

Unseen Pictures: Plight of the Parents of Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEs) In Distance Learning



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ABSTRACT: This study utilized the phenomenological research design which aimed to understand the lived experiences of the parents of the learners with special educational needs in distance learning at Pulo National High School- Special Education (SPED) Center. The researcher utilized the framework of Moustakas (1994) which involves bracketing, horizontalization, theme clustering, textural description, structural description, and essence. With the in-depth analysis of the significant statements from the verbatim transcriptions, nine (9) themes emerged. The parents of learners with special educational needs in the implementation of distance learning experienced challenges that include, the pros and cons of distance learning, the need for professional teachers' intervention, implications on learners' behavior, competing demands of being a parent and a learning facilitator and learning loss and social gaps. To be able to cope with their experiences for having children with special needs in distance learning, parents must have strong parental involvement and family support system, positive mindset, emotional stability, and strong faith as well as teachers who possessed commitment and compassion. The findings implied that experiences in distance learning of the parents of the learners with educational needs were truly challenging which entails the difficulties and opportunities of distance learning, the need to have professional experts, social and behavioral implications of distance learning to their children, different roles they played in the education of their children and the trouble of thought of the development of the students. Given the challenges that parents experienced in distance learning, the chance of overcoming the struggles is possible through the help and support of the family members, and teachers, by being optimistic, strong, and by being faithful to God.

KEYWORDS: phenomenology, special education, learners, special educational needs, parents

INTRODUCTION

Distance learning is not a new concept; it has been utilized by universities in the country and in other parts of the world. With the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures, educational institutions resorted to this type of learning in all year levels. It is the first time that the Philippine educational system has implemented distance learning for the security and safety of teachers, learners, and parents. Distance learning and blended learning are the most common learning modalities that are being implemented from the beginning of the school year 2020–2021 and up to this point. Distance learning, as defined in the Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) refers to the learning delivery modality where learning takes place between the teacher and learners who are geographically remote from each other during instruction. Distance learning provides unique opportunities for diverse learners' access to high quality instruction across all grade levels through the help of digital technologies. Compared to face-to-face teaching, distance learning requires students to be highly motivated, focus-driven and disciplined (Herburger, 2021). Teachers in distance learning need to provide learning experiences that will keep the students engaged in the learning process and keep them from being distracted by external stimuli. In the last two years, numerous studies have examined the experiences of teachers, parents, and learners in learning delivery modalities amid the pandemic. Teachers' resilience was challenged by the pandemic. Among the challenges they experienced were related to establishing communication with parents and students and difficulty in monitoring and assessing learning. The pandemic brought out the strengths of the teachers in applying their 21st century skills, their capacity to collaborate, their commitment and competence, which are essential skills in the delivery of the lesson during pandemic (Jamon et al., 2021). The teachers turned challenges they experienced into opportunities to be better than before. Studies that considered the perspective of parents in distance learning showed the numerous challenges from the transition to a new mode of learning in the virtual setting were those of Agaton and

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Cueto (2021). The study cited numerous challenges for learners and parents, which included pedagogical, economic, social, and technological problems.

Parents of learners with special educational needs felt greater stress than parents whose children were normal. They were not only worried about the learning loss, but also about the established routine activities and social skills developed by their children during face-to-face classes. Another concern was that special education requires specialized training, which parents do not have idea about, and the need for individualized learning plans because each learner has different educational needs. Some identified challenges experienced by parents in homeschooling in times of pandemic were struggling to make things work, balancing in meeting the special needs of their children, work from home arrangement, household chores, insufficient support from school, lack of social interaction and unstructured normal routine that have behavioral implications and inability to adopt to the changes (Ludgate, Mears & Blackburn, 2021). Furthermore, several problems identified in the continuity of education for learners with special needs during the pandemic in the digital classroom were lack of access to computers and other electronic gadgets, internet connectivity, lack of coordination between and among teachers, students, and parents, and lack of cooperation (Yazcayir & Gurgur, 2020). However, limited research has been conducted on the experiences of parents, with a greater emphasis on teachers and students with disabilities.

The purpose of this study is to shed light on how COVID-19 challenged the delivery of education for parents of learners with special educational needs. This also aimed to present an in-depth understanding of the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of the parents of these learners in the distance learning amidst the pandemic. Hence, the researcher explored the challenges experienced by the parents and their coping mechanisms in dealing with the needs of their children in the distance learning amid the global pandemic.

METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized the phenomenological research design. The goal of the phenomenological design is to describe a "lived experience" of a phenomenon. Through this research design, this study allowed researcher to gain rich and in depth understanding of the lived experiences of the parents whose children have special educational needs in the distance learning.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were fifteen (15) parents of learners with special educational needs (LSEs) in the SPED Center of Pulo National High School whose children have been enrolled to distance learning. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who can share rich data on the phenomenon being studied. Participants were selected on the following inclusion criteria: (1) parents whose child/children was diagnosed by medical expert with disability; (2) parents whose child/children exposed to distance learning since 2020 up to present; (3) the age of the child/children range from 12-30 years old; and (4) the diagnosis is either of the following, autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, and emotional-behavioral disability.

The number of participants as cited by Creswell (2018) as cited by Natividad & Galicia (2021) suggesting that researchers need to interview five (5) to twenty-five (25) individuals who have all experienced the phenomena, which in this study centered on the parents of learners with special educational needs. Specifically, there were fourteen (14) parents who were females and one (1) parent who was male. There were three (3) parents whose age ranged from thirty-five to forty (35-40); two (2) aged from forty-one to forty-five; five (5) aged were between forty-six to fifty (46-50); four (4) from fifty-one to fifty-five and one (1) from fifty-six to sixty (56-60). For the number of children with special needs; thirteen (13) parents have one (1) child and two (2) parents have two (2) children; For the diagnosis, nine (9) learners were diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD); three (3) have Intellectual Disability (ID); two (2) with Down Syndrome and one (1) with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD).

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis followed the methods of Moustakas' (1994) as cited by Creswell (2018) since it was systematic in terms of the data analysis, procedures, and guidelines for assembling the textural and structural descriptions. Similar processes occurred in other types of qualitative research. The researcher followed the steps of transcendental phenomenology which includes identifying the phenomenon to study, setting aside her experiences, and collecting data from fifteen LSEs' parents who experienced the phenomenon. Furthermore, analyzing the data by reducing the information into significant statements or quotes and then combining them into themes were performed. Next, a textural description of the experiences (what the participants experienced) and a structural description of their experiences (how they experienced it in terms of the conditions, situations, or context) were developed. Finally, the textural and structural descriptions were combined which conveyed the

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overall essence of the participants' experiences of being parents of the learners with special educational needs in the distance learning. Providing the essence of the lived experience is the overall aim of transcendental phenomenology (Creswell, 2018).

To establish research rigor, verification, validation, and validity were applied (Meadows & Morse, 2001). The researcher achieved verification through in-depth literature readings, sticking to the phenomenological method of inquiry, suspending past experiences, keeping research notes and journals, utilizing a sufficient sample of participants (Polkinghorne, 1989 as cited by Creswell, 2018), and conducting multiple interviews, as well as clarifying the responses of the participants, until data were refined. Validation was reached through multiple data collection (observation, casual interview, in-depth interviews), and data analysis utilizing Moustakas' approach. To attain validity, the researcher presented the findings of the study to competent researchers (qualitative analyst) for external review to establish trustworthiness of the research work.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This qualitative-phenomenological study investigated parents of learners with special educational needs terms of their (1) experiences and (2) coping mechanisms in dealing with the challenges and issues of distance learning.

1. What are the lived experiences in distance learning of the parents of learners with special educational needs?

Theme 1: Challenges to the Parents of Learners with Special Educational Needs. As revealed by the participants, this new normal-distance learning in education is hard for them, because of their children's special needs. Most of them agreed that teaching was hard because their children don't have definite time to study, it depends on their mood. They cannot be forced to study that is why they need to be conditioned first. They don't listen to their parents and cannot focus on their studies. They needed constant assistance and guidance. This was evident on the following responses:

Everything is hard in distance learning. I find it hard to teach him. I told his teacher that distance learning is not only hard for them but also to us parents. Distance learning is not only their battle, but also ours. It is challenging for us parents to make them follow our instructions. They like their teachers. I will tell him, "Let's study". He would reply, "I don't like, I want teacher. You're not a teacher, you are mommy" (P4).

Aside from the above-mentioned aspects of distance learning that is hard for the parents, some have issues in terms of internet connectivity and use of technology as evident in these responses:

Technology is challenging for older person like me. You need patience to be able to teach it to him, and yet you, yourself is having a hard time learning it (P3).

Another challenge is the internet connectivity. There were times that we have slow connection and was not able to join the online classes (P4).

The responses of the participants in terms of technical aspects of distance learning were also experienced by the parents in the study of Magsambol (2020), Jaga (2020), Bordeos (2021) and Parmigiani et al. (2021). The studies cited that one of the problems in the implementation of distance learning was the access of technology and connectivity. Sedia (2020) accounted that the problem of SPED parents goes beyond the weak internet connection but on the sacrifices, they must make for their kids to not left behind.

Theme 2: The Pros and Cons of Distance Learning. This theme refers to the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of distance learning as experienced by the parents of the learners with educational needs. During this time that threat in health is prevalent, parents agreed to the implementation of distance learning. Most of them cited that the health and safety of their children are more important than anything else. Aside from that, another advantage of distance learning is that it is less expensive because students do not need to go to school to attend classes. The following responses strengthen that claim:

One of the advantages, less expenses and time. Before I used to spend the same time as him in the school. I left my household chores because I was with him in the school. In the distance learning, it is less expensive (P2).

The good thing about distance learning is that I can monitor him because he's at home. I'm not worried about his whereabouts or if he's pinching other kid in school. That is the advantage and less expenses (P3).

Distance learning safeguards the right to education of the learners with special needs. However, the downfall of distance learning includes loss of interest in studies, manifested laziness in doing the activities in the modules, and distraction at home and lack of focus. These learners learned differently from the regular learners that SPED teachers knew that probably the parents didn't. The following responses were shared by the participants:

My daughter does not have interest (P2).

One of the disadvantages is that I cannot teach the way he should be learn. I am not teaching him the right way. Another thing is time, he is not focus and cannot learn (3)

Sometimes she did not want to answer the modules, she's lazy. In the online class, she's not focus and can't seem to understand what teacher is saying (6).

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Above findings about the disadvantages of distance learning were similar to the finding of Jaga (2020) and Averett (2021) wherein difficulty in the understanding of materials, feeling lazy and distracted were cited as the cons. Davis (2021), Sadeghi (2019), Shade (2020) and Bhamani, et al (2020) explored the advantage of distance learning. However, in the study of Sadeghi (2019) the pros outweigh the cons in the implementation of distance learning. Some of the mentioned advantages, safety of these children, they were not at-risk of contracting the virus, not commuting, and being flexible in terms of time and place to study.

Theme 3: Need for Professional Teachers' Intervention. Special Education Teachers have specialized training specifically to handle learners with physical, mental, emotional, and other learning disabilities. They developed individual plans suited to the educational needs of the special learners. SPED teachers adapted their teaching styles with the strengths and weaknesses of the learners for a greater chance to succeed in school. Even regular teachers need training before they handle SPED classes. That's the battle cry of the participants. They may have known the behavior of their children, but the approaches and pedagogies seemed hard for them knowing that majority of the parents are high school graduates. Nevertheless, they have tried their best to assist and guide their children. The following participants responses on the need of having a SPED teacher:

The limitation is that we cannot apply the curriculum that DepED or teachers wants to implement. Even if I reached college level, I did not study how to handle special children, unlike the teachers who had education and professional training to do so. In terms of education, the teachers have the sole authority to educate them (P7).

Distance learning is hard for my son who has special needs. First, I'm not a SPED teacher, I have no idea how to teach (P12).

Everything is hard, teaching him is hard because I don't know what I'm going to teach. It is also hard to teach him. Unlike before, teachers are the one teaching. Now I appreciate their work as a teacher (P14).

With these responses about the need to have a professional teacher, Mongelli (2020) expressed that virtual learning is not for learners with special needs because the parents can't fill in the role of the professionals. To provide support to the parents, it may take it into consideration the recommendation in the study of Paco, et al (2021) to train parents and community. Parents being parents know the behavior of their children but does not the capacity to deliver teaching since they were not trained properly. They lack knowledge and training on how to assist their children (Garbe et al, 2020 and Thwala et al, 2015)). Assessment should be done as basis on the refresher training to properly implement distance learning (Alipasa et al., 2021) This can be done since implementation of limited face to face to SPED learners is not yet considered.

Theme 4: Implications on Learners' Behavior. This theme refers to the noticeable changes in the behavior of the learners with special educational needs as observed by their parents. They compared the behavior that learners manifested before pandemic up to these days. Noticeable changes in their behavior includes having frequent tantrums that brought about by not able to go out of the house, other changes the participants noticed being stubborn and not listening to them. According to them, they may have tantrums in school but when the teacher talks to them, they stopped. This was affirmed by the participants.

He has no routine at home and has nothing to do. That is why he's bored and has the tendency to have tantrums and meltdown (P3).

There were times that I want to give up because he did not want to study. He's throwing tantrums on us; he does not want to attend online class, or he crumpled his module. It is really hard to handle him (P4).

Other noticeable changes which were brought about by the distance learning are the frequent use of gadgets and increased in their screen time. Even after their online classes, they still used it. These participants expressed it:

His frequent use of gadgets (P15).

Her use of gadget becomes frequent. Maybe because she has nothing to do. She's looking for someone to talk to (P9).

Disadvantage includes, since he's at home he spends more time on his cellphone (P13).

Misirli and Ergulec (2021) also expressed that the increased in the learners' screen time in the use of gadgets, watching TV and using computers got parents worried in the distance learning. However, acquiring skills like turning on and off, saving files, using the internet and other digital skills have been beneficial. With regards to behavioral changes, Kim (2020) "74 % of the parents surveyed reported regressive behaviors while learning from home". Pachner and Aranyi (2021) also mentioned that parents having difficulty in adjusting to distance learning because the children manifested behavioral problems. Bhamani et al. (2020) concerned about the discipline learned by the students disintegrated in the distance learning that can be attributed to the behavioral changes that these learners manifested that parent noticed.

Theme 5: Competing Demand of Being a Parent and a Learning facilitator. As parent, you provide for the basic needs of your children. You provide them food, shelter, clothes, and education. With the outbreak of pandemic and the implementation of distance learning, added to the list of roles being placed to the parents is being a learning facilitator. With the closure of the schools and home schooling prevailed, the success of the learner's education lies in the hands of the parents who will serve as

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learning facilitators. At first, there is a power struggle between the child and the parent because learners with special needs requires conditioning and adaptation to the new set up. The following responses of the participants validated the power struggles they experienced at the beginning of distance learning:

At first, his only authority and only acknowledged the teacher. He's not listening to us, not following (P 4).

She's not following my instructions because she's used to a real teacher. At first it was hard, until she gets used to it (P10).

In quest of the parents to perform their roles as parent and learning facilitator, stress, frustration, sadness, and disappointment are some of the emotions they experienced. Some of the participants expressed this:

It is frustrating and sometimes you ask yourself where you fail as a mother. But you cannot blame yourself because you cannot divide your body. You cannot focus on him because you still have other children, other things to do (P3).

When you're at home, you are a mother and a teacher. It is hard on the part of the parents. It is stressful. You are already stress at home, stress as a teacher. You will going to teach your child who has tantrums, it is hard. I cannot teach him the same way the teacher taught him especially when it comes to technology (P3).

Parents who have children with special needs experienced emotional stress because taking care of them requires and demands time. Learners with special educational needs have short attention span and easily get bored. For parents, playing different roles for their children in the distance learning caused stress (Thwala et al., 2015; Whitley, 2020; Savoie and Dickson, 2020; Nelson, 2020; Garbe et al., 2020; O' Hagan & Kingdom, 2020) frustrations (Mongelli ,2020 & Nadworny 2020) and disappointments. They were stressed during pandemic because they need to balance work, being parents, full time caregivers and teachers to their children with special needs. The good part is, they were able to spend more time together and bond. For the learners to be conditioned and to continue studying, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation should be developed and given.

Theme 6: Learning Loss and Social Gaps. This theme explained the downside of the distance learning as experienced and observed by the parents of the learners with special needs. For the past two years that distance learning has been implemented, some of the learned behaviors, knowledge, and skills that they have learned in school had been disintegrated. Some of the basic skills like reading, writing, and counting seemed to be forgotten by the learners, The routine established was gone and social skills weakened.

She forgot how to count from 1-100 which she used to know when she was still in school (P1).

Actual and hands on activities like arts and crafts to develop their motor skills. Or the cooking that was used to be taught to them in SPED Center (Pt 3).

Aside from the motor skills, social skills are one of the most important skills that learners with special needs should developed to be able to become independent. However, because they were not able to interact with their classmates personally, it became disintegrated. The responses of the participants validated this:

The limitations of distance learning are having no social interaction with classmates, no school activities that they are used to have. No therapy sessions and unable to go out. I have to condition her before she will do the activities in the module (P6).

There's no socialization. The established routine disintegrates. Her routine was waking up early, preparation to go to school. Her study time was gone, she will study when she's in the mood (P11).

Quality education can be measured by the learning loss experienced in the distance learning. Learning loss means that learners' academic ability and skills that were taught during face-to-face classes were loss. Learning loss was also experienced when the knowledge and skills that should be shared to the learners can no longer happen due limitations of distance learning (Safira & Ifadah,2021). Evidently from the responses of the participants, learning loss occurred and some of the functional skills (life skills, social skills and community-based skills) were not taught effectively under the distance learning (Padillo et al, 2021).

2. How do participants cope with the issues and challenges of having children with special educational needs in distance learning?

Theme 7: Strong Parental Involvement and Family Support System. The theme refers to the active participation and commitment of parents when it comes to the schooling of his/her children. It is said that the amount of parental involvement determines the achievement of the students. Family support on the other hand refers to the assistance provided by immediate family for the achievement set for the child/children. Family plays an important role in the success of the implementation of distance learning. Parents and other family members assist the child with specials needs in their studies as expressed by the participants:

My time is divided to earn a living and at the same time focus on the needs of my special child. When you tell him to write, he won't do it right away. I should be in his side. I spend a lot of time in my child with special need (P 4).

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With regards to technology, I ask for help with my other children. I left him with his siblings. They are the one helping him in his studies when I am not around (P3).

Learners with special needs must have the family's full support and attention. To be successful in their studies in this time of pandemic, parent's reinforcement, and guidance are needed and should be strengthened (Diana et al, 2021, Burdette & Greer, 2014, Young & Donovan, 2020). Increased in the time spend with family and strengthen family bonding were some of the good things which came out of distance learning (Bhamani et al., 2020).

Theme 8: Positive Mindset, Emotional Stability and Strong Faith. This theme represents the coping mechanism of the parents in dealing with the hardship they have experienced in distance learning. They kept a positive mind; they were hopeful that pandemic will be over soon, and things will be back to normal. Their children will be able to enjoy the joy of having a teacher. Some of them even mentioned their aspirations and dreams for their children. They will be supporting their children's education even if they must study all throughout their lives. They also showed strong personality and faith in God which indicates that no matter how hard the situation may be, they will be strong, and they will keep on fighting for the future of their children. The following responses showed their strong faith to God:

It may seem hopeless, but I am still hopeful, I have God to hold on to. I will not lose hope for my child (P2).

Sometimes, I think about her future when we're gone. I pray that God will give me long life to be with her. Our situation is hard, but it is even harder to other parents. I feel that I am still blessed (P2).

I just pray and hold on to my faith. I have to be strong until they finish their studies (P5).

Parents showed positive mindset and resiliency in managing the challenges brought by pandemic in the education of their children. They may have experienced hardship, but they were able to bounce back. The theoretical framework, Resiliency Theory best described this theme (Li,2021 & Moore, 2021). Being optimistic is one good thing that emerged out of the experience of the parents despite the challenges they faced in distance learning (Alipasa et al., 2021 & Moran & Kulkarni, 2018).

Theme 9: Teachers' Commitment and Compassion. There must have been role shift in the pandemic wherein the parents were the one teaching their children at home. This cannot be done without the help, guidance, and support of the SPED teachers. Participants recognized and acknowledged the commitment and compassion of the teachers as their education partners in this pandemic. They appreciated the time spend by the teachers in communicating with them, in delivering the learning materials and just being there when they need them. This was expressed by the participants.

When it comes to modules, sir delivered it to us (P 1).

During their online class, the teachers discussed what they need to do. (P 1).

Through constant encouragement...continuously assisting and guiding us.. They are always there for us (P10).

SPED teachers were challenged by the implementation of distance learning. Nevertheless, these challenges in distance learning have turned into opportunities. They were given opportunities to work with the parents in delivering education while at home. Most important among the opportunities is the connection established by the teachers with the parents. (Glessner et al, 2020 & Torquero, 2021). Averett (2021) emphasized that among the positive experiences of the parents was the teacher going an extra mile for their students.

Essence. The outbreak of pandemic changed the course of our lives. One of the predominant changes was felt in the system of education. Paradigm shift in education was mostly experienced by the parents. It was evident in the shared collective accounts of the selected parents of the learners with special needs in the Pulo National High School-SPED Center. In the news, we often heard the voices of the parents having a hard time in the distance learning. More struggles were uncovered like difficulties with motivating their children to be engaged in distance learning, struggling in balancing their responsibilities, providing the needs of their special children, implications of distance learning to social and behavior of the learners and the needs of the children were not addressed. The unseen pictures of the experiences the parents whose children have special needs brought clear pictures of their real life behind those smiles and accommodating faces. The "unseen pictures" just like a camera film when developed was the coping mechanisms of the parents in dealing with the challenges brought about by the distance learning amidst pandemic. They may experience hardship, but they can win the battle by being optimistic, by showing that they can surpass anything for the hopes and dreams they have for their children, the small accomplishment for us parents with regular learners but big triumphs for them, their leap of faith, the support of family members and the teachers' passion and compassion to bring quality education. These what keep the parents going, moving, and fighting for the future of their children. What struck to the researcher was the unconditional love and understanding of these parents for their children. Raising them was difficult enough, what's make it harder is to think about their children's future, what lies ahead of them, what future holds for them. For the parents, education is the answer. No matter how hard distance education is for both, education will continue.

CONCLUSION

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The parents of learners with special educational needs in the implementation of distance learning experience challenges that include, the pros and cons of distance learning, the need for professional teachers' intervention, implications on learners' behavior, competing demands of being a parent and a learning facilitator and learning loss and social gaps. To be able to cope with their experiences for having children with special needs in distance learning, parents must have strong parental involvement and family support system, positive mindset, emotional stability, and strong faith as well as teachers who possessed commitment and compassion. The findings implied that experiences in distance learning of the parents of the learners with educational needs were truly challenging which entails the difficulties and opportunities of distance learning, the need to have professional experts, social and behavioral implications of distance learning to their children, different roles they played in the education of their children and the trouble of thought of the development of the students. Given the challenges that parents experienced in distance learning, the chance of overcoming the struggles is possible through the help and support of the family members, and teachers, by being optimistic, strong, and by having a faith to God.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings and conclusion of this study, the researcher elicited the following recommendations for expected actions and future direction. Parents of learners with special educational needs should not focus on the negative side of distance learning. They should bear in mind that it is for the safety of their children that is considered one of the vulnerable groups in virus. Also, parents who observed behavioral changes in their children should examine the possible causes of that behavior. They should examine their parental practices that may be contribute to those changes. Seeking professional assistance is recommended if they cannot handle anymore the observed behavioral changes of their children. For the SPED Center, they should conduct training and seminars for the parents to help them on how to deal with the challenges their experiences. They should capacitate the parents since they are their educational partners. Topics of the training/seminars may include Parenting Children with Special Needs and Disabilities in the New Normal, Behavioral Management of Children with Special Needs, Bridging the Learning Gaps and Loss of the Learners in the Distance Learning and other related topics. SPED Center should conduct individual assessments on the special needs of the learners and provide feedback to the parents. The conduct of quarterly one on one meeting with the parents should be done to appease their minds that their children are improving even the changes may appear unnoticeable. SPED Center should solicit the help of the Local Government Unit (LGU) on the possible partnership for the employment and other opportunities for the LSEs. For the SPED Coordinator and its School Parent Teacher Association (SPTA) President and officers should initiate the creation of support group for all the parents. By doing this, they can have an avenue where they can share their experiences and will feel that they are not alone in this battle. SPED teachers on the other hand, should conduct frequent online classes to condition the LSEs in preparation for the possibility of opening of the SPED Center for face-to-face classes since they require conditioning and have problem with adaptation. Also, they should prepare individualized learning plan specific to address the educational needs of the learners. SPED Teachers may initiate activities involving family members to strengthen their bond and ties. Activities like "SPEDlympics", SPED Family Day, Family Talent Shows, Familialympics and others that can be done virtually or face to face depends on the AITF guidelines. The Department of Education (DepEd) should allot more budget for the other services (speech-language services, psychological services, occupational and physical therapy and others) that these LSEs should be receiving. DepEd should hire more SPED teachers and experts like speech therapists and occupational therapists for the improvement of the services they provided. Lastly, Future researchers should conduct another study to further explore challenging life experiences of the parents utilizing other research methods or variables.

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