

Teacher Preparedness to Work With Children Diagnosed With ADHD: A Pilot Study

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BACKGROUND: Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a prevalent neurobehavioral disorder impacting children in a number of environments. Current literature indicates that teacher training on ADHD is limited in both pre-service and in-service training. The purpose of this study was to examine the level of preparation that teachers in lower elementary classrooms have to work with children with ADHD, to understand their perception of their ability to manage ADHD in the classroom environment, as well as what resources or training teachers would find beneficial to assist in classroom management of behaviors associated with ADHD.

METHOD: Data was collected from a teacher survey with questions related to current educational level, teaching experience, grade, and history of training on ADHD. Teachers who had education degrees, were currently teaching, and did not have degrees or certification in special education were included (N = 26).

RESULTS: While most teachers reported no pre-service training in ADHD, the teachers who did report pre-service training had variations in their training which ranged from assigned readings, lectures, or courses covering ADHD. Sixty five percent of teachers reported having engaged in post-service training from ADHD which varied in the type and duration of training, up to 16 hours. The most identified resources and training identified by teachers to assist with classroom management included training on diagnosis, symptoms, and medication/side effects, evidence-based strategies to manage behaviors and facilitate improved performance in the classroom, increased school and classroom supports, as well as increased knowledge on available resources available for both parents and children.

DISCUSSION: Results are consistent with the literature in that teachers may have inadequate knowledge about ADHD and insufficient training on how to manage behaviors associated with core symptoms of ADHD in the classroom environment. Pediatric occupational therapists are equipped to provide training on topics identified by the teachers including more information on diagnosis, behavior management, environmental modification, and available resources to support children with ADHD and their parents.

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