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Educational Supports for the Inclusive Education for the Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities in South Korea

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Abstract

As the inclusive education for students with disabilities has been expanded recently, the number of special class and the number of students who are given inclusive education in regular schools have increased. In spite of the current tendency in South Korea, the children with severe and multiple disabilities have been frequently isolated or neglected from education and the inclusive education has focused on the physical inclusion; the educational supports are not sufficient.

In this context, this study aims to find the tasks for educational supports in order to successfully realize inclusive education by understanding the actual situation of children with severe and multiple disabilities and clearly identifying the problems of inclusive education for children with severe and multiple disabilities. The literature review focusing on the analyses for the precedent studies on related areas is employed for this study.

The inclusive education for children with severe and multiple disabilities has difficulties caused by problem behaviors of children with severe and multiple disabilities, the lack of systematic education and administrative support and the insufficient expertise and knowledge of teachers for disabilities. To solve these difficulties, several tasks need to be accomplished; the school curriculum and reinforcement of individualized education customized for children with severe and multiple disabilities, the reinforcement of expertise of teachers in charge of inclusive classes and special classes, and the collaboration with other professionals including psychiatrists, physical therapists and nurses.

Key words : Severe and multiple disabilities, Inclusive education, Educational support

I . Introduction

As the inclusive education for students with disabilities has been expanded recently, the number of special class and the number of students who are given inclusive education in regular schools have continued to increase. In spite of the current tendency, the children with severe and multiple disabilities have been frequently isolated or neglected from education and, even though they are placed in the educational institutions, for example, regular schools or special schools, the confidence for the developmental possibility through education is not sufficient and whether they are given education with the best educational methods is not clear (Eun-hae PARK 2005).

The realization of inclusive education means to guarantee that children with disabilities are equally given the same quality of education for children without disabilities. Based on the principle of Least Restrictive

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Environment (LRE)¹, the physical inclusion of education has been emphasized that children with disabilities need to be least isolated from the most natural educational environment. Inclusive education, however, has to be implemented aiming to the social and psychological inclusion and the curricular inclusion to embrace the unique educational needs of each student with the special needs as well as physical inclusion (Mi-Gyeong LEE, et al. 2009).

Even though the inclusive education has been emphasized for children with severe and multiple disabilities, the precedent studies about their inclusive education were not rich compared with the studies about other scopes of disabilities and the studies to produce clear guidelines or systems are also insufficient. Furthermore, they have focused on not the curricula inclusion, but only physical inclusion. The educational supports for the inclusive education have to be provided to keep up with the recent tendency that the children with severe and multiple disabilities have increased.

In this context, this study aims to find the tasks for educational supports in order to successfully realize inclusive education by understanding the actual situation of children with severe and multiple disabilities and clearly identifying the problems of inclusive education for children with severe and multiple disabilities.

II . The Characteristics of Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

1. The Definition of Severe and Multiple Disabilities

Severe disabilities mean that disabilities are intense beyond mild or moderate level. Multiple disabilities are a combination of two or more disabilities. For the education field, the term of severe and multiple disabilities has been used. The term of severe and multiple disabilities, however, has never been defined in legal parlance. Even though the term has been frequently discussed among researchers, it was found to be unsuccessful due to complicated factors to need to be considered. In results, there exist many definitions for the term of severe and multiple disabilities.

Hyeon-Suk LEE (2009) defined the children with severe and multiple disabilities as the ones who cannot actively participate in educational activities in school setting due to the extremely intense level of disabilities among children with developmental disabilities; commonly they have the impaired abilities of social interaction and communication, show limited interests and activities and present problem behaviors such as repetitive stereotyped behaviors² and self-injurious behaviors.

Westling and Fox (2000) defined persons with severe and multiple disabilities as ones who have both severe intellectual disabilities and physical disabilities simultaneously or two or more kinds of severe disabilities, even though severe and multiple disabilities are extremely heterogeneous group in the functional aspect, and often refer to physical disabilities and orthopedic disabilities.

Based on the definitions mentioned above, this study employed the definition of children with the severe and multiple disabilities that children have two or more disabilities of severe levels and need long-term physical and educational supports.

2. The Characteristics of Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

1) The limited learning ability

It seems that the intellectual development of children with severe and multiple disabilities is considerably

¹ It means that children with disabilities should be least separated from children without disabilities, family and community. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the U.S.A. prescribes that children with disabilities must be educated together with children without disabilities as much as possible regardless of whether they are educated in public schools or other institutions. It means that the life of children with disabilities have to be normal as much as possible and their education must be individualized, but, not infringe their liberty.

retarded compared with that of children without disabilities and their cognitive development also stops developing in certain points. In addition, they have difficulty in applying, utilizing and generalizing the stored information to their brains. Therefore, children with severe and multiple disabilities cannot actively participate in learning activities in schools and have difficulty in keeping up with the level of studying in their grades; because elementary school curriculum contains play programs, they can participate in class, even if it is just part of class. But, they have extreme difficulty in keeping up with classes, when they become middle and high school students. The children with disabilities who experience the repetitive failures and difficulties in studying tend not to trust their own abilities and but to rely on others (Jin-Ho KIM, et al 2006).

2) The limited communication ability

One of the characteristics of children with severe and multiple disabilities is the disability of communication. In the developmental aspect of human being, persons who have extremely limited abilities of cognition, motor skill and sensory organs also tend to struggle with intense communication disability. Especially because they have more difficulty in expressive language³ than in receptive language⁴, they are more likely to have difficulty in expressing themselves voluntarily. Even though they can express what they need by using non-verbal ways like gestures, they have extreme difficulty in expressing their emotions and feelings.

3) Maladaptive behaviors

Problem behaviors such as stereotyped behaviors, self-stimulatory behaviors⁵ and self-injurious behaviors⁶ that are frequently seen among children with severe and multiple disabilities disturb class and do harm to children without disabilities who study together, for example, behaviors to disturb class by making loud sound or tapping things or ones to do harm to peers without disabilities by pinching them or throwing things.

III . The Current Situation of Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

1. The Combination of Disabilities of Severe and Multiple Disabilities

Table 1 Combination of Multiple Disabilities

(Units: %, number of persons)

Number of disabilities	Combination	Nationwide estimation	Percentage
2	Two kinds of disabilities	312,478	77.7
2	Physical disability + Visual disability	20,277	6.5

² It means repeating same action for a certain period. This symptom can be presented under special circumstances or repeatedly shown at certain time intervals for a certain period. For example, someone who has the symptom of repetitive stereotyped behaviors may sit rocking back and forth him or herself in his or her chair, move his or her hand up and down repetitively or walk in a room without stopping regardless of any circumstances.

³ Ability to express him or herself using speaking or writing. Broadly speaking, it means to express him or herself with any methods including speech, writing, gesture, motions, sign language, finger language, communication board, etc.

⁴ Ability to understand what is said to.

⁵ It is the behaviors to stimulate one's sensory organ by repetitively moving the part of one's body or things. It does not aim to injure him or herself, which make it differentiated from self-injurious behavior(SIB). Self-stimulatory behaviors may be associated with one sensory organ or all sensory organs.

⁶ It is chronic and repetitive behaviors that one does harm to him or herself physically including beating him or herself, biting or sucking the part of body, pinching or scratching or poking several parts of body, repetitively vomiting or ruminating, eating inedible things, etc. For a person with the severely low level of intellectual capacity or the intense level of attack rate of stereotyped behaviors, it tends to more frequently occur.

2	Physical disability + Hearing impairment	25,588	8.2
2	Disability with brain lesion+ Visual disability	9,862	3.2
2	Disability with brain lesion + Speech disability	69,707	22.3
2	Others	187,044	59.9
3	Three kinds of disabilities	89,587	22.3
3	Disability with brain lesion + Visual disability +Speech disability	6,977	7.8
3	Disability with brain lesion +Hearing impairment + Speech disability	7,468	8.3
3	Others	75,142	83.9
Total	Total	402,065	100

National Survey on Persons with Disabilities, 2005, Ministry of Health and Welfare (2006)

According to the nationwide estimation of persons with severe and multiple disabilities, persons with two disabilities were 312,478(77%) and those with three were 89,587(22.3%). Among the persons with two disabilities, persons with disabilities of brain lesion and speech were most frequently found as 69,707 (22.3%) and there were 187,044 persons (59.9%) who have different two kinds of combination excluding the combinations of physical disability and hearing impairment (8.2%), physical disability and visual disability (6.5%) and disability with brain lesion and visual disability (3.2%). Among the persons with three disabilities, there were 75,142 (83.9%) persons who have three kinds of combination excluding the combinations of disability with brain lesion, visual disability and speech disability (7.8%) and disability with brain lesion, hearing impairment and speech disability (8.3%).

2. Prevalence of Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

Table 2 Estimation and Prevalence of Population with Multiple Disabilities by Year

(Unit: %, Number of Person)

Multiple disabilities	1990		1995		2000		2005	
	Prevalence	Estimation	Prevalence	Estimation	Prevalence	Estimation	Prevalence	Estimation
	0.38	159.047	0.45	196.742	0.66	311.736	0.86	402.065

2008 National Survey on Persons with Disabilities, Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs (2009)

It is noticed that the number of children with multiple disabilities has increased since 1990.

3. Education for Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

1) Special School

Most of children with severe and multiple disabilities tend to enter special schools. Among the children with severe and multiple disabilities, children with physical disabilities have difficulties in participating in learning activities. Therefore, children with severe and multiple disabilities are more likely to enter special schools that are equipped with facilities and personnel to provide both education and treatments.

2) Regular School (Inclusive Education)

As the special classes in regular schools have been expanded and the inclusive education has been taken a

growing interest, children with severe and multiple disabilities are more likely to enter regular schools. This tendency is more likely to be found in the education for young children and elementary school children, for their parents let them enter regular school, hoping that they can have more opportunities to interact with children without disabilities.

3) Itinerant Education

Itinerant education can be considered for children with severe and multiple disabilities, when the levels of disabilities are intense and a short or long absence from school is indispensable. The children with disabilities who are hospitalized for a long time have increasingly taken more opportunities to have itinerant education, even though it is not common.

IV . Inclusive Education for Severe and Multiple Disabilities

1. Inclusive Education

The concept of inclusive education, which has been the mainstream among special education services nowadays, includes various variables related to purpose, value and practice process. In addition, inclusive education has brought about diverse views in the aspects of its concept and reality, because it is affected by many variables such as spirit of the times, the needs of learners, a variety of situations, physical and mental factors, social, economic and political factors, educational philosophy (The Korean Society of Inclusive Education 2005).

Seong-Ae KIM (1997) argued that all the attempts to avoid separated education for young children with special needs can be regarded as inclusive education. Inclusive education can be efficient when it becomes to be organically integrated to regular education.

Hyeon-Mi KWON (2005) suggested that collaborated activities between young children with and without disabilities should be carried out in educational programs for inclusive education. Therefore, genuine inclusive education can be defined as the interaction of children with and without disabilities in the physical, social and educational integration.

Mi-Gyeong CHOI (2006) suggested that inclusive education is for children both with and without disabilities to live and to act altogether in daily life as well as in educational settings

In the Article 2 of the Special Education Law of Individuals with Disabilities and the Like, "Inclusive education is defined that the subjects of special education are provided with suitable education to the needs of each person together with the same age without the discrimination according to the types and degrees of disabilities in regular schools".

2. The Necessity of Inclusive Education for Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

Even though it has been raised that disability should be considered as individuality, the term of disability still contains negative perception. To overcome the negative perception, it is important that the education to plant positive perception for disability should be carried out from childhood. The emotion of childhood is mostly learned rather than inherent. Proper education is required for the emotional development of childhood, which becomes the basis for the social life of adulthood. The proper perception for disability that is planted in childhood may increase the width of understanding for people with disabilities when they grow up. Therefore, inclusive education may play the significant role to plant positive perception of disability to children by helping children with disabilities and those without disabilities naturally contact each other (Chang-Wan HAN 2011).

In addition, inclusive education helps children with disabilities raise social skills, develop learning and

cognitive ability, heighten their pride and self esteem and decrease problem behaviors (Eun-Sil KIM, et al. 2009), which is also true to children with severe and multiple disabilities.

Inclusive education can help children with severe and multiple disabilities feel comfort and satisfaction by participating in regular learning activities with children without disabilities of the same age (Hyeon-Sun SIN 2000). In addition, it helps persons without disabilities accept persons with disabilities as a person who are a lot in common with themselves and learn the sense of social responsibility that school community needs to accept children with disabilities as well as those without disabilities (So-Hyeon LEE and Eun-Hea PARK 2007).

Actually children who have ever learned in inclusive class tend to have less negative feeling and prejudices against children with disabilities and more actively participate in disability experience and volunteer works for persons with disabilities than children who are never involved in inclusive class. This suggests that the knowledge, understanding and indirect and direct experiences of disabilities from inclusive education play a great role for the social integration (Jung-Baek PARK 2003).

3. Problems of Inclusive Education for Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

1) Deficiency of the Perception for Children with Disabilities

The factors to interfere with inclusive education include the deficiency of understanding of teachers except special class teachers for inclusive education, the prejudices and negative attitude for inclusive education, the deficiency of understanding of parents of children without disabilities and the deficiency of cooperation of parents of children with disabilities (Mi-Gyeong LEE 2009).

The understanding and positive perception of teachers in charge of inclusive classes and parents of both children with and without disabilities for inclusive education are indispensable for the implementation of inclusive education rationally and efficiently. Especially the attitude of parents for inclusive education is a key factor to determine whether inclusive education will succeed or not.

Only when parents with children with disabilities play assistant roles both in school and at home by directly participating in inclusive education and parents with children without disabilities help them indirectly through their children, successful inclusive education can be realized. Even though the roles of parents of children for inclusive education are significant, it has been reported by Korea National Institute for Special Education (2003) that 82.5% of teachers in charge of inclusive classes answered that they never gave lectures on disabilities to the parents of children without disabilities.

2) Problem Behaviors of Children with Disabilities

It was found that children with severe and multiple disabilities have difficulties during classes because they frequently present abnormal behaviors and communication disability, which are caused by severe level of mental retardation and multiple disabilities including motor disturbance, community disability, visual and hearing impairments, epileptic seizure, etc.

In addition, there are also several causes to make children with disabilities study including the insufficient protection for transportation and safety for field trips, the difficulty in walking, disposing of human waste, and psychologically depending on children without disabilities to excess.

3) Lack of Expertise for Systematic Education and Administrative Support

Teachers in charge of inclusive classes argue that systematic education and administrative supports lack in expertise. There are also several factors to interfere inclusive education including much more students without disabilities than those without disabilities in inclusive class, the lack of expertise to develop curriculum and individualized education for children with severe and multiple disabilities in inclusive education, the high turnover rate of assistants for special education, no expertise of administrative management system and the

lack of support for physical environment, for example, insufficient facilities for children with disabilities in special schools.

In results of the survey on the physical environment of special classes for nationwide teachers in charge of special classes, over 80% of teachers presented dissatisfaction with physical environment (Gi-Jong YUN 2002).

4) The Insufficient Information on Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities and the Lack of Expertise of Teachers

Teachers who have difficulties in implementing inclusive classes argue that they need to receive more specialized educational, medical and psychological information and knowledge about children with severe and multiple disabilities who are characteristically different from children without disabilities. Since children with severe and multiple disabilities have two or more disabilities, they require more careful approaches and more professional knowledge medically and educationally than other children with disabilities.

Moreover, the expertise of teachers in charge of inclusive class is significant for the inclusive education for children with severe and multiple disabilities.

The positive perception of teachers for disability and the expertise of teacher in severe and multiple disabilities are the most basic factors to determine the curriculum, which is directly associated with efficient operation of inclusive education for children with severe and multiple disabilities. However, due to the individuality and characteristics of each disability of severe and multiple disabilities, some teachers consider inclusive education as negative, which proves that support system for inclusive education has not taken a concrete form. As noticed from Table 3, there are 44,937 teachers who are teaching in inclusive classes; 613 special education teachers with license, 10,066 teachers with over 60-hour training, 2,021 teachers with 30~59-hour training and 32,237 teachers without training. The number of teachers without training is highest and then teachers with over 60-hour training, teachers with 30~59-hour training, and teachers with special education teachers' license in descending order. If teachers who are not qualified for inclusive education become in charge of inclusive class, the negative conception of disability may be spread and be obstacles to deal with diverse problems that can happen in classes.

Table 3 Number of Teachers of Inclusive Classes

(Unit: Number of Person)

Establishment	Total				
	Teachers with special education teachers' license	Teachers with over-60-hour training	Teachers with 30~59-hour training	Teachers without training	Total
Government	6	52	7	162	227
Local government	576	9,591	1,861	29,520	41,548
Private	31	423	153	2,555	3,162
Total	613	10,066	2,021	32,237	44,937

Special Education Statistics, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2010)

4. Educational Support for Inclusive Education for Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

Even though children with severe and multiple disabilities can take a great advantage of inclusive education in the communicational, social and educational aspects, there are several problems mentioned above. To deal

with those problems, systematic measures of educational supports are required.

1) Curriculum and Individualized Education Plan for Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

Children with severe and multiple disabilities need to be provided diverse and individualized supports that are proper to their unique educational needs and efficient learning, for their disabilities are likely to have more diverse characteristics than other types of disabilities and each disability that they have is very different from each other (Eun-Sil KIM, et al. 2009).

Utilitarian function-centered curriculum for children with severe and multiple disabilities has been developed including individualized curriculum, integrated subject program, application play programs and programs (manual) that can be utilized in inclusive class. In addition, teachers who have expertise in inclusive education and children with severe and multiple disabilities and can organize and operate curriculum are required.

The organization of curriculum and the direction of implementation can be summarized as follows;

- ① Curriculum for children with severe and multiple disabilities (hereinafter to ⑧ referred to as curriculum) needs to aim at integrated course of study
- ② Curriculum needs to be utilitarian function-centered course of study.
- ③ Individualized education needs to be enabled by organizing differentiated educational curriculum.
- ④ Student-centered curriculum needs to be formed.
- ⑤ Based on the capability of each student, students can attend class full-time or by the hour, and classes can be run as through the diverse ways, for example, special education tutoring, inclusive class and itinerant education.
- ⑥ Curriculum needs to be organized, based on the basic curriculum for special schools and the ability of students at the 3rd year level of National Common Basic Curriculum.
- ⑦ Curriculum needs to be organized to include selective therapy education activities based on the personal characteristics, the level of disability, and the types of needs rather than age of students with disabilities.
- ⑧ Curriculum needs to be organized to include discretionary activities and extracurricular activities based on the actual conditions of students, parents, teachers and schools and the needs of community.

V Conclusion-the Tasks of Educational Support for Inclusive Education for Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

Inclusive education aims to the complete social integration that persons with disabilities are recognized as the members of society without discrimination and prejudice by letting them learn together with children without disabilities. There, however, are more limits on the inclusive education for children with severe and multiple disabilities than that for children with single disability. It's because children with severe and multiple disabilities require individualized and specialized education due to the much lower level of intellectual capacity and communication ability and their social, emotional and physical characteristics. In results, even many special education teachers became to regard the inclusive education for children with severe and multiple disabilities as negative. In addition to this kind of negative recognition, the lack of systematic educational and administrative supports, the insufficient information for children with severe and multiple disabilities and the lack of expertise of teachers have instigated to hinder from realizing inclusive education for children with severe and multiple disabilities.

To overcome these hindrances, more systematic educational supports are required;

First, curriculum and individualized education for children with severe and multiple disabilities need to be

reinforced. Children with severe and multiple disabilities struggle with the low level of intellectual capacity and communicational disabilities compared with children without disabilities. Moreover, each child has different composition and levels of disabilities from each other. Therefore, efficient curriculum that is fit for the diverse characteristics and differences is required. The curriculum for children with severe and multiple disabilities need to be utilitarian function-centered and individualized and it requires integrated subject programs, play programs within subjects, directly applicable programs to inclusive classes (operation manual), etc.

Second, the reinforcement of expertise of inclusive education teachers and special education teachers and the collaboration of multidisciplinary team are required.

According to Table 3, teachers (32,237) with no training for special education or inclusive education are much more than those (613) with special education teachers' license. When teachers with no expertise or professional education are in charge of inclusive education, it is more likely that negative perception for disabilities could be spread more and those teachers would have difficulties in dealing with diverse problems that can occur in class. To solve these problems, diversely specialized training courses that are utilitarian and deal with various problems that teachers confront with while they teach children with disabilities are need to be prepared for teachers. Furthermore, in collaboration with diverse professionals including psychiatrists, physical therapists, nurses, etc., individualized education needs to be provided for children with severe and multiple disabilities. There are scarce of precedent studies on the inclusive education for children with severe and multiple disabilities and almost no studies to offer clear guideline or systems compared with other studies on disabilities. From now on, diverse and profound studies on children with severe and multiple disabilities needs to be carried out.

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