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Auditory Perception and Phonological Skills in Pre-Primary School Children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

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Abstract

Attainment gaps in children should be addressed during their pre-school years. These gaps manifest as children's relative underperformance in a number of subskills that are required for entry to primary school. Language and speech gaps are especially conspicuous among pre-primary school children, especially children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD). Since the Czech educational system operates on the principle of inclusion, children diagnosed with DLD are primarily placed into mainstream primary school classes. For this reason, it is important that their attainment gaps are addressed in a timely manner in order to prevent the children's removal from ordinary schools and placement in special education schools because of underperformance in required school skills. A pivotal subskill for success in a classical education is auditory perception, hence this paper's focus on auditory perception and phonological skills in children with DLD. It follows the progress that was reached after the completion of the author's own stimulation programme "Naslouchálek" (Open Ears) as part of speech therapy classes at an ordinary kindergarten prior to admittance into primary school. Language ability training took place twice per week over a four-month period and involved six selected children with varying types of DLD (32 lessons).

A mixed-method research design was selected for the study, utilising the methods of participant extrospective observation, semi-structured interviews on medical history with the parents of the six observed children with DLD, diagnostic testing – conducting their own initial and final diagnostic assessments and analysing educational records. Collected data was arranged into tables, compared, and then evaluated and incorporated into the given studies that are not, however, the subject of this paper.

Keywords: Specific Disruption of Speech Development; Developmental Language Disorder (DLD); Inclusion; Auditory Perception; Phonological Skill