PARENTS' PARTICIPATION IN DISTANCE SPECIAL EDUCATION PRACTICES: A REVIEW ON TEACHERS' OPINIONS

Research article

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Abstract

In this study, the opinions of teachers on the participation of parents who had children with special needs in their children's education processes during the pandemic were examined with a phenomenological design, which is one of the qualitative study methods. The study group consisted of 22 special education teachers. The data of the study were collected with a semi-structured interview form that was developed by the researchers, expert opinion was taken and finalized in line with the corrections. In the present study, in which the participation of parents who had children with special needs in the education process of their children in the Covid 19 pandemic was examined from the perspective of teachers, the teachers expressed their opinions about the practices they made to ensure parental involvement in the distance education process, the motivations of the parents to participate, the difficulties they faced in ensuring parental participation, the effects of parental participation. When the findings of the study were examined, the teachers guided the family by explaining the materials used to ensure parental participation in the distance education process, providing information on the necessary issues, following the homework assignments and home practices and giving feedback, and evaluating the process. Teachers also ensured the continuity of communication in the family and teacher channel through online applications to facilitate and increase the participation of parents. They encouraged the use of EBA and created complementary activities, ensuring that especially daily life skills continued to be practiced in the home setting with parents' support.

Keywords: Special education, pandemic, teacher opinion, distance education, parental involvement

1. Introduction

After the first Coronavirus case emerged in Wuhan, China in December 2019, the first case in our country was detected on March 11, 2020, and the World Health Organization declared Covid-19 as a pandemic on the same date. After the pandemic announcement, the Ministry of National Education decided to close primary and secondary schools and special education and rehabilitation centers for 2 weeks. After the closure decision, it was announced that education would continue online, but the inevitable increase in cases caused the distance education process to continue until the end of 2019-2020 (EFT, 2020). The distance education process, which affects students at all levels of education, negatively affects the children in the special needs group and their families, and it was frequently discussed both in previous studies

and in the media (Singanayagam et al., 2020; Kavoor, 2020; Patel et al., 2020). The fact that students who could not receive special education because of curfews and closures of schools could not leave their homes and faced great educational and behavioral problems was discussed both in the media and studies (Kayahan Yüksel & İşcen, 2022; Singanayagam et al., 2020; Kavoor, 2020; Patel et al., 2020). Students who could not receive special education because of curfews and closures of schools could not leave their homes and faced great educational and behavioral problems (Xie & Yang, 2020; Pelton et al., 2020; McCallion, 2020; Pikulski et al., 2020).

According to the types and degrees of disabilities they had, children with special needs faced difficulties in learning without physical assistance, interacting face to face, participating in studies, completing studies, and focusing on the screen (ETF, 2020). These children may exhibit undesirable behaviors and experience intense anxiety when the daily routines that they are accustomed to are disrupted. This can retard, stop or slow down the developmental progress of children with special needs until they become accustomed to their new routines. For this reason, the education of children with special needs entered a risky period during the pandemic process (Lee, 2020) and it was often not possible for them to participate in the distance education process independently. This made it inevitable for families to participate in the distance education process for children with special needs.

Although family involvement is an issue that has often been emphasized in the traditional education system, parents are aware of the responsibilities and duties they must undertake to play a supportive role in the education of their children in the traditional education system. However, parents face problems in understanding the responsibilities and roles they are expected to undertake during the distance education process (Murphy & Rodriguez Manzanares, 2009). The necessity of continuing education from a distance imposed new responsibilities on the families of students who require special education and required them to develop an understanding of the new order and new responsibilities. In this process, tasks such as following children's participation in educational activities, encouraging them, and providing the necessary equipment and continuity necessitated the active participation of the family in educational activities and made the role and influence of the family more important in parent-school cooperation, which is one of the key issues of special education.

In this context, when the literature was reviewed, there are many studies conducted on Covid-19 and special education. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the education processes of children with special needs (Demir & Kale, 2020; Tek & Yılmaz, 2021), the problem of accessing distance education materials, the inadequacy of the distance education curriculum for children with special needs (Sani-Bozkurt et al., 2021; Tarbox et al., 2020), the fact that the restrictions that came with the Covid-19 process increased the problem behaviors in children (Colizzi, Sironi, Antonini, Ciceri, Bovo and Zoccante, 2020), teacher candidates regarding distance education in the Covid 19 process (Er-Türküresin, 2020; Görgülü Arı & Hayır Kanat, 2020) and examining teachers' opinions (Balaman & Hanbay Tiryaki, 2021; Bayburtlu, 2020; Çakın & Külekçi Akyavuz, 2020), parent views on inclusive education practices during the covid-19 pandemic (Keşkek ve Kayahan-Yüksel, 2022) are some of these studies. However, no study was found in the literature that specifically examined the opinions of teachers on parental involvement in special education practices during the Covid-19 process.

For this reason, it is considered that the present paper will close this gap in the literature and shed light on new studies to be conducted.

The research questions to answer within the scope of the research are as follows:

1. What are the practices of special education teachers to ensure parental participation in the distance education process?
2. What are the opinions of special education teachers about the motivation of parents to participate in teaching activities in the distance education process?
3. What are the opinions of special education teachers about the difficulties they face in ensuring parental participation?
4. What are the opinions of special education teachers on the reflections of parental involvement in terms of learning acquisition?

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

In the present study, the opinions of teachers on the participation of parents who had children with special needs in their children's education processes during the Covid 19 pandemic were examined with a phenomenological design, which is one of the qualitative study methods. The phenomenological pattern is defined as a study design used to describe situations related to people's perceptions, opinions, and types of experiences regarding the phenomenon or concept, and to determine the meanings of situations (Creswell, 2018; Smith & Fowler, 2009; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

2.2. Study Group

The Purposeful Sampling Method, which is one of the methods frequently used in social sciences, was used in the sample selection because the majority of qualitative research studies are performed with a small sample group (Patton, 2014; Robson, 2011). In the Purposeful Sampling Method, the person or people to be included are determined within the determined criteria, in other words, among people who can give the most appropriate answer to the researcher's purposes (Kümbetoğlu, 2017). The study group consisted of 22 special education teachers working in the cities of Ankara, Bartın, Istanbul, Sakarya, and Isparta.

2.3. Research Ethics

The ethics committee approval was obtained from the Bartın University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee for the study (with the protocol number 2022-SBB-0133 on 31.05.2022), and written and verbal approvals were obtained from the teachers who agreed to participate in the study.

Table 1. *The Demographic Data of the Study Group*

Participants	Age	Gender	Work experience	Type of institutions
T1	32-36 age	F	10 years and over	Special education secondary school
T2	22-26 age	F	1-3 years	Special education class
T3	Age of 37 and over	F	10 years and over	Special education secondary school
T4	27-31 age	M	7-9 years	Special education secondary school
T5	27-31 age	F	1-3 years	Special education class
T6	27-31 age	M	7-9 years	Special education high school
T7	27-31 age	F	7-9 years	Special education high school
T8	32-36 age	F	10 years and over	Special education secondary school
T9	Age of 37 and over	F	10 years and over	Special education high school
T10	Age of 37 and over	F	10 years and over	Special education elementary school
T11	22-26 age	F	1-3 years	Special education elementary school
T12	32-36 age	F	10 years and over	Special education secondary school
T13	32-36 age	F	10 years and over	Special education class
T14	32-36 age	F	10 years and over	Special education secondary school
T15	22-26 age	M	1-3 years	Special education class
T16	27-31 age	F	7-9 years	Special education class
T17	Age of 37 and over	M	10 years and over	Special education elementary school
T18	Age of 37 and over	M	10 years and over	Special education elementary school
T19	22-26	M	1-3 years	Special education high school
T20	27-31	F	7-9 years	Special education class
T21	32-36	F	7-9 years	Special education secondary school
T22	22-26	M	1-3 years	Special education class

2.4. Data Collection Instruments

The data of the study were collected with a semi-structured interview form that was developed by the researchers, expert opinion was taken and finalized in line with the corrections. In this study, which was designed according to the Qualitative Study Design, the data were collected through the Semi-Structured Interview Technique. The appropriate days and hours for the special education teachers who agreed to participate in the study were determined, and online interviews were conducted on the specified days and times. The online

interview recordings, which were recorded with the permission of the teachers, were then documented in writing by the researchers. The interviews over platforms such as Zoom, MS Teams, and Loom lasted an average of 20-25 minutes.

2.5. Data Analysis

The analysis of the study data was performed through content analysis. Determining the themes and sub-themes that allow to identify the concepts and explain the data with the help of the data obtained is defined as content analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). The collected data were analyzed by the researchers and codes were created by identifying repetitive expressions. To calculate the reliability of the determined themes among the coders, the codes, themes, and titles of the sub-themes put forward by the researchers were calculated with the formula (Agreement/Agreement + Disagreement) x 100 developed by Miles and Huberman (2002). According to the calculation, the inter-coder reliability was determined as 94%.

3. Findings

The findings obtained from the answers given by the special education teachers to the interview questions were presented under the themes of practices for parental involvement, opinions on parents' motivations in participation in teaching activities, difficulties in ensuring parental involvement, and the effects of parental involvement in terms of learning acquisitions.

Theme 1: *The Practices of Special Education Teachers for Ensuring Parental Involvement*

The opinions of special education teachers on the theme of practices aimed at ensuring parental participation were analyzed, and these practices were examined in three categories as "guidance, online practices, and complementary activities". The categories and codes on the theme of practices aimed at ensuring parent participation are given in Table 2.

Table 2. *The Practices to Ensure Parental Participation*

Categories	Codes
Guidance	Explaining technology/material usage
	Informing the parent
	Homework assignment tracking
	Keep in touch with the parent
	Simplifying matters
	Send an event to home
	Evaluation of distance education activities together
	Give family feedback on apps
Online Applications	Regular online meetings with family
	Use of EBA
	Video-assisted education
Complementary Activities	Giving homework assignments
	Continuation of practices related to daily life skills at home

When the Guidance category was examined, the teachers said that they provided information about the materials to be used at home to ensure parental participation, followed

the completion of homework assignments, explained the topics in a way that the parents could understand, and kept in contact with the parents and tried to be accessible to them. The teachers also said that they evaluated the process together with the families and provided feedback to them when necessary. Sample teacher statements related to this category are as follows.

"Because our students, who have limited time in attention deficit and joint attention, cannot stay in front of the screen for a long time, the distance education process was mainly planned by providing guidance to the family and informing the family about what the family can do with their child at home in educational terms."(T16).

"…I sent the children the activities they should do with their families every day." (T11).

"The activities and assignments sent to the families through whatsapp were completed and sent back to me and I checked them. I corrected the missing and wrong places… the curriculum and hours were sent to the families through whatsapp at the beginning of every week."(T18).

"We constantly talked to the parents about what was done and what would be done. All the deficiencies were resolved in the interaction of the family and the teacher with the feedback." (T20).

Regarding the Online Applications Category, the teachers said that they had regular online meetings with parents through WhatsApp, encouraged the use of EBA, provided support with the lecture video they prepared, and parents sent their applications with video recordings. The statements of teachers regarding this category are as follows.

"...we usually taught our courses through EBA, but sometimes it was not enough. Some wanted additional lessons or explanations from the parents, so I prepared and sent a lecture video for them." (T17).

"…we completed our lessons on the EBA platform, with the participation of the families, with 2 lesson hours per day for each child."(T19).

"We had conversations with the parents on all matters that were not understood through WhatsApp. They also guided the children. Also, they sent the event visuals from WhatsApp."(T21).

When the Complementary Activities Category was evaluated, teachers said that they ensured parental participation by giving homework assignments and planning practices that served to continue daily life skills at home. Sample teacher statements related to this category are as follows.

"…it was difficult and meaningless to work distance, especially daily life skills. I also gave my parents tasks… they had their daily life skills practiced at home, they were video recording and sending them to me…" (T13).

"...after I finished the lesson, I asked the family to repeat the parts that needed to be done and to complete the homework assignments, and they made the revisions and tried to help me with the subjects I gave as homework assignments." T (15).

"….the parents had all their homework assignments done…" (T11).

Theme 2: *The Opinions of Special Education Teachers on Parents' Motivation in Participation in Teaching Activities*

Two categories, "high motivation and low motivation", were obtained in the theme of the opinions of special education teachers on the motivation of parents to participate in teaching activities in the distance education process. These categories are given in Table 3.

Table 3. *The Opinions on the Motivation of Parents in Participation in Teaching Activities*

Categories	Codes
High Motivation	Being open to cooperation Preparing additional materials Taking an active role in events Providing physical and visual support
Low Motivation	Failure to cooperate Inability to encourage the child to participate in activities and lessons Not using additional materials The tiring of families over time by the Covid-19 process Family's disregard for the process Family problems Inability to maintain motivation

In the High Motivation Category, teachers described parents who were highly motivated to participate in the distance education process as open to cooperation. It was said in the teachers' opinions that the parents prepared all kinds of additional materials requested from them, took an active role in the activities, and provided the physical and visual support that the student needed. The examples of expressions related to this category are as follows.

"…families were like our hands, eyes, and ears in fieldwork under our guidance. They always gave importance to cooperation."(T14).

"Generally, the families participated in the study by using the materials they already had in their homes, apart from preparing small materials" (T11).

"… because of the special needs of our students, their unsupported implementation of the instructions was causing problems. Physical and verbal supports suitable for the needs of the student were provided by the family." (T1)

In the Low Motivation Category, teachers described parents who showed low motivation in participating in the distance education process as parents who did not want to cooperate. Regarding this category, the teachers said that the parents did not encourage the student to attend the lessons and complete the activities, did not use additional materials, and acted indifferently, the pandemic process tired the families over time, and the parents could not maintain their motivation at the beginning of the process. Sample teacher statements related to this category are as follows.

"…but towards the end of the process, family support decreased and participation started to be disrupted."(T2).

"Although the families were self-sacrificing in using online applications, they had difficulty in encouraging their children to participate in the lesson because of their children's moderate-to-severe intellectual disability or autism."(T8).

"Families did not have a desire or motivation to attend classes... Our families were not sensitive to their children and were indifferent... We could not expect parents to be motivated to attend

classes in a home/family environment where children were ignored and there were 'crooked' relationships."(T1).

Theme 3: *The Challenges Special Education Teachers Faced in Ensuring Parental Involvement*

The opinions of the special education teachers on the theme of the difficulties they faced in ensuring parental participation were examined in three categories as "difficulties arising from family, difficulties arising from students, and difficulties in accessing digital resources". The categories and codes related to this theme are given in Table 4.

Table 4. *The Opinions on the Difficulties Experienced by Teachers in Ensuring Family Participation*

Categories	Codes
Difficulties arising from family	Decreased family motivation over time
	The family does not have enough information on the distance education process
	Families have low beliefs and expectations for the child
	The indifference of the family
Difficulties arising from students	Student's severe disability
	Screen addiction
Difficulties in accessing digital resources	Not having internet access
	Insufficient technological equipment

In the category of difficulties arising from the family, the teachers said that the families did not know the distance education process, they were indifferent to the applications, and they thought that their children would not be able to succeed. Also, there are statements in the teachers' opinions that the motivation of the families, which was at a high level at first, decreased over time. The examples of expressions related to the category of difficulties arising from the family are as follows.

"Family participation in special education was not good in face-to-face education either, and it was similar in distance education... Families do not believe that their children can achieve anything" (T9).

"Families do not want to take an active role in their children's education processes. In the distance education process, the responsibility fell to the family, but they could not carry out this process in an accurate way because they were very unfamiliar with the process."(T7).

Regarding the category of difficulties arising from the students, the teachers said that the students were severely disabled and that screen addiction occurred in the students because of the frequent use of online applications. Sample teacher statements in this category are as follows.

"Continuity and repetition are very important in special education. The things done in the sense of education in front of the screen were somehow included in the life of the student, but the execution of the process with the screen caused an increase in children's screen addiction and problem behaviors, and families had a very difficult time in this regard." (T10).

"The degree of disability of our students is very severe. For this reason, we could not even perform the face-to-face training efficiently. Things became worse in distance education" (T3).

In the category of difficulties in accessing digital resources, teachers said that they did not have internet access and that the technological tools required for distance education at home were limited. Sample expressions related to this category are as follows.

"Many of our families live in villages; they have no computers and no internet. They could not use the internet on their phones because their quotas were limited." (T6)

Theme 4: *The Effects of Parental Involvement on Learning Acquisitions*

In the theme of opinions on the effects of parental involvement in terms of learning acquisitions, two categories were obtained; "*effective parent involvement* and *ineffective parent involvement*". These categories and codes are given in Table 5.

Table 5. *The Opinions on The Effects of Parent Involvement in Terms of Learning Acquisitions*

Categories	Codes
Effective parent involvement	Transferring the teaching process to the home setting Prevention of forgetting information Facilitating the learning of new information Ensuring school-family cooperation
Ineffective parent involvement	Not giving due importance to the process The negative effect of screen addiction on teaching Insufficient family support Failure to ensure continuity in participation

When the category on the effectiveness of parent participation was examined, it was seen that teachers said that they received support from families in transferring the teaching process to the home setting, preventing the forgetting of the information, facilitating the learning of new information, and ensuring school-family cooperation. Sample statements regarding the category of effective parental involvement are as follows.

"Everything that parents did for their children in terms of education worked very well. Because families were the only way to touch our students during the distance education process."(T4).

"Yes, families supported their children in distance education. They completed and sent back the assignments and activities we sent to families through WhatsApp. As teachers, we checked and corrected the missing and wrong places."(T5).

In another category, which is related to the ineffectiveness of parental participation, the teachers expressed their opinions about the lack of attention given to the process, the negative effects of screen addiction on teaching, the lack of family support, and the lack of continuity in the participation. Sample teacher statements regarding the effects of parental involvement in terms of learning acquisitions are as follows.

"Families were more willing and enthusiastic at the beginning of the pandemic, but I think the process tired them over time, and they lost their old interest."(T12).

"The parents were not doing what we wanted for the child. Most of the time, they did not take the warnings of us seriously. The children made progress only to the extent that we supported them."(T1).

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the present study, in which the participation of parents who had children with special needs in the education process of their children in the Covid 19 pandemic was examined from the perspective of teachers, the teachers expressed their opinions about the practices they made to ensure parental participation in the distance education process, the motivations of the parents to participate, the difficulties they faced in ensuring parental participation, and the effects of parental participation.

When the findings of the study were examined, the teachers guided the family by explaining the materials used to ensure parental participation in the distance education process, providing information on the necessary issues, following the homework assignments and home practices and giving feedback, and evaluating the process. Teachers also ensured the continuity of communication in the family and teacher channel through online applications to facilitate and increase the participation of parents. They encouraged the use of EBA and created complementary activities, ensuring that especially daily life skills continued to be practiced in the home setting with parents' support.

It is said that the supportive role of parents in the teaching process of their children has a significant impact on children's success (Pugliese, 2020). Parental support gained even more importance in ensuring participation and continuity in education activities, especially for children with special needs with the transition to distance education during the Covid 19 process. Similarly, Bozkurt (2020) reported that the role of parents in children's learning and teaching processes increased with the Covid 19 pandemic. In this case, teachers should resort to encouraging practices to ensure the active participation and support of parents in the distance education process, which they are not familiar with. When the literature was reviewed, studies conducted on the subject show that teachers use messages and phone calls for homework assignments/activities to be done at home (Gross & Opalka, 2020), carry out teaching activities with online applications, EBA, video, and activity papers (Ünay, Erdem and Çakıroğlu, 2021), informing families, sending homework assignments, and following up the assignments (Senol and Can Yaşar, 2020; Gündoğdu, 2021).

Another finding obtained from the study was about the motivation of parents to participate in the distance education process. The common expression that teachers used to describe parents who were highly motivated to participate in the education process was "being open to cooperation". In this respect, highly motivated parents cooperated with teachers in the distance education process, provided the material support expected from them, and played an active role in the completion of the activities. However, teachers commonly used the expressions "uncooperative" and "tired from the pandemic and distance education process" to describe low-motivated parents. This made it difficult for parents to provide the support expected from them in the process, maintain the motivation and interest they had at the beginning of the process, and give the necessary importance to the teaching process. Parents' family problems and failure to encourage their children's participation in education also affected their motivation negatively and hindered their participation in the distance education process.

When the literature was reviewed, it was seen that relevant and willing parents actively participate in the distance education process (Gündoğdu, 2021), children's inability to focus on

distance education and not listening to their parents affect family participation (Şenol and Can Yaşar, 2020), families do not take adequate responsibility, do not provide necessary feedback and are indifferent and did not participate in the process deliberately (Foti, 2020; Akyavuz & Çakın, 2020; Bayburtlu, 2020), and parents support their children for an average of 1-2 hours a day during the distance education process (Üstündağ, 2021).

Distance education is an unfamiliar process for students as well as parents. Students and parents inevitably need support to adapt to the process. The inadequacy and developmental characteristics of children with special needs make it difficult for them to follow their educational activities independently in this process. At this point, parents should encourage the participation of students by providing the necessary support and motivating them to work. However, it is normal for families who have to take on the role of educator as well as parenting, who need information, guidance, and motivation to provide the abovementioned support to their children. Chang (2018) reported that parents need motivation as much as children in the distance education process. As Üstündağ (2021) stated, parents expect their needs for teachers' guidance and information to be met during the distance education process. Covering these needs is an important factor in providing the motivation parents need to be supportive in the education of their children.

When the findings of the study were examined regarding the difficulties experienced in ensuring parental participation, it was seen that the difficulties arising from the families were indifference, low motivation, insufficient knowledge about the process, and low expectations and belief toward the child. Difficulties arising from students were expressed as severe disability levels and screen addiction. Limited internet access and insufficient technological equipment are said as difficulties in accessing digital resources. These findings are similar to the findings of the studies in the literature conducted on the difficulties experienced in distance education (Sönmez, Yıldırım & Çetinkaya, 2020; Xie & Yang, 2020; Arora & Srinivasan, 2020; Ünay, Erdem & Çakıroğlu, 2021). Previous studies reported findings that parents could not participate effectively in the distance education process because of some problems. Brown et al. (2020) reported that parents could not attend the training because they did not have enough experience with the online platform used, and Akbulut et al. (2020) argued that inadequacy in technology skills was a factor affecting parental involvement. Similarly, Nothroughnti and Garzia (2020) stated that families could not participate effectively because they were not familiar with the use of technology. Findings with similar characteristics draw attention in the study that was conducted by Gündoğdu (2021). In the abovementioned study, the problems faced in the distance education process were discussed as problems related to families, children, and the internet/system structure.

Another finding of the study included the effects of parental involvement in terms of learning acquisitions. According to the findings, an educational environment was created at home with the parents who actively participated and the information was prevented from being forgotten. This also affected the learning of new information positively. In the case of functional and active parental involvement, these effects are an expected result. However, some teachers said that the expected development from the student did not occur despite parental participation. The reason for this is explained by the fact that parents cannot provide functional participation and fulfill their duties adequately, cannot find a solution to the screen addiction that occurs in the student, and negative effects arising from systemic limitations such as the

internet. It was seen that even if the parents were willing to participate in the education and training process when they were not adequately guided in the process and there was no solution to the problems they faced, they were bored over time, lost their interest, and moved away from the process. At this point, it is important to find solutions for the problems faced by families and to support families by providing systematic and planned guidance in terms of ensuring continuity in parents' participation.

Epstein (1995) stated that parent cooperation and participation affect students' academic, social and personal development significantly. Sarı & Nayır (2020) said that the home education process will be more effective by ensuring parent participation, informing parents about the process, and raising awareness of parents. Parents direct their children's education life to the extent of their interest and support (Çakın & Külekçi Akyavuz, 2020). This important role of parents has come to the forefront, especially in the distance education process that entered our lives with the pandemic. Students who received enough support and attention from their families during the distance education process had positive attitudes toward learning and their interest increased (OECD, 2020).

Effective and active parental participation is required for children with special needs to receive adequate education in the distance education process (Fronapfel & Demchak, 2020). It is normal for parents who experience distance education for the first time because of the Covid-19 pandemic to have faced some problems during the process and need support in solving problems. It is considered that offering solutions to the problems faced by parents, and guiding and supporting parents in solving their questions will affect their active participation in the process positively. In this context, in the report published by OCED (2020), it was stated that parents need follow-up, support, and cooperation to maintain educational services, support students in need, and realize learning during the pandemic process.

With the findings of the present paper, it was seen that the teachers are aware that the biggest supporters of the distance education process are the parents, and they try to involve the family in the process with various applications so that the students are not deprived of education services. Most of the teachers succeeded in transforming the home environment into an instructive environment for children with special needs, especially in the early days of the distance education process, with the cooperation of their families, and tried to ensure that what is taught in online lessons is transferred to the home setting. When doing this, they established communication with the family that is not limited to education and training and aimed to ensure the continuity of communication. However, the prolongation of the pandemic and the continuation of the restrictions caused parents to lose their motivation and interest over time, and their participation in the education process decreased. Also, parents faced various problems such as not being able to access the internet, screen addiction in their children, and the need for additional materials. Despite these problems, teachers emphasized that they were able to manage the process with their parents and their children, that they could provide effective family participation and teaching, and that this was very important for the development of students. In this respect, the importance of teacher support for children with special needs and their parents, providing the necessary guidance in solving the problems with sustainable communication and information.

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