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A Study of Learning Assessment of Personal Hygiene Skills of Mentally Retarded Individuals in Drop-In Day Care Services

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Abstract: Aim: The aim of the study was to assess the success and efficiency of the training practices for acquisition of basic personal hygiene skills and behavior of hand washing and soiling in a relatively heterogeneous group of individuals receiving care from a drop-in day care/special education service. We also analyzed etiologies of the causes of discrepancies in learning behavior implying a need for differentiation of intellectually disabled individuals who are candidates for continuous long-term institutional medical care from those who can be integrated into the community through special education. Materials and Methods: The study included 30 participants with mental retardation receiving care and special education who were classified within the teachable and trainable limit. A competency-based training was given to the study participants and a checklist based on the learning guide assessing hand washing and soiling skills and behavior acquirement was administered before and after the training. Results: No significant difference was observed in individuals trained for self-hygiene skills (assessed as hand washing and soiling skills) and behavior when a step-ordered checklist was compared pre- and post-training to some independent variables related to the individual other than educational status of the family member supplying primary care to the retarded individual, receipt of additional institutional or personal support from somewhere other than the observed day care/special education center, and prior receipt of training within the last three months. Conclusions: To establish a unitary inclusive system of education for social integration of the handicapped, a single law may be adopted obligating school districts to provide an effective education for each and every student - not a 'one-size for all' approach, but a nuanced recognition that students are more alike than different.

Key Words: Learning disabled, basic personal hygiene skills, special education, mental retardation, drop-in day care, learning assessment

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