

Participation and understanding of intervention's goals among Ethiopian immigrants and their children

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The Ethiopian immigrants who came to Israel brought with them their own culture and customs which are different from the local Mediterranean culture. The Ethiopian family is traditionally patriarchal where the father is the head of the family working outside and the mother takes care of the household and children. Most Jewish Ethiopian families lived in tight-knit community villages. This situation changed drastically with their immigration; women's status was raised while the men's was lowered and their traditional community life was erupted. Therefore, attention should be given to parents, and families' cultural while delivering Occupational Therapy (OT) treatment to the Ethiopian child.

The purpose of this study was to compare participation in meaningful occupations of Ethiopian children living in Israel versus native Israeli children. In addition we assessed the difference between the OT's understanding of treatment goals and the parents understanding (Ethiopian immigrant and native Israeli separately).

Methods: The research population included 40 parents (20 Ethiopian, and 20 native Israeli) whose children aged 4 to 6 years received OT treatment for at least a month. Child's participation was assessed using the Child Participation Questionnaire (CPQ) and parents' understanding of treatment goals was measured by modifying the CPQ for this purpose.

Results showed that the Ethiopian children compared to Israeli children were significantly more independent, reported higher enjoyment, and their parents reported more satisfaction of their child's participation. Although, it seems that Ethiopian children's participation is somewhat higher than the Israeli children their overall achievements and readiness for school are poorer. Ethiopian parents generally report on high satisfaction from the educational system not because they are acquainted with the educational programs, but because in their culture it is not customary to challenge the authorities. Significant differences were found between the OT's and the parent's understanding of treatment goals in Activities of Daily Living, Instrumental Activities of Daily Living, and play. However, no significant differences were found between Ethiopian and Israeli parents in this respect.

The results will be further elaborated regarding immigration influences, culture and context.