

Exploration of Experiences in Relationships between Mother of Child with Special Need and Teacher, and Their Potential Implications: the Viewpoint of Mother

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of the mother-teacher relationship in the case of children with special needs, and to analyze the significance of this experience for the mother's position. For this, a method of searching for a narrative appropriate for exploring human experience was applied. It analyzed the conversational record between mother and teacher of children with special needs, the interview data with the participating mothers, and other documentary data related to education. The mother-teacher relationship in children with special needs was indicated to be the relationship of having conversation and practicing, the relationship of sympathizing and trusting, and the relationship of being helpful mutually. The significance of this relationship for the mother was analyzed as having self-confidence as a rearer, growing as a parent, and broadening the horizon of recognition with 'social care'. It was discussed that the educational significance of the mother-teacher relationship has for a mother, and institutional supplementation for a better mother-teacher relationship.

Keywords: mother-teacher relationship in children with special needs, narrative inquiry

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Purpose of Study

Lately, the focus of the special education paradigm has evolved from children to family. A series of new laws on special education over the last 2 decades has had a dramatic impact on relationships between special children's family and school (Rosenbaum, 2004). Now, it is widely accepted that special children's parents are reasonably considered as partners having crucial effects on education for their children, rather than a passive receiver relying upon helps and instructions given by special education professionals. Recent studies and practices in special education have focused more on the implementation of family-based service to prepare for special children and their families (Dempsey & Keen, 2008). Indeed, the family-based philosophy in special education has been widely advocated by a broad range of relevant professionals like healthcare specialists (Svavarsdottir, 2006), therapeutic service specialists (Esdaile & Olson, 2004), early intervention specialists (Australian Early Intervention Association, 1998), preschool education specialists (Keyser, 2007), special education specialists (Murray & Mandell, 2006) and general education specialists (Stormshak, Dishion, Light, & Yasui, 2005).

It is reported that a special education program has the greatest effects when special children's families participate positively in it (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2006). Based on these findings as listed above, there have been some publications of domestic studies on special education programs involving the participation of families. For instance, it has been reported that positive behavioral support based on cooperation between home and school is effective in motivating autistic infants to behave favorably with less problematic behaviors, and also has generalization effects on the change of behaviors even without the application of intervention (Lee & Cho, 2008), or positive behavioral supports involving the participation of the family are effective in reducing problematic behaviors of autistic infants during the hours of daily routine in the evening at home (Mun & Park, 2008).

In the relationships between special children's family and specialist, it is most important that they agree with each other, respect each other, trust each other and open their mind to each other when preparing an educational plan for a special children (Keen, 2007). According to a qualitative study on relationships between

special children's parents and school from the viewpoint of parents (Nowell & Salem, 2007), it is found that decision-making authority is a key to relationships between parents and school. In addition, the above qualitative study also reports that parents' views on intervention consented by parents have significant effects upon whether they consider their relationships with school better or worse after intervention than before.

How may the relationships between special children's family and specialist have effects on the family? It is reported that families relying on family-centered intervention services felt less stress from nurturing special children and felt more capable as rearers than those not relying on such services (Keen et al., 2008). Also, it is reported that the extent of cooperation between parents and specialist is strongly associated with parents' perception of a sense of self-efficacy (Reich, Bickman & Heflinger, 2004).

Domestic studies on relationships between special children's parents and teacher (school or specialist) fall into broadly into two mainstreams, i.e. comprehensive studies on family support and studies focusing on relationships between parents and teacher. Existing studies on family support have focused on fact-finding study, demand study and teachers' perception about family support services, such as a fact-finding study on customized family support services provided by preschool education for the handicapped and by teachers working for childcare-related organizations (Park, 2007), a study on parents' needs for a family support program to enhance the functions of special children's family (Kang, 2006), a study on special preschool educators' perception about family support program for infants with retarded development (Oh, 2005), a study on possible ways to support families with handicapped infants or children (Lee & Kim, 2001), and a study on the quality of life in families with children with retarded development and their needs for social supports (Lee, 2003).

Studies on the relationships between parents and teachers fall broadly into studies on parent-teacher communications and fact-finding studies on parent-teacher cooperation. Bang and Hwang (2008) compared perceptions about the frequency of communications, satisfaction and psychological conditions between disability-spec-

ialized preschool teachers and mothers of children with special needs. Kang (2004) surveyed parent-related job stress which disability-specialized preschool teachers may feel. And Sohn (2003) performed a fact-finding study on teachers' cooperation with parents when preparing a special education plan for their children with special needs. Moreover, a study focused upon an actual profile of a customized education program operated by special preschool educational organizations in order to survey their actual cooperation with parents and propose remedial solutions (Cho et al., 2005).

In view of the findings from these domestic studies, it is summed up that the Korean special education world still has insufficient perception or content with regard to support for families with special children, and also shows low satisfaction and negative psychological conditions in the relationships of parents and teachers. Most of these studies adopt a questionnaire survey to examine an actual profile, needs, perception, satisfaction and frequency to help identify the overall context of family support or have a partial understanding about actual profile and certain aspect of relationships between parents and teachers. But there are very few studies that conduct further examination into the relationships between a mother of a child with special needs and a teacher on a long-term basis, while understanding the quality of the relationships and exploring their implications.

Thus, this study focused upon perse relationships between a mother of a child with special need and a teacher so as to understand the quality of the relationships and explore their implications. The relationship was explored qualitatively by analyzing the conversational record that was shared in writing between the mother and the teacher in children with special needs through COR (Children Observation Record). Interpersonal relationships are variable and complex in nature. In order to give more solid and synthetic comprehension of those relationships, this study used narrative inquiry. As the significance and implications of family in the education of special children and their quality of life become spotlighted more than ever, it is expected that this study will contribute to extend and deepen supports for families with special children by seeking to further understand the quality of relationships between a mother of a child with special need and teacher and explore the potential implications of such relationships. In addition, it is expected that focusing on personal

relationships between parents and teacher in the foreground, not in the background, to explore implications of relationships will be meaningful in educational aspects.

Thus, this study set the following two questions:

1. How is the relationship between a mother of a child with special need and the child's teacher?
2. And what may be the educational implications of such relationship from the viewpoint of the mother?

Methodology

Narrative Inquiry

This study aims to reveal experiences in relationships between special children's parents and teacher and explore the potential implications of those relationships for parents. To meet the goals, this study adopted a narrative inquiry method appropriate for exploring human experiences. According to Clandinin & Connelly (2000), an experience forms with narrative and the narrative inquiry aims to understand experiences and attach significance to the experiences.

While a mother who rears her child with special need and a teacher who instructs and cares for the child at kindergarten share written feedbacks - talking, reading listening and talking again - with each other, they construct and reconstruct their own experiences related to their special children and thereby come to form certain implications and knowledge. This study focuses upon revealing relationships between parents of children with special needs and teacher in the course of their conversation, and also exploring the potential implications of those relationships for parents.

Participants

This study took participants according to the purposive sampling method, which refers to intentional selection of special desired cases as subjects of study. The cases are useful to provide many required data for certain desired phenomenon, so this study selected such sampling method which may give an insight into phenomena (Kim, 2006).

The participants in this study were a teacher who has been giving integrated

instruction to children with special needs from the days when this researcher worked as head of kindergarten up to now, as well as mothers of three special children being taught by the teacher. Indeed, the researcher was acquainted with the teacher for a long time, and could hear from a new head of kindergarten that she keeps forming reliable relationships with parents of children with special needs. For privacy, this study used aliases for the actual names of the participants.

Detailed data on the organization and participants adopted in this study can be outlined as follows:

Table 1. *Profile of Organization*

Classification	Description
Type	Inclusive facilities for special children(inclusive child-care facilities)
Location	Seoul
Total No. of kindergarten children	Normal children: 85, Special children: 15
Total No. of participant group members (age: 4)	20 normal children + 3 special children
Initial year of integrated education	2001
Form of classwork	Large group, small group, individual
Total No. of teachers for participant group (age: 4)	1 general teacher + 1 special teacher
How to attend kindergarten	Attending individually
Education program	General education plan is made in consultation between general teacher and special one, but modified education plan for special children is made by special teacher
Hours of education	Normal children: 7:30 AM to 7:30 PM / special children: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM (After school, special children may stay at the kindergarten, or choose to go to the 2nd service agency.)

Table 2. *Information on Parents Participating in Study*

Name	Sex of children	Age of children	Type of disability	No. of children	Age of children at entrance	Age of mother
Gitae's mother	Male	5	Mental retardation	2	5	33
Icheol' mother	Male	5	Developmental disorder	2	5	35
Heewon's mother	Female	6	Developmental disorder	2	5	36

Table 3. *Information on Teacher Participating in Study*

Name	Sex	Age	Major & qualification	Integrated education career for special children	Educational career
Special teacher of Haneul Class	F	30	Qualification for special education / special teacher	5 years	5 years

Data Collection

This study is based on records of conversations between a mother of a child with special need and a teacher in terms of special children's daily life. The records were obtained with the consent of the head and teacher of kindergarten for research. The records contained secondhand feedbacks from teachers and mothers: teachers wrote each special child's daily life episodes at kindergarten and their opinions along with attachment of related photographs, while the mothers read teachers' feedbacks and then wrote their ideas back to the teachers. This routine is performed on a daily basis. The kindergarten adopted in this study calls the records "Child Observation Record (COR)." Parent-teacher feedback data adopted in this study were collected from the records dating from March to Oct. 2008. The data total 112 pages (font size: 10) per child in format of A4. Thus, the feedback data on 3 children examined herein total 336 pages in the same format.

The parents participating in this study were asked to join an interview on Nov. 5, 2008. Since this was a time just before finishing the annual educational program, this

study was conducted in semi-structured form, focusing primarily on some questions such as how special children changed while attending kindergarten for a year, how they had relationships with teachers during a year, how mothers felt when looking at their changing children, and what are the matters kindergarten should care more about to prepare for a follow-up year. The interviewer was asked to have a personal interview with each mother for about 20 minutes. The interview began with usual daily topics and developed in non-structured form on the basis of basic questions. All the contents of the oral interview were recorded and transcribed. Other data included 1st semester's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) Plan, 2nd semester's IEP Plan and documents on feedbacks shared between teachers and parents in order to plan materials and details of IEP for participant children.

In this study, data were collected from 3 major sources such as "COR" documents (containing written conversations between parents and teacher), records of interviews between researcher and parents, and other educational documents. These sources were adopted for data collection in order to collect data with a combination of various different means and thereby improve reliability of data through triangulation for data collection.

COR, which is mentioned here, includes teacher-parent conversation every time about children without stopping at simple observation record on children. Its conversation was analyzed. Thus, it is judged to be in line with the research objective that tries to analyze the relationship between parent and teacher.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

For data analysis, all field texts collected from the interviews were re-designed into research texts with a mind to temporality, sociality and context, which are 3-dimensional spaces of narrative inquiry as developed by Connelly and Clandinnin (2000). This study sought to find certain narrative patterns, outline, tension and theme as revealed by repetitive reading of field texts.

By repeatedly reading field texts, the researcher identified and summarized cyclic or common words or relationships shown in those texts. As a result, this study could focus on aspects and characteristics of relationships between parents and teachers.

And it went through reconstructing field texts into research texts by repeatedly reading the former on the basis of parent-teacher relationships. In this way, relationships between the handicapped child's parents and the teacher became understandably revealed, so that this study could interpret potential educational implications of those relationships for parents.

The researcher sought to obtain justification for this study by sharing research texts with participants (Lincon & Guba, 1985). This process went on in such a way that I, the researcher, retold their statements. In other words, it amounts to another dialogue created from virtual conversation between the researcher's retelling voice and the participants' voices.

Results

Relationships between a Mother of a Child with Special Need and Teacher

Relationship of Conversation and Practice. The mother of a special child talks with the teacher of the child day by day. By sharing daily feedbacks on COR, they communicate with each other in writing or in speaking while the mother brings her child and takes her child back home. This conversation doesn't end simply with itself, but leads to practice. Then, it is applied to the teacher's plan and execution of daily routine instruction or educational activities for the special children, and ultimately has effects on the mother's care for her child at home. That is, it usually involves a relationship of educational partnership between the mother of a child with special need and the teacher in educating the special children. The following examples well demonstrate a relationship of conversation and practice between the mother of a child with special need and teacher with regard to the presentation of "weekend story."

Please help Gitae practice the presentation of his weekend story with the family on Monday morning. Before bringing him to our kindergarten, you'd better talk about a weekend topic with him once so he can remember it (commented by Gitae's teacher; Apr. 14, 2008). I helped Gitae practice telling you that he went to play at Cheong-gyecheon Stream along with me, his little brother and (maternal) aunt and saw ducks swimming in the stream. I think he has to begin by practicing telling a simple thing (commented by Gitae's mother; Apr. 16, 2008). In this session of presentation on

weekend story, it is Gitae's turn to finally tell something. When I asked him a question about what he did at the weekend, he just replied, "Cheonggyecheon Stream." So I said, "You went to Cheonggyecheon Stream" and asked him "What did you see there?" Then, he just answered "ducks." I asked him again what the ducks did there, and he answered, "In water." So I told him that he went to Cheonggyecheon Stream and saw ducks playing in the water there. Then, he replied, "Yes." (commented by teacher in activity report; Apr. 21, 2008). It's worthwhile to practice telling a weekend story. He still tells something one word at a time even after practice, but I believe one day he will tell something in a sentence, if he doesn't give up repeating this practice (commented by teacher; Apr. 21, 2008). After a clinical session ended on Saturday, I took a walk with him along the Anyangcheon Stream from Omokgyo Bridge to Gocheok Bridge. We had lunch together and also enjoyed sliding over a slippery mound for inline skating in the vicinity of Gocheok Bridge, as if playing on a playground slide. Gitae really enjoyed climbing up barefoot, riding and sliding down on the mound, so I helped him practice telling this experience as this weekend topic. And I wonder how and what he will tell you. "He played at sliding on a mound around Anyangcheon Stream"(commented by Gitae's mother; Feb. 15, 2008). In the session of presentation of the weekend story, Gitae stepped forward to tell his story and his classmates asked what he did last weekend. So Gitae first replied, "Gimbap." I asked him again what he did at the weekend, and he answered, "I slid around Anyangcheon Stream." So I asked him another question about who joined him to play. Then, he said, "with Gicheol and mother." I asked him, "And your father?" Then, he replied to me, "No, he didn't." (commented by teacher in activity report dated May 19, 2008) Now, he seems to be a little used to telling his weekend story to his teacher. Please help him to use a little more complicated expressions to tell where and what he did with whom (commented by Gitae's teacher; May 19, 2008). He answers my question well about what he practiced at home, but he still feels a little awkward with other questions. However, he is becoming gradually better at Presentation and reply to questions (commented by Gitae's teacher; June 2, 2008). When I asked Gitae what he would tell for his weekend story, he answered that he would tell about riding a bike at a park on the weekend. We went to Yeoeuido Park, and I got rental bikes

there and enjoyed riding bikes with Gitae and Gicheol from there to the Hangang Riverside Park (commented by Gitae's mother; June 4, 2008).

These reports illustrate that parent-teacher conversations and practices concerning "weekend story" became a critical motivation for Gitae to get better telling attitudes and skills than before. The reason why they could share those feedbacks and do practice is possibly that the teacher accepted the parents as educational partners and shared the focus of interests with them, while the parents also tried to share the focus of interests with the teacher and show a relationship of cooperation with the teacher.

The following examples demonstrate that the focus of the teacher's interests is not consistent with that of the parents', but they came to meet partner's focus of interests by sharing a chain of feedbacks with each other, ending up with a relationship of conversation and practice. Here, a teacher focused upon peer-to-peer interests and sociality of a special child(girl), whereas the mother of the child focused upon her speaking and cognitive development. Despite such an inconsistency, they could bridge the gap by talking with each other on and on in parallel with their efforts and practice to share focus of interests with each other, ending up with the same orientations toward growth and development of child.

... Today, when playing at an indoor playground, Hiyeon didn't keep to herself, but was still with her friends. Though other friends drew near to her, she didn't avoid them and joined them at play spontaneously (commented by Hiyeon's teacher; June 2, 2008). Hiyeon seems to take a little longer time to do classwork or learn something. When taking her seat, she doesn't get ready for classwork but waits a few minutes before it. Once ready, she seems to have a proper attitude. I heard that Hiyeon is getting a better ability to identify colors (red, green, yellow, etc), things and verbs anyhow. So please instruct her to identify them on a daily basis (commented by Hiyeon's mother; June 2, 2008). Hiyeon's mother only shows an interest in her daughter's speaking (June 30, 2008) even in response to the teacher's advice that she should report and try actual effective cases of measure for Hiyeon's frustration (June 30, 2008).

Such a slight gap in the focus of interests between them becomes filled inch by

inch through a chain of feedbacks, since Hiyeon's teacher tries sharing her educational interests with Hiyeon's mother, and the mother tries to share interests with the teacher and keeps talking about educational matters with the teacher. First, the teacher tries sharing educational interests with the mother. Then, the mother sympathizes with the teacher's ideas, so that they keep talking with each other.

When Hiyeon is in good shape and humor, I keep talking about something beside her and she habitually speaks a little more. I try to encourage her to say anything in the fullest possible degree, although I'm not a speech therapist (commented by Hiyeon's teacher; Sept. 8, 2008). These days, she feels in a good mood. And she is relatively good at joining in classwork and playtime anyhow. She tends gradually to say something and often makes even abrupt meaningless sounds loudly as if to practice abdominal breathing. I guess that she got such a habit possibly due to her ongoing practice of speaking. Please keep instructing her in speaking (commented by Hiyeon's mother; Sept. 8, 2008). Today, Hiyeon said something with a similar pronunciation to her mother's even twice at an indoor playground. Even with simple and meaningless utterances, she overreacts to each of my expressions and pays attention to me, saying "Mom" more frequently to me. I believe that even her simple utterance will help her to have a better command of speaking, if she keeps trying to do it (commented by Hiyeon's teacher; Sept. 19, 2008). She also utters something a little at home, but most of what she speaks is meaningless utterance. But I believe she'll be better making sense when she speaks, if she keeps learning it. I'm afraid she'll be unable to do a presentation ... May my daughter put on a hat before the presentation? (commented by mother; Sept. 19, 2008).

Based on the utterance of Hiyeon, her teacher and parents share their educational interests and feedbacks with each other, trying to practice customized instructions for her. As a result, her mother comes to share her teacher's educational interests in following instructions or acquiring the basic habits of life. The above examples illustrate that both teacher and mother share their educational interests with each other, creating a relationship of conversation and practice.

... In the past, Hiyeon could seldom find the socks she took off or other things she had, but now she can find her stuff she put somewhere - even after a while. I'm

thankful and feel rewarded for even any gradual development she shows (commented by Hiyeon's teacher; Sept. 17, 2008). In daily life, she shows considerable development. But it is very unfortunate that her work doesn't yet keep up with her knowledge ... Please instruct her in doing simple activities for herself (commented by Hiyeon's mother; Sept. 17, 2008). Hiyeon gets very interested in a variety of sports instrument. Though she doesn't know proper ways to play, I think it's necessary to instruct her in play because of her great interest in it (commented by Hiyeon's teacher; Sept. 29, 2008). I believe she'll be gradually better at it, if she is instructed in good time, but it is unfortunate that she doesn't have much time for it. Undoubtedly, Hiyeon will develop so much if we wait for her to do so, but ... (commented by mother; Sept. 29, 2008).

The above examples illustrate how important it may be for parents and teacher to share educational interests with each other, so that they can make and develop a relationship of educational communication and practice with each other.

Relationship of Sympathy and Trust. A chain of feedbacks between teacher and parents and their practices of ideas and opinions shared with each other can create a relationship of sympathy and trust between them. In this relationship as illustrated in the examples below, parents and a teacher - the teacher is a mother of two children - share a sympathy with each other in the sense that when a teacher deals with a child, he or she is not just one of many children she cares for, but is an absolutely and indispensably precious kid for his or her parents. Based on such sympathy, they make a relationship of trust with each other.

I understand you may well worry about Icheol's unbalanced nutrition. I'm also very concerned about him. ... As a part of the meal menu, you'd better prepare the kind of long-lasting side dishes he likes, such as dry laver (commented by Icheol's teacher; Apr. 3, 2008). So I've just begun to administer a dose of nutritious herbal medicines to him since a few days ago. It possibly works! He began to have meals ... Now I hope you'll have fewer difficulties with his eating habit. I'll give some dry laver to you (commented by Icheol's mother; Apr. 3, 2008). I don't know why he felt bad in the afternoon today; he ate all his lunch fully at noon. He lay down quietly during building play for a length of time, possibly because he felt a little tired. I also

want to be quickly aware of why he felt bad (commented by Icheol's teacher; Apr. 21, 2008). Even as Icheol's mother, I sometimes don't know yet why he weeps. I feel so happy, if he says something he wants ... I believe he'll make it, sooner or later (commented by Icheol's mother; Apr. 21, 2008).

Icheol's mother and teacher share worries over his problem with skipping meals and sympathize with each other in their depressed and pathetic sentiment at a loss for why he feels bad, and their collaboration in finding any solution for his meal problem evolves into a relationship of trust to share hopes for his potential improvement in the future, not just right now. Such a relationship of trust is a foundation of educational relationships, which is demonstrated by the relationships of Icheol's teacher with his parents as well as other special children's parents in her charge in various aspects.

Icheol's mother said that she originally expected to read daily COR on him only on a single day, but it was good for her to see his daily routine in comments Icheol's teacher wrote with photographs everyday. She also said that she was a little uneasy about Icheol because she was not allowed to look into his daily routine at kindergarten, but the daily COR helped so much to relieve her worries. And she expressed significant satisfaction with Icheol's attendance at H Kindergarten as desired, as well as his liking for the kindergarten and his good adaptation (commented by Icheol's teacher in the home visit counseling daybook; Mar. 25, 2008). Gitae is the only classmate who can speak well in our integrated class. He usually gives some questions to Icheol but doesn't have much to say to Icheol. So I'm trying to make more settings for Gitae to speak to Icheol. Today, I gave some questions to Gitae and told something to him as well (commented by Icheol's teacher; Mar. 14, 2008). Whenever I read the daily COR, I make up my mind once again to treat Gitae better. I know you try your best for my son. Thank you! (commented by Gitae's mother; Mar. 14, 2008). Hiyeon often shows reactions to her classmates, and some of them who know how to please her begin to play a trick on her or draw near to her and speak knowingly to her (commented by Hiyeon's teacher in daily COR; May 13, 2008). I appreciate that Hiyeon's classmates get interested in her and play together with her. I'm also happy with that - it's a better development for Hiyeon than anything else. I really owe such a change to your help. Thank you. I appreciate your smile and efforts to care for her

despite your heavy workload. If my daughter can sometime say anything that makes sense, I'll ask her to tell you, "Thank you, ma'am." (commented by Hiyeon's mother in daily COR; May 13, 2008).

In some aspects, the parents of special children may well be anxious and nervous about whether they can adapt well to the settings of kindergarten, but the above examples demonstrate that parents and teacher create a relationship of trust with each other owing to peace of mind based on daily feedbacks and a sense of trust between them. In addition, the above sample comments show that parents come to give more thanks and trust to the teacher by feeling sympathy toward a small but meaningful development of the child with a sense of worth. This relationship of trust is not realized just in a day, but is a long-term ongoing relationship based on a large volume of daily feedbacks, collaborative practices and sympathy between parents and teacher. Such a deep relationship becomes a crucial foundation for parents to bear and overcome difficulties in educating their special children.

Relationship of Encouragement. A relationship of sympathy and trust, where a mother of a child with special need and teacher share feedbacks and collaborate with each other in practices, evolves into a relationship of encouragement for each other. It is really demanding to educate special children all together. That is why a relationship of encouragement is precious in energizing such an arduous process. Let's take a look at this relationship of encouragement where parents and teacher share many aspects of their special children who develop at a very slow pace like fingernails, and keep finding a strand of hope by encouraging each other.

Today, Hiyeon wanted to join our activity in a hurry, because it involved a new media. When I gave a magic pen to her, she wanted to do the activity, though she was not willing to do so for herself at first. She shows less behaviors of eating something odd now than at the beginning of this semester. She seems to take a little longer to adapt to here (commented by Hiyeon's teacher; Apr. 18, 2008). I feel troubled but happy to see Hiyeon changing and developing even at a slow pace like a snail but inch by inch. Please watch her changes, ma'am. I guess her gradual attempt to draw a picture is a great development. I'll keep guiding her at home as well (commented by Hiyeon's mother; Apr. 18, 2008). Gitae still has no playmate. I give him candies and

prepare to employ normal classmates as helper for him. Today, Gyeongjin played with Gitae in a pair for the first time, and I rewarded them with candies. And he showed a bit of change in his behaviors as other classmates saw the reward (commented by Gitae's teacher; Mar. 18, 2008). I've always imagined that Gitae would play with his classmates in fun. But I believe my dream will sometime surely come true, because you make such great efforts for him. I really thank you! (commented by Gitae's mother; Mar. 18, 2008). I've never seen before that Icheol gave such a loud laugh and played even with his classmates. Possibly, he seemed to think a classmate would piggyback him. Meantime, I hope he'll get more interested gradually in his classmates (commented by Icheol's teacher; May 30, 2008). I'm happy to see that Icheol enjoys playing with his classmates, too. I really made a long and difficult decision to put him in your kindergarten. Now I think it's OK (commented by Icheol's mother; May 30, 2008).

Shared expectations and delight while seeing a child develop even very slowly but inch by inch become a real encouragement for others to educate him. Moreover, the above comments show that the mother's dreams for her handicapped child did not yet come true, but she has a firm hope to see the future where her dream will come true through her vision of belief in the teacher's efforts for the child. Such a shared hope becomes an encouragement for both parents and teacher.

Potential Implications of Mother-Teacher Relationships for Mother

As described above, this study addressed how the special children's parents and teacher may have relationships with each other in nurturing him. As a result, it was found that they have a relationship of conversation and practice, a relationship of sympathy and trust, and a relationship of encouragement with each other. Then, what implications do such relationships between special children's parents and teacher have for parents? As the paradigm of special education orients from special children toward their family, it is possibly more significant to focus on a mother of a child with special need, since something meaningful to parents will enhance the functions of special children's family and also contribute ultimately to the happiness of special children and their family.

Self-confidence in the Capacity of Rearer. As parents and teacher come to have a relationship of sympathy and trust with each other by sharing conversation and practices, parents tend to participate more positively in educating their child and have influence on any critical decision-making process involving the educational orientation of their child. While going through these courses, the parents gain confidence in their capacity as rearer. While caring for a special child with a handicap, they sometimes face matters of concern or embarrassing events, but they become generous enough to placidly accept those matters so that their generous mindset builds up and evolves into a sense of self-confidence.

... I had Hiyeon take off her hat because of the warm air in the afternoon. We as adults feel trouble about her behavior and sometimes think of what we don't like to see from her. But her classmates accept her behavior in a casual manner (commented by Hiyeon's teacher; Sept. 16, 2008). Hiyeon's classmates seem to be familiar with her forelock haircut because they often saw her with such a haircut from her. ^_^ ... (commented by Hiyeon's mother; Sept. 16, 2008). In this weekend story, Gitae's story means that you and he enjoyed playing with a water balloon together, hit it on your butt and he took off all his wet clothes, doesn't it? Or he told his imaginative weekend story for fun in response to my question, right? I guessed the latter (commented by Gitae's teacher; July 7, 2008). Bingo! You got it! The water balloon was made by me while he bathed, and he went out to throw it away on the 1st floor. Hmm ... His lie (?) grows day by day ^ ^; (commented by Gitae's mother; July 7, 2008).

Even in the somewhat embarrassing incident of Hiyeon's ugly-looking forelock haircut, her mother expressed emoticons like ^_^ to show her generosity with a laugh. And Gitae's mother showed her humorous mindset with her expressions like 'Bingo!', 'lie (?) grows up', '^ ^;' and 'ㄷㄷ' in response to his excuses and his teacher's presumption, because Gitae told his teacher an odd weekend story as opposed to the original one he managed to practice with his mother. Her responses demonstrate that she accepts and adapts to her child's disability. The following examples demonstrate that the mother of a child with special need has many difficulties and concerns about her child, but she tries to share her troubles with her child's kindergarten teacher, rather than become overwhelmed by them, and tries to analyze possible causations

and seek reasonable solutions, ending up by establishing her responsible role as rearer and her confidence in her capacity as rearer.

Today, Icheol played in an indoor playground. He held the net, climbed up high on a space between the cabinet and the playground, and climbed up on the top of the window frame. I told him not to do so, because it looks dangerous, but I'm afraid that he will possibly keep climbing up there again for a while (commented by Icheol's teacher; Sept. 19, 2008). These days, he has been more aroused and a little excited. I treat him in such aspects and it'll be okay once again, I think. Icheol will surely be better owing to your elaborate efforts (commented by Icheol's mother; Sept. 19, 2008).

The above examples indicate that a mother educates her handicapped child with his teacher and thereby makes a relationship of trust in each other with shared worries and values, so that she can build up her own confidence in her capacity as nurturer.

Growth as Parents. While a handicapped child's parents share their difficulties and conflicts in rearing him with his teacher in collaborative efforts to find practical solutions for them, the parents come to have deeper understandings about their child and thereby develop better skills of nurturing him. At the same time, they realize their own limitations and thereby grow as human and parents. The following examples demonstrate that mothers apply detailed educational methods based on understanding their child, wait for the desired results and get better skills of nurturing their child. Such an improvement shows the portrait of parents who grow up with their children.

I giggle at Gitae's changing daily routine to get all good-job stickers from the teacher. He reads books, does homework and more. How adorable he is! ^ ^; At first, he asked me to give him stickers, saying "I learned much at kindergarten." I hope the stickers will be a good motivation for him to keep attending your kindergarten boldly and well (commented by Gitae's mother; Sept. 17, 2008). In October, I began to score a new item titled 'Enjoy Playing with Classmates at Kindergarten.' By reminding him of it again and again, I said to him, "Let's make it to get stickers!" And he replied "OK." How about this? (commented by Gitae's mother; Sept. 29, 2008). Today, Hiyeon showed somewhat serious mood swings. Overall, she looked somewhat depressed. She wept and I hugged her tight. Next, I massaged, rubbed and pressed her

body with my fingers. Then, she felt a little relieved from her sad mood and began to laugh again but then went back to weeping ... (commented by Hiyeon's teacher; Sept. 26, 2008). In a mart, I ate pork cutlet and spaghetti with her, bought her favorite ice cream and stroked her a lot. Then, she felt so good. Possibly, the careful instruction with smooth talk and praise helped her feel so good, I guess (commented by Hiyeon's mother; Sept. 26, 2008).

By caring for her child and sharing her nurturing experiences with her teacher, the mother makes sure that she rears her child well. That is, her experiences and awareness about them become integrated with each other through sharing feedbacks with her teacher. As a result, she gets better skills of nurturing her child by appropriately applying motivations to her child depending on contexts, and the resulting growth and development of her child deserves worth and happiness of the parents and gives them the power to endure and wait. Thus, it becomes a critical motivation for them to overcome difficulties with nurturing a handicapped child and grow up as parents. Seemingly, Hiyeon looks unaware of something, but later, I often feel she knows it. I hugged her with my husband, saying, "Thank you and love you." She also hugged us, replying "I love you, kiss" with a smile (commented by Hiyeon's mother; May 6, 2008). Recently, Gitae sometimes bites his pencil when working. How about your kindergarten? Isn't it OK? I often try to correct his bad habit, but it doesn't work (commented by Gitae's mother; July 21, 2008). ... Gitae often shows a behavior of biting the back of pens at our kindergarten as well. These days, this habit is getting much worse (commented by Gitae's teacher; July 23, 2008). I wonder if Gitae bites it due to his own stressful mind or the odd feeling of his teeth being pulled out? Anyway, I believe his bad habit will eventually be corrected if he receives regular instructions for a while (commented by Gitae's mother; July 23, 2008).

The above examples demonstrate the wisdom of life to give reasonable instructions to a special child and waiting for his growth, rather than feeling frustrated by his retarded growth. These paths involve not only successful experiences but also failed ones at times. The failure of various means and efforts gives parents a chance to learn to humbly accept their limitations, and learn that they should keep in good step with their child, rather than ask their child to keep up with them.

Last week, I carried on a somewhat burdensome schedule for Icheol, so I suffer from fatigue and he also feels tired. I have a sore throat and a fever. I still feel so bad with my tonsils. Now, I'm going to care for his health without any special desire for him (commented by Icheol's mother; Apr. 25, 2008). Last week, Icheol felt so bad physically. He ran a serious fever, but I rebuked and strongly urged him to follow my instruction even without knowing his condition ... I realize it's not about the matter of eagerness. Last week helped me realize many things a mother requires. Thank you for your good work! (commented by Icheol's mother; Apr. 30, 2008).

Here, it is found that the realization Icheol's mother came to can motivate her to have hope and patience for him, not give him up, even when he tends to regress again.

Lately, Icheol shows his last troubles again at times. He sometimes gets up even at dawn and is still awake or weeps at night, but not so seriously. His troubles are back, but are getting better than before, I guess (commented by Icheol's mother; July 2, 2008). I'm so surprised to see that Icheol can put on a headband by himself. Our pupils dislike putting anything on their heads very much, but he followed how his classmates put it on and did so for himself. I didn't ask him to do anything (commented by Icheol's teacher; July 4, 2008). Now, he speaks more than before and is also more interested in others, which will possibly help him imitate them (commented by Icheol's mother; July 4, 2008).

Icheol's mother is not overwhelmed even by signs of his regression, and doesn't give up any hope for his improvement, as she overcame it and it turned better. That is why she can be motivated to wait for his improvement with patience, and distinguish and judge his conditions. This implies growth as a parental being and as a human. Cho (1997) defined that "education is a process starting from existential introspection on life, perception of ignorance and inadequacy and discovery of self-contradiction, in endless pursuit of perfection." Parents' experiences in caring for and cultivating their child in partnership with his or her teacher indicate that they have educational potential for the growth of their child as a man. Lee (1999) maintained that parents and teacher are the nearest helpers who can sensitively care for a child, and he can grow up soundly only in sound relationships between parents and teacher, so their

relationships have an educational potential for their growth as well.

Extension of Perception about ‘Social Care’. Handicapped children’s parents who create a ‘caring’ community together with teachers and preschool children come to realize their limited parental capacity to personally care for their children, when they share childcare experiences with teachers in the educational partnership and introspect their personal care for children at home. The ethics of “care” are embodied in the basis of interpersonal relationships. The interpersonal relationships cannot be separated from society; much of what defines interpersonal relationships is inevitably influenced by social custom and norm. So the ‘care’ cannot be limited only to personal relationships. As defined comprehensively by Tronto (1993), “caring activities are generally defined in sociocultural contexts and depend on sociocultural aspects” and ‘care’ means “activities of every species to preserve, sustain and recondition our planet so that we can live in it as well as possible.” The case reports in this study showed that ‘caring community’ to successfully maintain and develop ‘caring’ relationships. By actually caring for a handicapped child, the parents of handicapped children realize that their society should be made better for the better growth of their children. This realization is well illustrated by the following examples:

... I think it is really necessary to create a reasonable system for our children with developmental disability so that they are readily exposed to the most suitable and ecologically integrated education on a sustainable basis. For example, we need a counseling and guidance system to show the proper timing of integrated education for developmentally handicapped children, as well as an integrated education system connected with primary, secondary and high school education (interview with Heewon’s mother; dated Nov. 5, 2008).

Like current speech therapy, I hope more and more appropriate therapies will emerge in various field such as music and fine arts, so our children can benefit much from them ... And I expect you’ll contribute to creating desired settings for primary, secondary and high school education, like our kindergarten here, so that handicapped children’s mothers can also have the peace of mind to send their children to school ... As Icheol’s mother, I promise you I will do my best for a happy life with him every day (interview with Icheol’s mother; Nov. 5, 2008).

When informed about Gitae's handicap, I felt really helpless and uncertain about everything. I could hardly accept his handicap itself, and didn't have any know-how to educate and guide him. That's why I felt tougher with him. Then, I heard of an integrated kindergarten and came here ... Among other things, I felt reassured that it had technical teachers specializing in handicapped children, and I could share useful feedbacks with parents who suffered similar difficulties to me. At first, Gitae felt so uneasy at the strange place, but he attended kindergarten better than I expected. At home, he always talked about his teacher and classmates. Once in a while later, he imitated funny gags popular among his fellows, gripped a pencil, ate a meal by himself, and also modeled himself on his peer group in aspects of behavior and learning (simple work). So I felt hopeful and happy again with him. I think it's about the results of integrated education. If he attended a general kindergarten, he could have been left alone and neglected, I guess ... It is most important that Gitae could possibly carry on in emotional balance with the help of his teacher who reads his ideas as well as his classmates who stand by him. Yes, they possibly gave an absolute help to him for better changes, you know ... I hope more and more integrated kindergartens will open up to make such a positive change to kids like Gitae in the near future, so handicapped children and their families can be hopeful about their future (interview with Gitae's mother; Nov. 5, 2008).

Here, it is found that when our mothers care personally for their children and they introspect their caring experiences, they realize their limited personal 'caring' capacity and their perception about caring extends into 'social care', which indicates a potential for personal care to evolve into social care. That is, the above examples indicate that parents' personal caring relationships with their child may give an opportunity to connect adult individuals with their society. A social issue like special children, which was not one's personal concern before, becomes 'his issue' that he may face due to his handicapped child. In addition, parents of a handicapped child expect that their good lessons obtained with their child will be helpful for other handicapped families as well, beyond their reminiscence. Such a change and extended perception shows that mother's caring relationships with her child have a real potential for the child to grow up to become an adult.

Discussions and Conclusion

So far, we examined relationships between a mother of a child with special need and teacher, as shown in daily COR, and potential implications of such relationships for the mother. As a result, it was found that their relationships fell broadly into a relationship of conversation and practice, a relationship of sympathy and trust and a relationship of encouragement. And it was found that these relationships had some implications for the mother, such as self-confidence in the capacity of rearer, growth as parents and the extension of perception about 'social care' respectively.

Then, this study sought to discuss these findings broadly in 2 aspects, i.e. in the educational aspect based on parents and in the institutional and policy-making aspect. First, let's take a look at the educational aspect based on parents. As the focus of special education evolves from children to their family, it is possibly significant to examine the educational aspect based on parents. It is reported that relationships between special children's parents and teacher in the settings of special education are ultimately in direct association with special children's better quality of life and the growth of their teacher (Nam, 2006).

The relationship between parents and teacher based on a handicapped child belongs to the intersubjective relationship, as explained by Lee (1999). That is, it is an empirical relationship where two parties can share ideas and feedbacks with each other and sympathize with each other, so that they can make further relationships. Rogoff (1990) called it 'an intersubjective state.' The intersubjective state means that one shares some meanings with the other. In this study, it was found that mothers came to integrate their caring experiences with their perception on those experiences by sharing COR feedbacks with their teacher and communicating with the teacher, and one step in their trial and error process to deepen and extend such integration through feedbacks with the teacher involved educational potentials for their growth as parents and human beings. Given that education is an endless change (becoming) created in intersubjective relationships between meaningful parties around a child, it is concluded that the intersubjective relationships between parents and teacher around their handicapped child have an educational implication for changing and developing parents. Indeed, it is far beyond the capacity of parents to assist their handicapped

child in developing their identity as an adult. It is possible that their parental identity develops when they have a partner who can sympathize with them in their experiences in caring for and developing their handicapped child as well as their perception about the experiences. Ruddick (2002) explained that one's ability to create ego gets intertwined intricately and often painfully with other's ability to perceive the ego that he is creating.

There is no perfect relationship in this world. Likewise, there may be defects even in the parent-teacher relationships filled with educational potential. In parent-teacher communication about their special children, their ideas may conflict with each other in the question about where educational focus should be set for their special children. Then, it is necessary to find and create a positive communication mechanism to mediate such conflict and propose alternative measures. For example, there is an incomplete communication between them, where parents follow advice from therapists and expect a kindergarten teacher to follow them, whereas the teacher has different opinions in the context of kindergarten, which is different from that of a clinic. The above case reports indicate that teachers try to share the focus of interests with parents and keep having a relationship of conversation and practice. Thus, it would be more preferable that there was a communication mechanism where teacher, a mother of a child with special need and therapist met and talked with one another to find a better solution or an alternative measure. It is expected that such a tripartite collaboration will give a more proactive solution to the care problem of special children, beyond simple communications between parents and teacher. Here, the teacher can collaborate with the therapist and parents in devising possible ways to appropriately use the therapist's inputs on special children for the kindergarten curriculum. As a part of reference for setting therapeutic orientation, the therapist can make more concrete and integrated comprehensions about special children as informed by the teacher. And parents can come to know better about the difference between the context of the kindergarten and that of the clinic, and understand the potential and limitations of a therapeutic effect applicable to the general settings of kindergarten, so that they can control the level of expectations for their special children. This communication mechanism requires far more than the capacity of the

teacher alone. Thus, it will be required to create a regular and institutionalized communication mechanism among these 3 parties concerned with special children across kindergartens.

This challenge is actually associated with institutional and policy-making aspects. The current Korean law on special education stipulates that parental participation may be determined in accordance with school regulations, but they have no binding power. According to the case reports in this study, it is found that a steering committee opens a window for parents to participate, but doesn't work well in practice. Hence, it is necessary to develop practical and institutional instruments for motivating special children's parents to more positively participate in kindergarten education. In addition, as described above, it is also necessary to prepare a mechanism for teacher and therapist to collaborate with each other in prescribing curriculum and therapy.

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