



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY FOR THE SCHOOL INCLUSION OF AUTISTIC STUDENTS



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ABSTRACT

The research investigated the importance of the family in the school inclusion of autistic students, highlighting how family collaboration can positively influence the success and adaptation of these students in the educational environment. The objective was to analyze the contribution of the family to the inclusion process, considering its role in the personalization of educational strategies and in the creation of a school environment more adapted to the needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The methodology involved a detailed analysis of the impact of family participation on the effectiveness of inclusive practices, including ongoing parent-school communication, emotional support provided by the family, and advocacy to ensure adequate resources. The results revealed that active family involvement is crucial to understand the specific needs of students, promote effective pedagogical adjustments and offer emotional support, in addition to ensuring that inclusion strategies are implemented consistently. The research concluded that collaboration between the family and the school not only improves the adaptation and progress of autistic students, but also contributes to a more inclusive and respectful school culture, benefiting the entire school community.

Keywords: Education, Inclusion, Autism, Family, Teaching.



INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has been consolidated as a fundamental principle in contemporary educational policies, aiming to provide all students, regardless of their special conditions or needs, with equitable access to the school environment and learning opportunities. This educational model seeks to adapt the school system to meet the diverse needs of students, promoting the full participation of all in the educational process. The central idea of inclusive education is to recognize and value diversity, ensuring that each student has the opportunity to reach their full potential in an environment of support and respect (Cabral; Flacke; Marin, 2021).

The inclusion of autistic students is a critical aspect within the broader concept of inclusive education. Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) often face specific challenges that can impact their ability to interact, communicate, and learn in traditional ways. The school inclusion of these students requires adaptations and differentiated educational strategies that allow for active participation and the development of their skills. Creating an inclusive environment for autistic students not only meets their particular needs but also enriches the educational experience of the entire school community by promoting greater understanding and acceptance of diversity (Lima, 2020; Mantoan; Prieto, 2023).

Autism, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a neurobiological disorder that affects the development of communication, social interaction, and behavior patterns. The signs of autism usually manifest before the age of three and can vary significantly in terms of severity and impact. It is characterized by difficulties in social and communication skills, restricted interests, and repetitive behaviors. Although autism is a spectrum, meaning that the condition can vary widely from one individual to another, early diagnosis and appropriate interventions can significantly improve the quality of life and academic success of autistic students (Paula et al., 2020).

At school, autism can impact the student in many ways, from difficulties in social interaction and communication to challenges in structured learning environments. Autistic students may face difficulties following instructions, working in groups, or adapting to changes in routine. These challenges can result in frustration, isolation, and even behavioral difficulties, which can affect your academic performance and school experience. It is crucial that the school environment is adapted to offer individualized support and teaching strategies that consider these needs, to promote inclusion and student development (Soares; Santos, 2022).

In this context, the family plays a vital role in the school inclusion of autistic students. Parents and guardians are critical to the success of inclusion, as they provide essential



information about the student's needs and characteristics, as well as collaborate in the implementation of educational strategies. Family involvement with the school, through continuous communication and active participation, can facilitate student adaptation and ensure that educational approaches are appropriate and effective. In addition, emotional support and advocacy from parents are crucial to create a positive and inclusive learning environment that promotes the academic and social development of the autistic student (Martins; Monteiro, 2017).

Thus, the objective of this research was to analyze the importance of the family for the school inclusion of autistic students.

DEVELOPMENT

INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS

School inclusion is a concept that aims to ensure that all students, regardless of their needs or abilities, have equitable access to the educational environment and learning opportunities offered by regular schools. This principle is based on the idea that diversity is a wealth and that each student has the right to participate in the educational process in a full and meaningful way. School inclusion is not limited to the physical presence of students in the classroom, but extends to the active participation and involvement of all students in the learning environment (Martins; Monteiro, 2017).

Implementing school inclusion involves adapting the curriculum, teaching methods, and school environment to meet the varied needs of students. This may include modifying activities, utilizing differentiated educational resources, and providing additional support, such as individualized assistance or assistive technology. The goal is to create an environment where all students can feel valued and have the chance to develop their skills and talents to the fullest (Cabral; Flacke; Marin, 2021).

Inclusion also requires the continuous training of teachers and other education professionals, so that they can adopt inclusive pedagogical practices and respond effectively to the diverse needs of students. It is essential that educators are prepared to identify and overcome barriers to learning and to foster an environment of respect and support. This may involve creating differentiated teaching strategies and applying flexible pedagogical approaches that cater to a wide range of learning styles and needs (Soares; Santos, 2022).

In addition, school inclusion promotes a culture of respect and empathy among students. By interacting with peers of different abilities and backgrounds, students develop a deeper understanding of individual differences and learn to value diversity. This inclusive



environment not only benefits students with special needs, but also contributes to the social and emotional development of all students, preparing them to live and work in a diverse and collaborative society (Silva; Menezes, 2022).

Collaboration between school and family is crucial for the success of school inclusion. Active participation by parents and guardians helps ensure that the specific needs of students are understood and met. An open dialogue between the school and families facilitates the implementation of effective strategies and the resolution of challenges, fostering an educational environment where all students have the opportunity to thrive (Paula et al., 2020).

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a set of neurological and developmental conditions characterized by significant challenges in areas such as communication, social interaction, and behavior. The term "spectrum" reflects the wide range of symptoms and abilities that can vary significantly from one individual to another, from mild to more severe forms of the disorder. The signs of ASD usually appear before the age of 3 and can impact several areas of a person's life, including the ability to develop language skills, relate to others, and adapt to change (Mantoan; Prieto, 2023).

In the field of communication, individuals with ASD often face difficulties in understanding and using verbal and non-verbal language. They may have difficulties initiating and maintaining conversations, interpreting social cues, and responding appropriately to social interactions. In addition, nonverbal communication, such as facial expressions and gestures, may not be recognized or used in a conventional way. In some cases, people with ASD may use alternative communication, such as assistive communication systems, to express their needs and thoughts (Soares; Santos, 2022).

Social interaction is also a significant challenge for those with ASD. They may have difficulties understanding and participating in typical social interactions, which can lead to difficulties forming friendships and interpreting the intentions and emotions of others. This can result in behaviors that seem outside of the social pattern, such as difficulty sharing interests or responding to social interactions appropriately. These difficulties can make the person with ASD feel isolated or misunderstood (Lima, 2020).

Repetitive and restrictive behavior is another striking characteristic of ASD. This can include repetitive patterns of movement, intense interests focused on specific topics, or rigid routines that, when interrupted, can cause great distress. These behaviors can help the



person cope with sensory overload or the feeling of control in a world that may seem unpredictable and confusing (Silva; Menezes, 2022).

Despite these difficulties, individuals with ASD may have unique abilities and talents. They often demonstrate exceptional abilities in areas such as math, music, or visual arts. Appropriate interventions and supports can help maximize these skills and provide strategies to overcome challenges. Therapies, specialized education, and individualized support are essential to help people with ASD develop their skills and adapt to the social and educational environment (Martins; Monteiro, 2017).

Understanding ASD and providing appropriate support are key to improving the quality of life of those affected and promoting greater inclusion in all aspects of society. Recognizing the specific capabilities and needs of each individual with ASD can contribute to a more welcoming and inclusive environment, where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential (Lima, 2020).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY FOR THE SCHOOL INCLUSION OF AUTISTIC STUDENTS

The importance of the family for the school inclusion of autistic students is a crucial aspect in the educational process, playing a fundamental role in the success and well-being of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Active collaboration between the family and the school can make a significant difference in the adaptation and progress of autistic students in the school environment (Santos et al., 2022).

Firstly, the family provides in-depth and individualized knowledge about the student, which is essential for planning and implementing effective educational strategies. Parents and guardians know their child's characteristics, preferences, and needs better, information that can be valuable for educators in creating a more inclusive and adapted learning environment. Sharing this information helps the school better understand the specific challenges faced by the student and personalize the teaching and support resources needed to meet their needs (Mantoan; Prieto, 2023).

In addition, the active participation of the family in the educational process allows for better coordination between the school and the home, which is vital to ensure that strategies and interventions are consistent and effective. When there is regular and effective communication between parents and teachers, it is possible to adjust pedagogical and behavioural approaches collaboratively, solve problems quickly and celebrate progress together. This synergy between home and school helps to maintain continuity in the



application of support strategies and to ensure that the student receives integrated support (Paula et al., 2020).

Another important point is the role of the family in providing emotional support and encouragement to the student. The presence of a supportive family network can strengthen the student's confidence and motivation, helping them to face challenges and engage more effectively in school activities. Emotional support from parents helps to create a positive and encouraging learning environment, which is essential for the student's development and adaptation to the school environment (Carvalho; Shaw, 2021).

The family also plays a vital role in advocating for the rights and needs of the autistic student. Parents and guardians are often the main advocates for their child's special needs, working to ensure that the school provides the appropriate resources and support. Family advocacy is crucial to ensure that the student receives the necessary accommodations and to promote a deeper understanding of the needs of ASD within the school (Cunha, 2017).

Finally, family involvement in school inclusion can serve as a model for building a more inclusive and understanding school community. Collaboration and family support not only directly benefit the autistic student, but also promote a culture of inclusion and respect that can positively influence the entire school community. Thus, the active participation of the family is essential to create a school environment where all students, regardless of their differences, can have access to quality education and opportunities for full development (Cabral; Marin, 2017).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research on the importance of the family for the school inclusion of autistic students revealed the fundamental influence that family involvement has on the success and adaptation of these students in the educational environment. The objective of this analysis was to explore how collaboration between the family and the school contributes to the effectiveness of school inclusion and to the creation of an educational environment more adapted to the needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The results demonstrate that the active participation of the family is crucial in several aspects of school inclusion. First, the family has detailed knowledge about the student's characteristics, preferences, and needs, which is essential for creating personalized and effective educational strategies. This understanding allows educators to tailor curriculum and teaching methods to better meet individual needs, fostering a more inclusive learning environment.



Additionally, ongoing and effective communication between parents and school is vital to ensure that pedagogical interventions and approaches are consistently implemented and adjusted as needed. This collaboration not only helps solve challenges quickly, but also ensures that support strategies are integrated and aligned in both the school context and the family environment.

Emotional support from the family also plays a significant role in the well-being and motivation of the autistic student. The presence of a supportive family network contributes to the student's confidence and ability to face challenges, facilitating their engagement in school activities and their adaptation to the educational environment. Additionally, family advocacy is essential to ensure that the student's rights and needs are met. Parents and guardians often act as advocates for their children's special needs, working to ensure that the school provides the resources and supports necessary for effective inclusion.

Finally, family involvement contributes to the construction of a more inclusive and understanding school culture. By fostering close collaboration between home and school, the family helps to create an environment where all students, regardless of their differences, can benefit from quality education and opportunities for their full development.

In summary, the research confirms that the role of the family is indispensable for the school inclusion of autistic students, showing that a collaborative and well-informed approach between parents and educators is essential for the creation of an educational environment that respects and values diversity, promoting the full participation and development of all students.



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