

BIAP Recommendation TC 25 /Rec document 07:

« Advice to professionals to support parents of death children and thus optimize favorable attitudes for language development”

Foreword

This document presents a Recommendation by the International Bureau for Audiophonology BIAP.

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Preamble:

Parental support is ensured in a specific manner for each member of the multidisciplinary team in the limits of one professional competency and the ethical rules (recommendation of 01/25).

The professional must be conscious that the parental support is a complex task. It consists in building a genuine partnership between the parents and him/herself.

The professional must contribute to the creation of a serene and empathic relationship in a neutral and kind environment so that the parents feel confident and secured.

In the parental support frame, the professional and the parents pursue a common goal: recognize the child in all his/her potential as actor of his/her development, seek his/her personal fulfillment particularly in his/her language competencies.

To reach this goal, the professional must be aware of what is to be a parent. He/she must be able to position him/herself with respect to the parents' expectations while taking into account the child and parents' reality ¹.

This reality is described by the place of the child in the family, the type and degree of hearing loss, the age of appearance and diagnosis of this later, the presence or absence of associated disorders, the socio-cultural and socio-economic level of the parents, their life project, their beliefs and values, people support, all that make the “here of now”.

The stake of the parental support is to bring the parents to be and stay (or become) the principal partners of the linguistic development of the child in each step of his/her life.

Advices:

1. The professional well-being

For a quality support, the professional must be assured that he/she is working in good condition so to construct his/her relationship with the parents.

He/she must know his own ability for self-management: his/her welcoming capacity, his/her ability to identify and master his/her own emotions.

To stimulate the process of independent and responsible parental behavior toward the deaf child, the professional must be conscious and able to identify his/her predictions, his/her own personal stake, his/her ‘transfers’, his/her presupposed ideas, representations and beliefs.

The professional must have time to distance him/herself allowing him to manage the intensity and complexity of the parents-professional relationship.

He/she must know he/she is and stay also at the service of the multidisciplinary team that takes care of the family and child.

He/she needs a talking space: an exchange environment with other professionals that will allow him/her to express his/her thoughts, doubts and certainties.

A check on his/her work is recommended (recommendation 01/25).

2. Professional-parents relationship

So to facilitate the behavioral and emotional adjustment of the parents to their reality, the professional must acknowledge them as parents.

So that the child can claim language notion with the family, the professional must name and clarify the objectives of the activities during the session and explain to the parents the means to achieve these objectives in other activities.

The professional must know that he/she is an indicator of tacit notion that the parents already know but cannot grasp.

In his/her relational work with the parents, the professional includes a listening ear, speech, reflection, dialogue and confrontation to:

- establish a quality relationship based on trust,
- take into consideration the real needs of the parents and child,
- take into consideration the capacity of the parents to adjust qualitatively with the child,
- make the parents fully aware of the essential role in the language development of the child.

He/she must underline the significance of an interactive language model, reachable to the child, in line with the child perception abilities and his/her level of language development.

The professional must develop and maintain the parents' abilities to observe, to appreciate, may be discover the child in order to recognize him/her in all his capabilities and competencies.

He/she must give points of reference and help the parents to choose what they want or can do to their pace.

To guarantee the quality of his intervention and be efficient, the professional must express him/herself clearly, with consistency, assertion, authenticity and conviction: the parents must perceive the quality of the commitment.

3. Parents-child relationship

In his/her work of support, the professional must:

- point out, show and bring out the elements in the attitude of the parents that promote the language development,
- assist the parents to develop plans for an adapted communication,
- promote the understanding and the spread of appropriated behaviors,
- underline the importance of an adjusted language model to the child language level,

- stimulate the parents to “do” new experiences of communication with the child in everyday life.

4. Methodology

In the parental support, beyond knowing the steps and the necessary conditions to develop the language, the professional must:

- welcome and recognize the parents as partners during all the following up of the child,
- formalize and explain this partnership: his/her professional status, the parents’ status, and each role,
- explain the goals of the activities during a session,
- write a medical history as complete as possible and know the family background,
- observe the actual communication between the family members,
- encourage the parents to explain the exchange they have with the child, the experience they have in everyday life,
- write observation sheets, analyze the child’s behavior, and give a feed-back to the parents,
- give to the parents concrete tools,
- refrain from transmitting his/her own experience or convictions onto the parents,
- avoid being influenced by ideologies or actual methodology movements.

Scope: multidisciplinary teams specialized in hearing loss – health and education services – doctors of whom ENT specialists and pediatricians – social security – speech therapists – audiology specialists – audio prosthetists.

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This recommendation was created and approved as part of a multidisciplinary cooperation between professionals of all audio specialist disciplines: medicine, psychology, speech therapy, audiology, educational methods.

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