality of life.

Between 2006 and 2008, D. Xoliqov, R. To‘raqulova, and M. Bobocholova conducted research under the project titled “Let’s create a mechanism to enhance the correctional-pedagogical literacy of parents of children with disabilities not covered by the education system in Uzbekistan.” The results of this project were summarized in a 2008 monograph, which emphasized the vital role of the family in the moral education and personality development of children with disabilities.

The study highlighted that a major aim of child-rearing in such families is to develop positive personal traits in the child while attempting to correct and minimize behavioral or psychological shortcomings. Within the upbringing of children with disabilities, the family occupies an irreplaceable place.

Support Systems and Government Involvement

According to statistics provided by the “Oila” Scientific and Practical Center, there are more than 130,000 families in Uzbekistan raising children with disabilities, with the total number of registered individuals with disabilities exceeding 799,708. Some families care for multiple children with special needs.

The government has introduced legal frameworks and inclusive education policies to support such families. The Uzbek social protection system ensures opportunities for medical, psychological, and educational rehabilitation, as well as community integration.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has taken significant steps to strengthen support for such families, aligning with global standards on disability 152 and inclusive education. Nevertheless, the need for tailored psychological assistance remains critical.

Psychological and Social Exclusion

Families with disabled children often experience social marginalization. They may feel excluded from public life due to their child’s condition and the societal stigma surrounding disability. This often leads to a sense of isolation, with parents avoiding social interaction and public participation. Many parents leave their jobs or avoid community events because of caregiving responsibilities or perceived judgment.

Such self-isolation not only worsens the emotional state of caregivers but also reduces the chances for children to be socially integrated. Addressing this requires both social and psychological interventions.

Policy and Institutional Support

The Uzbek government has adopted several policies to address these issues. These include:

- Inclusive education laws
- Rehabilitation programs
- Social benefits and training for families

- Professional development for teachers working in inclusive settings

However, for these initiatives to be successful, they must be accompanied by awareness campaigns and community engagement to reduce stigma and promote psychological literacy.

Emotional and Social Consequences

Despite governmental support, many families still face emotional overload, stigmatization, and practical limitations. Parents may lose employment opportunities and withdraw from public life due to the constant demands of caregiving. These factors often result in a sense of isolation and exclusion from broader social dynamics.

One of the most essential aspects of psychological support is improving parent-child communication. Guskova highlights the importance of professional support to help mothers, in particular, understand how to interact with a child who has complex medical or psychological needs. Effective communication builds resilience, strengthens attachment, and enhances the child’s emotional development.

Additionally, families need to learn coping strategies such as mindfulness, stress management, and social engagement. Encouraging participation in support groups and therapy sessions can provide emotional relief and reduce isolation.

Conclusion

Families raising children with disabilities exhibit distinct psychological profiles that require special attention. Supporting these families involves not only legal and institutional reforms but also comprehensive psychological assistance. Promoting emotional resilience, social participation, and inclusive attitudes can significantly improve their well-being. Future policies should integrate mental health services into family-centered support models and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration.

No one understands a child better than their own parents. Parents are the most knowledgeable about their child’s abilities, character, and health status. Taking these into account, they must focus on ensuring the child’s access to education,

physical development, and emotional cultivation, while also fostering their abilities and talents [97; 37].

A.G. Asmolov (2000), in discussing the “mother–child” dyad and its psychological transformation, asserts that within this dyad, the mother influences the child not only as an individual but also in shaping the child’s personality. He states, “If the mother’s behavior affects the formation of the child’s personality, the child simultaneously influences the mother’s behavior and character.”

References

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