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FAMILY-CENTERED APPROACH IN THE ORGANIZATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES RAISING A CHILD WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

СІМЕЙНО-ЦЕНТРОВАНИЙ ПІДХІД В ОРГАНІЗАЦІЇ ПСИХОЛОГІЧНОГО СУПРОВОДУ РОДИНИ, ЯКА ВИХОВУЄ ДИТИНУ З ОСОБЛИВИМИ ОСВІТНИМИ ПОТРЕБАМИ

In the article, the authors analyze the problem of implementing a family-centered approach in the process of psychological support for families raising children with special needs. The main vector of providing effective psychological support is shifting from a child-centered approach to a family-centered approach. The article also discusses modern scientific research on the problem of psychological support for children with special needs and their families, where the effectiveness of support depends on a multidisciplinary approach in the process of building constructive relationships between children and parents and preventing disharmonious relationships and interpersonal conflicts in the family. The modern process of psychological support of a family raising a child with health disabilities must be built on the basis of revealing the family's personal and developmental potential, where the family's potential is the family's internal resources, which allow effective resolution of emerging difficulties, as well as personal growth and development of family members in any spheres of life. A family-centered approach is one of the aspects of the biopsychosocial model of comprehensive care for children with special educational needs. It provides attention to all the biopsychosocial elements of the child's life, as opposed to a narrow focus on the child's limitations. The principle of family-centeredness of psychological support programs determines the specific nature of the diagnostic process, the nature of parent-specialist relationship building, and the range of services provided by the program. The article notes that along with the study of the child's condition, the family's condition and needs are investigated. The model of the family-centered approach presented in the article involves specialists focusing on giving parents a sense of their own resources and strengths – personal, and that of their family and their social environment, recognizing their abilities and positives, as well as developing their potential.

Key words: family-centered approach, psychological support, children with special educational needs, family roles, conscious parenting.

У статті аналізується проблема імплементації сімейно центрованого підходу в процес психологічного супроводу родин, які виховують дітей з особливими потребами. Основний вектор забезпечення ефективного психологічного супроводу зміщується з дитино центрованого підходу у сімейно центрований підхід. Також в статті розглянуті сучасні наукові дослідження проблеми психологічного супроводу дітей з особливими потребами та їх сімей, де ефективність супроводу залежить від мультидисциплінарного підходу в процесі побудови конструктивних взаємин дітей і батьків та профілактики дисгармонійних відносин, міжособистісних конфліктів у родині. Сучасний процес психологічного супроводу сім'ї, яка виховує дитину з обмеженими можливостями здоров'я, необхідно будувати на основі розкриття особистісно-розвиваючого потенціалу сім'ї, де потенціалом сім'ї є внутрішні ресурси сім'ї (дитячо-батьківські, подружні та інші), які дозволяють ефективно вирішувати виникаючі труднощі, а також особистісно зростати і розвиватися членам сім'ї в будь-яких сферах життєдіяльності. Сімейно центрований підхід є одним з аспектів біопсихосоціальної моделі комплексної допомоги дітям з особливими освітніми потребами. Він передбачає охоплення

увагою усіх біопсихосоціальних елементів життя дитини на відміну від вузькогалузевої фіксації на обмеженнях дитини. Принцип сімейної центрованості програм психологічного супроводу обумовлює специфічний характер діагностичного процесу, характер побудови відносин батьки-фахівці та спектр послуг, що надаються програмою. В статті зазначається, що наряду із вивченням стану дитини досліджується стан та потреби родини. Представлена у статті модель сімейно центрованого підходу передбачає фокусування фахівців на тому, щоб дати батькам відчутти власні ресурси й сили – особистісні, і своєї сім'ї та свого соціального середовища, розпізнати свої здібності та позитиви, а також розвинути свій потенціал.

Ключові слова: сімейно центрований підхід, психологічний супровід, діти з особливими освітніми потребами, сімейні ролі, усвідомлене батьківство.

Formulation of the problem. At present, the number of children with special needs (later known as “SN”) has increased significantly and, consequently, the need to help them and their families has increased. The work with families with “special children” should be approached from a humanistic point of view, parents should be oriented to the advance preparation of the child for life, to develop the ability to think in terms of the future, to form positive prospects for his development, comprehensive psychological and pedagogical assistance based on a family-centered approach is needed. The relevance of the research topic is based on the fact that families raising children with disabilities face a lot of problems at the psychological level – this is fear of the present and the future for their child. Generally, parents are fearful of their child’s future because of self-doubt and their strength. Quite frequently this factor is the unknown. The threat is real or perceived, imaginary. Many parents underestimate this situation and are unable to constructively assess what is happening with the child, thereby overestimating or vice versa underestimating the expectations of the child’s development. Relationships in the family change under the control of experiences, become “strained” and very often lead to divorce. Children feel emotionally their parents subtly, experience, but often not even realize what is happening between them, as a result, they start to fall ill, become tearful and irritable. There is a change in communication between the family and society, due to the limitations of the child’s health. The need for co-operation with parents is an important precondition for the successful delivery of counseling.

The need to provide support and psychological and pedagogical support to parents who have children with special needs was the basis for the emergence of a new direction of research in modern science, but some aspects of this topic were dealt with by domestic and foreign scientists. Thus, national scientists sought and scientifically corroborated: characteristics of the psychoemotional states of parents of children with psychophysical disabilities (A. Dushka, T. Skrypyuk) and various stages of psycho-social development (T. Viskovatova, Y. Martyniuk); features of parental

responses (O. Zernitsky, T. Viskovatova); the impact of the crisis in the long run on the psychological, social and somatic levels of dysfunctions in the family (I. Levchenko, V. Tkacheva), characteristics of counselling for families with young children with an intellectual disability (G.V. Kukuruz) [1].

The achievements of foreign scientists are of great importance for building an integrated model of psychological and pedagogical support for families raising children with special needs. In particular, the factors causing stress in parents with children with disabilities (Y. Hisao) and autistic children (A. Sim, S. Vaz, R. Cordy, A. Joystey, D. Parson) were identified. The means of diagnosing traumatic stress of parents were developed and tested (S. Gul, A. Ardik, V. Olgunsoy, Y. Unal, etc.), separate methods and models of support for parents of children with disabilities (J. Tumlu, R. Akdogan, A. Turkum), family rehabilitation system (J. Roland). The role of the family for the child’s socialability, as well as the importance and necessity of educational activities among parents raising children with psychophysiological disorders (K. Kembel, J. Turbul, J. Plazo, M. Sevina) were highlighted [7].

Most studies, despite their undoubted significance and practical value, illustrate the typology of intra-family interaction with a child with disabilities from the point of view of correlation of parents’ personal characteristics, nosology, family situation and other factors, bypassing the issue of deep psychological interpretation of ambivalent attitude towards a child with special needs and their parental role, insufficiently reveal the issues of integration of the family-centered model and the possibilities of compensatory mechanism of the organization of family life.

The purpose of the article is to analyze and substantiate the peculiarities of implementing a family-centered approach in the process of psychological support for families raising children with special needs.

Results of the research. As far as Ukraine’s integration into the European area is concerned, there are changes in attitudes towards persons with special needs. The birth of a child with special needs

modifies the functioning of the family, the personal qualities of the parents, their worldview, their values, their system of relationships. The possibility of the actual socialization of such a child is conditioned by the personal characteristics of the parents, their stress, the nature of the family environment and the attitude of the relatives.

A family with a child with special needs is a family with a special status, the problems of which are determined not only by the characteristics of all its members and the nature of the relationship between them, but also by the isolation of the family from the outside world, lack of communication. According to E. Semycheva, families with children with disabilities have a number of psychological characteristics which adversely affect the psychological state of the sick child and his healthy siblings. Most parents are characterized by a special attitude to the child, based on fears for his health and, as a result, underestimation of his capabilities, light, but in fact infantile requirements for the child. A key point is the intrafamily psychological climate. In the works of scientists, the socio-psychological climate of the family is understood as an integrative property of the family, which shows the degree of satisfaction of marriage partners with the main indicators of the family's life process, the general style and mood of relations. Thus, according to the child-centered model, the main value is the child and his or her interests and needs. Assistance technologies are aimed at improving parental competence, while the emotional situation of the family remains out of the field of view of specialists [3].

In the family-centered model, the main value is the family as the best environment for child development. Specialists recognize the intrinsic value of the family and the diversity of family forms. Deviations in child development affect all family members, there is a risk of its destruction. The focus is on the needs of all family members, ensuring their access to social rights. The family turns from an instrument into an active participant of assistance, but the main place of assistance is the place where the family lives. Forms of family-centred counseling and social support have started to develop relatively recently. The basis for their development was the understanding of the fact that the problem faced by one of the family members affects the entire system as a whole, and this, in turn, affects his personal situation. Applying the system of psychological and educational support to families raising children with special needs is an innovative approach to the organization of global rehabilitation and social adjustment. Establishing constructive parent-child relationships in families raising children

with special educational needs is a fairly large and complex problem. The social adjustment of children with special needs depends directly on the effective parenting strategy [5]. The nosological characteristics of the manifestation of disability in early childhood hamper the establishment of relations between parents and the child, which complicates the acquisition of social experience, the formation of interpersonal communication.

Timely provision of the necessary psychological and pedagogical assistance will improve the further development of a child with special educational needs, increase the psychological and pedagogical competence of parents in matters of upbringing and education, as well as form positive emotional relationships between family members. The proposed model of integration of the family-centered approach into the process of supporting a family raising a child with special educational needs is comprehensive and allows to organize comprehensive cooperation of specialists with the family. The purpose of the family-centered model of support is to create psychological and pedagogical conditions for the development of the personal and developmental potential of a family raising a child with special educational needs, which allows to effectively counteract new challenges in life.

The task of support:

1. Improving the psychological and pedagogical competence of parents raising children with special educational needs.
2. Providing psychological, pedagogical and informational assistance to families raising a child with special educational needs.
3. Creating conditions for the formation of a positive emotional background of a family raising a child with special educational needs.
4. Realization of personal and developmental potential of a family raising a child with special educational needs [4].

Theoretical and methodological basis of the family-centered model of support for families raising a child with special educational needs:

- a systematic approach that allows to consider the interaction of specialists and parents as a multicomponent and multilevel system;
- provisions on the leading role of family and family education in the formation of the personality of children of early and preschool age;
- resource approach in studying the family.

Methods of work with parents used in the program: conversations; questionnaires; parent meetings; individual consultations of parents with specialists; open classes; workshops; creative games:

role-playing, dramatization games; mini-contests; improvisations; design of stands and information folders; exhibitions of special literature; hotline; festive events for parents and children, etc.

Foundational Principles of the Family-Centred Support Model for Families Raising Children with Special Learning Needs:

- person-centered principle – this principle is based on taking into account the personal characteristics of a child with special educational needs and his/her family while ensuring safe and comfortable conditions;

- humane and personal principle – this principle is based on love and respect for the child and his/her family members, positive attitude to achieve favorable results, formation of positive attitude of the family to the child with special educational needs;

- the principle of complexity – this principle provides for the implementation of psychological assistance only if there is a close relationship between the psychologist and other specialists (speech therapists, defectologists, rehabilitation specialists, teachers, parents, administration);

- the principle of activity approach – this principle provides for taking into account the leading activity of a child with special educational needs, as well as taking into account personally significant activities for the child in the construction of an individual support program [6].

The efficacy of the family-centred support model is focused on:

1. Create the conditions to ensure the psychological and educational safety of the family and the child with special educational needs.

2. Increase the level of psychological and educational skills of parents who are raising children with special educational needs.

3. Recognition by parents of the impact of family education on the personal development of a child with special educational needs.

4. Formation of emotional acceptance of a child with special educational requirements, creating conditions for effective interaction in the family.

5. Master personal resource utilization and family development skills as a source of overcoming difficulties [8].

Figure 1 presents a model of support for a family raising a child with special educational needs.

The support model presented for a family raising a child with special education needs has two parts: organisational and substantial. The organizational part determines the form of organization of psychological and pedagogical assistance and provides for several levels of psychological and pedagogical assistance – the level of individual work, the level of work with the family, the level of work with the dyad “parents-child with special educational needs” (interpersonal level). The levels presented imply an interconnectedness and a deepening between the individual level and the interpersonal level. The content part implies the features of the implementation of the support process: the use of methods and techniques, directions of work, focus on the personal development potential of the family. The personal and developmental potential of the family is considered as a complex of elements of marital and child-parent relations that affect the ability of a family member to effectively solve emerging problems, as well as to grow and develop personally in any sphere of life. The personal and developmental potential of the family consists of the resources of

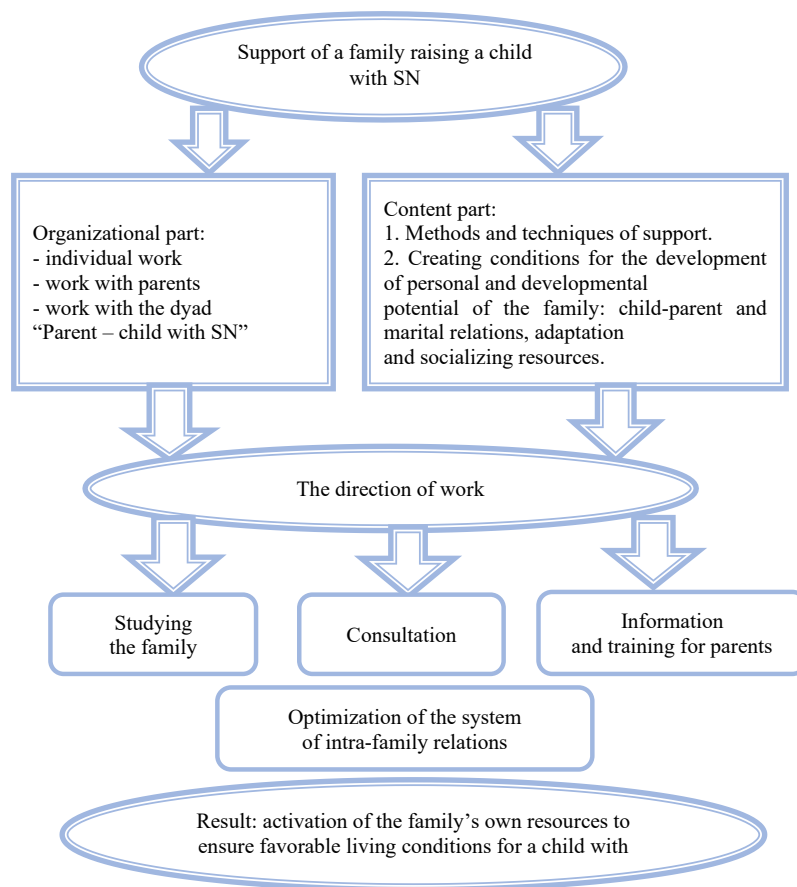


Fig. 1. Family-centered model of support for families raising a child with special educational needs

marriage, child-parent relations, adaptation and socializing resources. Personal resources of marriage imply the presence of love, empathy, mutual acceptance, trust and respect of the spouses for each other, as well as the presence of coherence in the organization of family life, the ability to jointly solve family problems and respect the interests of other family members. The personality development resources of child-parent relationships are considered to be resources of children born in contact with parents and resources of parents trained in interaction with their children. Child-parent relationships are a limitless source of family resources (parental acceptance, love, confidence, mutual understanding, education, safety, etc.) [2].

At the fundamental level, personal and family development resources include coping and social resources. The family resource of accommodation is composed of resources of love, acceptance, security. The purpose of this resource is to maintain the person's mental health. The family resource of socialization is aimed "at creating conditions for enriching the individual's ideas about himself and others, about possible ways of building interpersonal contacts, expanding the ranges of behavioral activity of the individual". The areas of work of the model of support for a family raising a child with special educational needs are the main activities of a psychologist. Thus, the study of the family involves the implementation of diagnostic activities by a psychologist in order to obtain basic information about the state of the family, the peculiarities of child-parent relations, the personal characteristics of parents that affect the development of a child with disabilities [4]. The direction of informing and training of parents is an organized activity on education and prevention. The direction of optimizing the system of intra-family relations is the correctional and developmental work of a psychologist with family members in order to form the optimal level of family functioning. In order to analyze the effectiveness of the implementation of a family-centered approach in the system of support for a family raising a child with special educational needs in 2021–2022, an empirical study was conducted on the basis of the Municipal Institution "Inclusive Resource Center" of the Melitopol City Council of Zaporizhzhia region. The study involved 50 families raising children with special educational needs. At the stating stage, a diagnostic examination of the socio-psychological situation in the family, the conditions of family upbringing was carried out.

To determine the resource of marriage and the resource of child-parent relations of the personal-developmental potential of the family, we used the PARI method (E.S. Schaefer and R.K. Bell), which

allows us to identify the models of education used by parents, especially intra-family relations, attitudes towards the family role.

Table 1

Diagnostic results according to the PARI method

Scale	High level	Middle level	Low level
Attitude towards family role	74%	21%	5%
Optimal emotional contact	14%	18%	68%
Excessive emotional distance with the child	8%	21%	71%
Excessive concentration on the child	84%	16%	–

Methodological analysis of respondent judgments yielded the following results:

1. The majority of parents (74%) raising children with special educational needs have a high level on the scale "Attitude to family role" (scored 20–26 points), which indicates that women's interests are limited to the family, they are also characterized by caring for the family, self-sacrifice. In families there are frequent conflicts that do not include men in family affairs, with the dominance of the mother and her dissatisfaction with her position in the family.

2. The majority of parents (68%) raising children with special needs have a low level of "Optimal emotional contact", which indicates the desire of parents to dominate the child, imposing inappropriate demands on him, feeling restrictions associated with the child's illness.

3. The majority of parents (71%) raising children with special needs have a low level on the scale "Excessive emotional distance with the child", which indicates that parents are irritable, hot-tempered, harsh, excessive severity on the behavior and actions of their children.

4. The majority of parents (84%) raising children with special needs have a high level on the scale "Excessive concentration on the child", which indicates that parents establish dependent relationships with their children, suppress the child's will, while creating conditions of safety and seek to protect their child from failure. Parents who raise children with educational needs, intervene excessively in the world of the child, establish strict control over the behaviour and actions of the child.

In this way, the PARI methodology (E.S. Schaefer and R.K. Bell) allows us to conclude that in families raising children with OD, there is no support from the father, while the mother invests all her strength in the family and feels dissatisfaction with the situation in the family. Relationships with the child are characterized by parental dominance, severity and demands on the child, dependency and a desire for complete control.

To determine the family's adaptive resource, we used the "Typical Family Condition" methodology (E. Eidemiller, I.V. Yustitskis), which allows the identification of the most typical condition of a person in his own family: satisfactory – unsatisfactory; nervous and mental stress; family anxiety. The results of the methodology "Typical Family Status" (E. Eidemiller, I.V. Justickis) report the presence of 'family anxiety' in 75% of respondents (parents raising children with special needs) who participated in the study. 70% of parents are generally dissatisfied with family relationships, and 80% of parents feel nervous and mentally stressed because of the psychological atmosphere in the family. Thus, for parents raising children with ASD, who participated in the study, the presence of doubts, fears, fears concerning, first of all, the family – the health of its members, their weaning and late return, clashes and conflicts is characteristic. To determine the adaptive resource of the family, we used the methodology "Typical family state" (E. Eidemiller, I.V. Justickis), which allows to identify the most typical state of an individual in his own family: satisfactory – unsatisfactory; nervous and mental stress; family anxiety.

The results of the methodology "Typical Family Status" (E. Eidemiller, I.V. Justickis) indicate the presence of "Family Anxiety" in 75% of the respondents (parents raising children with special needs) who participated in the study. 70% of parents show general dissatisfaction with family relationships, and 80% of parents feel nervous and mental stress related to the psychological atmosphere in the family. Thus, for parents raising children with ASD, who participated in the study, the presence of doubts, fears, fears concerning, first of all, the family – the health of its members, their weaning and late return, clashes and conflicts is characteristic.

To determine the adaptive and socializing resources of the personal-developmental potential of families raising children with special needs, we used the questionnaire "Conscious parenting" (developed by M.S. Ermikhina under the guidance of R.V. Ovcharova). This questionnaire considers the following criteria: parental positions, feelings, relationships, responsibility, attitudes and expectations, as well as the degree of consciousness of parenthood. According to the results of the survey "Conscious parenthood", it can be concluded that parents raising children with special needs have a higher awareness of parental relationships (22.8%), feelings (18.6%) and responsibility (18.7%). The lowest rate was found on the scales of family values (6.25%), parental attitudes and expectations (10.5%).

Thus, parents raising children with special needs show responsibility in raising a child, positive feelings, while parents are not aware of the importance and value of the family, their own attitudes and expectations, a certain style of interaction and upbringing is not formed. According to the results of the methodology "Family Functional Resource Test", it can be concluded that parents raising children with special needs have medium and low positive resources. It is typical for parents to be a source of positive emotional influence on other family members. Parents who took part in this study can actively support positive patterns of family dynamics.

Finally, it should be noted that the sample presented has the following features:

1. For parents raising children with special needs, it is characteristic to show emotional rejection of their child, to use inadequate forms of interaction with their child, while showing responsibility in the upbringing of the child, positive feelings, little awareness of the importance and value of the family, their own attitudes and expectations.

2. In most families raising children with special educational needs, there is no support from the father, while the mother invests all her strength in the family and feels dissatisfied with the situation in the family. Relations with the child are characterized by parental domination, severity and demand of the child, dependence, desire for total control.

3. Most parents who raise children with special learning needs are dissatisfied with family relationships, doubts, fears, concerns, mostly related to the family.

4. Most families have not gone beyond the positive resource of preserving a positive family dynamic. At the same time, there are family organizational issues.

After the stating stage, the formative stage was implemented, which included training, individual consultations, organization of family cooperation with various specialists.

To confirm the hypothesis about the impact of the family-centered model of support of a family raising a child with special educational needs on the development of the personal and developmental potential of the family, the non-parametric T-Wilcoxon test was used, which showed significant differences as a result of the establishing and formative experiments. The following methods were used in the empirical study: PARI method (E.S. Schaefer and R.C. Bell), methodology "Typical marital status" (E. Eidemiller, I.V. Justickis), questionnaire "Conscious parenting" (developed by M.S. Ermikhina under the guidance of R.V. Ovcharova), Family Functional Resource Test (N.M. Lavrova, V.V. Lavrov).

Table 2

Results of the T-Wilcoxon criterion

Methodologies	Scale	Z, value of the standardized index of T Wilcoxon's criterion *	Asympt. value (Bilateral)
PARI methodology (E. S. Schaefer and R. K. Bell)	Attitude to family role (before and after)	-1.256b	.209
	Optimal emotional contact (before and after)	-.581c	.562
	Excessive emotional distance by the child (before and after)	-1.891b	.059
	Excessive concentration on the child (before and after)	-.134c	.893
Methodology "Typical family status" (E. Eidemiller, I.V. Justickis)	General dissatisfaction (before and after)	-2.994b	.003
	family anxiety (before and after)	-2.836b	.005
	Nervous and mental tension (before and after)	-2.299b	.022
Questionnaire "Conscious parenting" (Developed by M.S. Ermikhina under the guidance of R.V. Ovcharova)	Parental positions (before and after)	-3.084b	.002
	Parental feelings (before and after)	-2.011b	.044
	Parental responsibility (before and after)	-1.202b	.229
	Parental attitudes and expectations (before and after)	-2.403b	.016
	Family values (before and after)	-2.220b	.026
	Style of family education (before and after)	-2.447b	.014
	Parental attitude (before and after)	-2.011b	.044
Methodology "Test functional family resource" (N.M. Lavrova, V.V. Lavrov)	functional family resource (before and after)	-3.064b	.002
* A. Wilcoxon sign ranks criterion b. Negative ranks are used. c. Positive ranks are used.			

According to the data presented in Table 1, we see that according to the methods "Test of functional resource of the family" (N.M. Lavrova, V.V. Lavrov), the method "Typical family status" (E. Eidemiller, I.V. Justickis), as well as individual scales of the RARI methodology (E.S. Schaefer and R.K. Bell) and the questionnaire "Conscious Parenting" (developed by M.S. Ermikhina under the guidance of R.V. Ovcharova), statistically significant changes are observed. We observe the dynamics in increasing the personal and developmental potential of the family raising a child with special educational needs and who participated in the implementation of the family-centered model of family support ($p \leq 0.05$).

It should be noted: dynamics in the change of emotional distance between parents and child ($p \leq 0.05$); general dissatisfaction with family

relationships ($p \leq 0.01$); family anxiety ($p \leq 0.01$); nervous and psychological tension ($p \leq 0.01$).

Also, the personal and developmental potential of the family has changed on the following scales: "Parental positions", "Parental feelings" ($p \leq 0.05$), "Parental attitudes and expectations" ($p \leq 0.05$), "Family values" ($p \leq 0.05$), "Family upbringing style" ($p \leq 0.05$), "Parental attitude" ($p \leq 0.05$). Thus, parents who raise a child with special educational needs are more aware of parenting, parents' feelings, parents' attitudes and expectations, family values, family upbringing and parenting relationships.

As well, resources for child-parent relationships, adaptation and socialization have changed significantly statistically:

- satisfaction with family relationships has increased,
- family anxiety decreased,

- decreased nervous and mental tension associated with the family,
- reduction in emotional distance with the child;
- increase in functional family resources.

Conclusions. Accordingly, we can talk about the effectiveness of the developed model of family support for a family raising a child with special educational needs in terms of its impact on increasing the personal and developmental potential of the family: the resource of child-parent relations, adaptation resource and socializing resource. The support model for families raising a child with a disability, built on a family-centred approach, is statistically effective. The model

allows to change the emotional distance of parents with the child, increase satisfaction with family relationships, reduce nervous and mental stress, increase the functional resource of the family, as well as increase the level of parental awareness. The modern systematic process of supporting a family raising a child with disabilities should be based on the disclosure of the personal and developmental potential of the family, where the potential of the family is the internal resources of the family (child-parent, spousal and other), which allow to effectively solve emerging difficulties, as well as to personally grow and develop family members in any spheres of life.

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