HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL WORK TECHNOLOGIES IN SUPPORTING FAMILIES RAISING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24051978

ABSTRACT: This article examines the social, psychological, economic and legal needs of families raising a child with a disability and the role of social work technologies in supporting them. It explains the family-centred approach, case management, social outreach, psychosocial counselling, advocacy, peer support and interagency cooperation. The legal and institutional framework is reviewed with reference to the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and relevant local academic publications. The article proposes ways to individualise social services, coordinate assistance through an integrated support plan and strengthen family participation in decision-making.
Keywords: child with a disability, family, social work, social support, case management, social outreach, psychosocial counselling, advocacy, inclusion, rehabilitation.

NOGIRONLIGI BO‘LGAN FARZAND TARBIYALAYOTGAN OILALARNI QO‘LLAB-QUVVATLASHDA IJTIMOIY ISH TEXNOLOGIYALARINING AHAMIYATI

ANNOTATSIYA: Maqolada nogironligi bo‘lgan farzand tarbiyalayotgan oilalarning ijtimoiy, psixologik, iqtisodiy va huquqiy ehtiyojlari hamda ularni qo‘llab-quvvatlashda ijtimoiy ish texnologiyalarining o‘rni tahlil qilinadi. Oilaga yo‘naltirilgan yondashuv, keys-menejment, ijtimoiy patronaj, psixososial maslahat, advokatsiya, tengdoshlar ko‘magi va idoralararo hamkorlikning mazmuni ochib beriladi. O‘zbekiston Respublikasining nogironligi bo‘lgan shaxslar huquqlariga oid qonunchiligi, BMTning Nogironlar huquqlari to‘g‘risidagi konvensiyasi hamda mahalliy ilmiy maqolalar asosida oilani qo‘llab-quvvatlashning huquqiy va tashkiliy asoslari ko‘rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot natijasida xizmatlarni individual ehtiyojlarga moslashtirish, yagona holat rejasi asosida muvofiqlashtirish va oilaning qaror qabul qilishdagi ishtirokini kuchaytirish bo‘yicha takliflar ishlab chiqiladi.
Kalit so‘zlar: nogironligi bo‘lgan bola, oila, ijtimoiy ish, ijtimoiy qo‘llab-quvvatlash, keys-menejment, ijtimoiy patronaj, psixososial maslahat, advokatsiya, inklyuziya, reabilitatsiya.

ЗНАЧЕНИЕ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ РАБОТЫ В ПОДДЕРЖКЕ СЕМЕЙ, ВОСПИТЫВАЮЩИХ ДЕТЕЙ С ИНВАЛИДНОСТЬЮ

АННОТАЦИЯ: В статье анализируются социальные, психологические, экономические и правовые потребности семей, воспитывающих ребёнка с инвалидностью, а также значение

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HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

технологий социальной работы в их поддержке. Раскрывается содержание семейно-ориентированного подхода, кейс-менеджмента, социального патронажа, психосоциального консультирования, адвокации, взаимопомощи родителей и межведомственного взаимодействия. На основе законодательства Республики Узбекистан, Конвенции ООН о правах инвалидов и отечественных научных публикаций рассматриваются правовые и организационные основы поддержки таких семей. Предлагаются меры по индивидуализации социальных услуг, координации помощи на основе единого плана сопровождения и расширению участия семьи в принятии решений.
Ключевые слова: ребёнок с инвалидностью, семья, социальная работа, социальная поддержка, кейс-менеджмент, социальный патронаж, психосоциальное консультирование, адвокация, инклюзия, реабилитация.

INTRODUCTION. Raising a child with a disability affects the everyday life of the family in many ways. Alongside issues related to the child's health and development, family members must address matters such as education, rehabilitation, transport, an adapted environment, social benefits and access to services, and preparation for future independent living. In such circumstances, the needs of the family are not limited to financial assistance: reliable information, psychological support, legal advice, opportunities for rest and close coordination among services are also required. Contemporary social work views disability not merely as a medical condition but within the framework of an individual's interaction with the environment, services and social relationships. Accordingly, the main focus is not confined to adapting the child or the family to the problem; it is directed towards reducing barriers, safeguarding rights and creating conditions for social participation. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities establishes as key principles that children with disabilities have equal rights with other children, live in a family environment and participate in community life [1]. Article 20 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. O'RQ-641 of 15 October 2020 "On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" stipulates that the State shall ensure the right of children with disabilities to a family and a family environment and shall provide financial, advisory and other assistance to the families raising them [2]. This provision serves as an important legal basis for social work services and defines family support as a systemic responsibility of the State and society. The aim of the article is to analyse the main social work technologies used in supporting families raising a child with a disability and to develop proposals for improving them in the context of Uzbekistan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY. The study employed the methods of analysis of legal and regulatory documents, review of scholarly literature, comparative analysis and the systems approach. The legal analysis covered the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Law "On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities", the Law on the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and Presidential Decree No. PF-82 of 1 June 2023 [1–4]. The scholarly sources comprised works that interpret disability through social and biopsychosocial approaches, as well as relevant articles published in Uzbekistan [5–8]. This article is theoretical and analytical in nature. It does not claim that any new empirical survey or statistical observation was conducted; the conclusions are based on the analysis of legal documents and published scholarly sources.

MAIN BODY1. Needs and Social Problems of Families Raising a Child with a Disability

The needs of families are determined by the child's age and functional abilities, the area of residence, family income, parental employment and the services available. For this reason, offering the same

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ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
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package of assistance to all families would not be effective. For some families, access to rehabilitation services and transport is the most pressing issue, whereas for others inclusive education, adapted learning materials, daily care or legal advice may take priority.

The first important area concerns barriers to information and to access to services. Parents may lack complete and comprehensible information about the child's rights, available social services, allowances and benefits, rehabilitation aids and educational opportunities. When services are dispersed among different agencies, repeatedly submitting documents and travelling independently between organisations increase the time and resources the family must expend.

The second area is psychosocial burden. Long-term care, uncertainty, social stereotypes and the shrinking of social ties may intensify feelings of strain among parents. In this context, what matters is not blaming the family or giving parents ready-made instructions, but listening to their experiences, identifying their existing strengths and mobilising real support resources.

The third area is economic and employment-related constraints. Caregiving responsibilities may lead one of the parents to reduce working hours or to withdraw temporarily from employment. In such a situation, the social worker should inform the family about appropriate financial assistance, employment services, day care and other forms of support.

The fourth area is the social participation of the child and the family. A lack of adaptation in public spaces, schools, transport and the information environment may restrict the child's participation in community life. Therefore, it is incorrect to attribute the problem solely to the child's individual condition; barriers in the environment must also be assessed [5; 6].

2. The Family-Centred Approach and the Principles of Social Work

Family-centred practice views the family not as a passive recipient of assistance but as an equal partner in the process of supporting the child. The social worker listens to the views of the parents and the child, identifies the family's priority goals, develops decisions jointly and evaluates the outcomes of services together with the family. This approach makes it possible to deliver services suited to the individual situation rather than confining the family's needs to standard categories.nSocial work should rest on the following principles: respect for human dignity and rights; non-discrimination; consideration of the best interests of the child; confidentiality; informed consent; reliance on the family's capacities and strengths; continuity of services; and consideration of the child's views in line with the child's age and communication abilities. The need for a gradual transition from an exclusively medical model of disability assessment to a social model is also noted in Decree No. PF-82 [4].

3. Main Social Work Technologies in Supporting Families

3.1. Case Management

Case management is a technology encompassing the assessment of the needs of a particular family or child, the development of an individual support plan, the coordination of services, the monitoring of the process and the evaluation of outcomes. Its main advantage is that the family does not have to navigate between various organisations alone; a responsible social worker coordinates the chain of services. Case management is usually carried out in the following stages: (1) receiving the request and conducting an initial assessment; (2) identifying the needs, risk factors and existing resources of the child and the family; (3) developing an individual case plan jointly with the family; (4) referring to the relevant services and arranging interagency communication; (5) monitoring the implementation of services; and (6) evaluating outcomes and determining the need for further assistance. The plan should

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specify clear goals, the responsible organisation, deadlines and expected results. For example, if the child requires rehabilitation, inclusive education and assistive devices, the social worker establishes contact with the relevant medical, educational and social protection organisations. In doing so, the child's personal data may be exchanged only on a lawful basis and within the scope of the necessary consent.

3.2. Social Outreach and Home-Based Support

Social outreach means studying the family's living conditions with its consent, identifying everyday barriers and arranging the necessary services. A home visit must not become a means of monitoring or blaming the family. Rather, it should serve to understand the family's actual needs, the accessibility of the dwelling, the child's care conditions and the parents' support resources.

During outreach, the social worker may assess the adapted environment, safe mobility, hygiene, the care burden, the family's need for rest and the resources of the mahalla (neighbourhood community). Depending on need, the family is informed about ways of applying for home-based services, day care, rehabilitation or assistive devices.

3.3. Psychosocial Counselling and Strengthening Parental Capacity

Psychosocial counselling is aimed at supporting the family's emotional state, interpersonal relationships, adaptation process and problem-solving skills. Within the scope of their competence, social workers use active listening, problem clarification, resource identification and practical planning. When clinical mental health support is needed, the family is referred to an appropriately qualified specialist. Training for parents can develop skills in knowing the child's rights, accessing education and rehabilitation services, organising daily care, managing stress and communicating with service-providing organisations. In this regard, it is necessary to avoid placing all responsibility on the parents, to distribute the care burden fairly among family members and to consider opportunities for rest.

3.4. Advocacy and Legal Counselling

Advocacy is the activity of protecting the rights and legitimate interests of the child and the family and of helping to remove systemic barriers to accessing services. The social worker provides the family with clear information about the rights established in legislation, application procedures, and opportunities for accessing education and social services. Where necessary, the social worker assists in preparing applications to competent organisations or refers the family to an appropriate specialist. In 2021, Uzbekistan ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by Law No. O'RQ-695 [3]. The Convention establishes the principles of ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities, non-discrimination, accessibility and full participation in community life. Therefore, advocacy should not be limited to assistance in individual cases; it should be directed at identifying and removing barriers in the environment of schools, mahallas, transport and service delivery.

3.5. Peer Support and Mutual Support Groups

For parents raising a child with a disability, mutual support groups make it possible to exchange experience, obtain reliable information and prevent social isolation. In such groups, parents may discuss their experiences of using services, cooperation with educational institutions and ways of resolving everyday problems. Group activities should be carefully facilitated by a professional, the spread of incorrect medical advice should be prevented, and the confidentiality of participants should be ensured.

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3.6. Interagency Cooperation and Social Partnership

For assistance to families to be effective, cooperation is needed among social protection, health care, education, employment, mahalla and non-governmental organisations. Decree No. PF-82 defines the directions of the activities of the National Agency for Social Protection, the development of professional social work services, the elaboration of standards for guaranteed social services and the provision of assistance at the mahalla level on the basis of an individual approach [4]. In interagency cooperation, the responsibilities of each organisation should be clearly defined, repeated requests to the family for the same documents should be reduced, and information exchange should be carried out in a lawful and secure manner. The "Inson" social service centres can be regarded as an important institutional link in identifying the family's needs and referring the family to the relevant services.

4. Legal and Institutional Foundations in the Context of Uzbekistan

Article 76 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan establishes that the family is the fundamental unit of society and is under State protection, and that the State creates the social, economic, legal and other conditions for the full development of the family. Article 77 reinforces parents' responsibility for the upbringing, education and development of their children [5]. These norms imply a collaborative role for the State and society in supporting families. Law No. O'RQ-641 is one of the principal national instruments for ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities. In particular, Article 20 provides for the right of children with disabilities to live in a family and for the provision of financial, advisory and other assistance to the families raising them [2]. This provision indicates that family support must be viewed not merely as charity or voluntary initiative but within the framework of legal obligations. Decree No. PF-82 of 1 June 2023 is aimed at developing the social protection system on the basis of a comprehensive approach, extending social services to the mahalla level and supporting families in difficult life situations on the basis of individual assessment. The Decree sets out directions including the transition from a medical to a social model of disability assessment, the development of rehabilitation and habilitation services, the organisation of home-based services and the establishment of professional social work services [4].

Local scholarly literature also highlights the importance of social, biopsychosocial and legal approaches to the social protection of children with disabilities. B. Tolibov and D. Turg'unova analysed the theoretical and methodological foundations of the social protection of children with disabilities and the significance of inclusion and family-centred methods [7]. M. Komilova, in turn, focused on problems related to infrastructure, access to information, specialists' capacity and stereotypes in social work with persons with disabilities [8].

5. Proposals for Improving Social Work Technologies

First, it is advisable to introduce an individual social support plan for every family. The plan should be developed jointly with the family itself and should cover the child's developmental and educational goals, care needs, and material and psychological resources.

Second, the principle of a case manager or responsible social worker should be strengthened. To reduce the burden on families of repeatedly approaching different agencies, services must be coordinated on the basis of an integrated support plan.

Third, social outreach services should not be limited to identifying need; they should be directed at identifying the family's strengths, the child's abilities and the resources available in the mahalla.

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Fourth, free or affordable psychosocial counselling, legal information and peer support groups should be developed for parents. Counselling services should be accessible geographically and in terms of communication and, where necessary, may also be provided remotely.

Fifth, continuity between inclusive education and rehabilitation services needs to be strengthened. The child's participation in education should be assessed not merely by admission to school but by the availability of learning materials, the physical environment, means of communication and support appropriate to individual needs.

Sixth, when assessing the effectiveness of services, not only the number of services delivered but also the family's real outcomes should be used as indicators: access to services, parents' access to information, the child's participation in education and community life, the family's social ties and the reduction of the care burden.

CONCLUSION

Supporting families raising a child with a disability is a multidimensional and continuous process that cannot be limited to financial assistance or medical services alone. The needs of the family are closely interrelated with social, psychological, economic, legal and educational factors. Social work technologies should therefore serve to ease the family's everyday life, ensure the child's rights and reduce barriers in society. The analysis shows that case management is important for coordinating services, social outreach for identifying the family's actual circumstances, psychosocial counselling for strengthening parental capacity, and advocacy for protecting rights and removing systemic barriers. These technologies yield sustainable results only when applied in a mutually coherent manner. Uzbek legislation contains important foundations for preserving the family environment, assisting families raising children with disabilities and developing professional social services. The task now is to strengthen the practical implementation of these norms through family-centred services, qualified social workers, interagency cooperation and outcome-based monitoring.

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