

Understanding and Addressing Sensory Integration Disorders: Teachers' Perspectives and Training Needs

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Abstract

Sensory integration issues can negatively impact learning progress and behaviors in classroom settings. Unfortunately, there is a lack of research to provide teachers with effective strategies to address this challenge in schools. This study aims to assess teachers' awareness of children's sensory integration disorders (SID), their needs for managing SID in the educational environment, and to outline a potential framework for a teacher training program on SID. The research was conducted using a basic qualitative approach, involving 150 teachers of varying ages, experiences, subjects, and grade levels. Data were gathered through an open-ended opinion form and a focus group interview and analyzed using the content analysis technique. Preliminary results indicate that most teachers were unaware of SID unless they encountered it in their own classrooms. Teachers with greater awareness of SID could clearly explain the disorder, had developed strategies for managing it, and collaborated with therapists to support affected children. Teachers particularly expressed the need for guidance and support from sensory integration professionals, such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists, to address SID in classrooms. For a proposed teacher training program on SID, teachers strongly emphasized the need to include the theoretical background of SID, the underlying causes, and the impact of SID on children's learning and behavior. Additionally, they expected to discuss case studies and receive practical classroom strategies in such a program.

Keywords: classroom behavior; primary school; sensory integration disorder (SID); teacher awareness; teacher training