Early Intervention Opportunities: Semi-structured Interviews in B.C.

Researchers: Samridhi Gulia, Shunyan Lyu, Panpan Zhou; Supervisor: Dr. Manu Sharma

Abstract

The current study investigated the potential for collaborative partnerships between educators and child development service staff to improve the accessibility of early intervention (EI) programs. Through semi-structured online interviews, the research identified barriers faced by families from diverse backgrounds and coping strategies. This study aims to make EI programs more accessible and enhance support for young children with disabilities.

Research Question

How are the EI programs accessible and impactful to the Kamloops community?

- Barriers faced by disabled children and their families in accessing EI programs.
- Existed and potential strategies to enhance the accessibility of EI programs.
- The role of educators in fostering collaborative partnerships with EI service staffs.

Literature Review

Early Intervention (EI) Programs:
- Support infants and preschoolers with single or multiple disorders. (Miller et al., 2023).
- Often incorporate a multidisciplinary approach, including physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, and occupational therapy (Miller et al., 2023).

Practical Strategies of EI:
- Conducted in groups, workshops, or one-on-one to build parental skills. (DuBois et al., 2021).
- Focus on the family as a core support unit (e.g., McManus et al., 2020)

Diverse Client Demographics:
- Cultural Gap: Stigmatized attitudes in families from developing countries can hinder access (Jackson-Best & Edwards, 2018).
- Information Accessibility: Limited health literacy can impede awareness and access to EI programs (DeWalt & Hink, 2009; Jimenez et al., 2013).
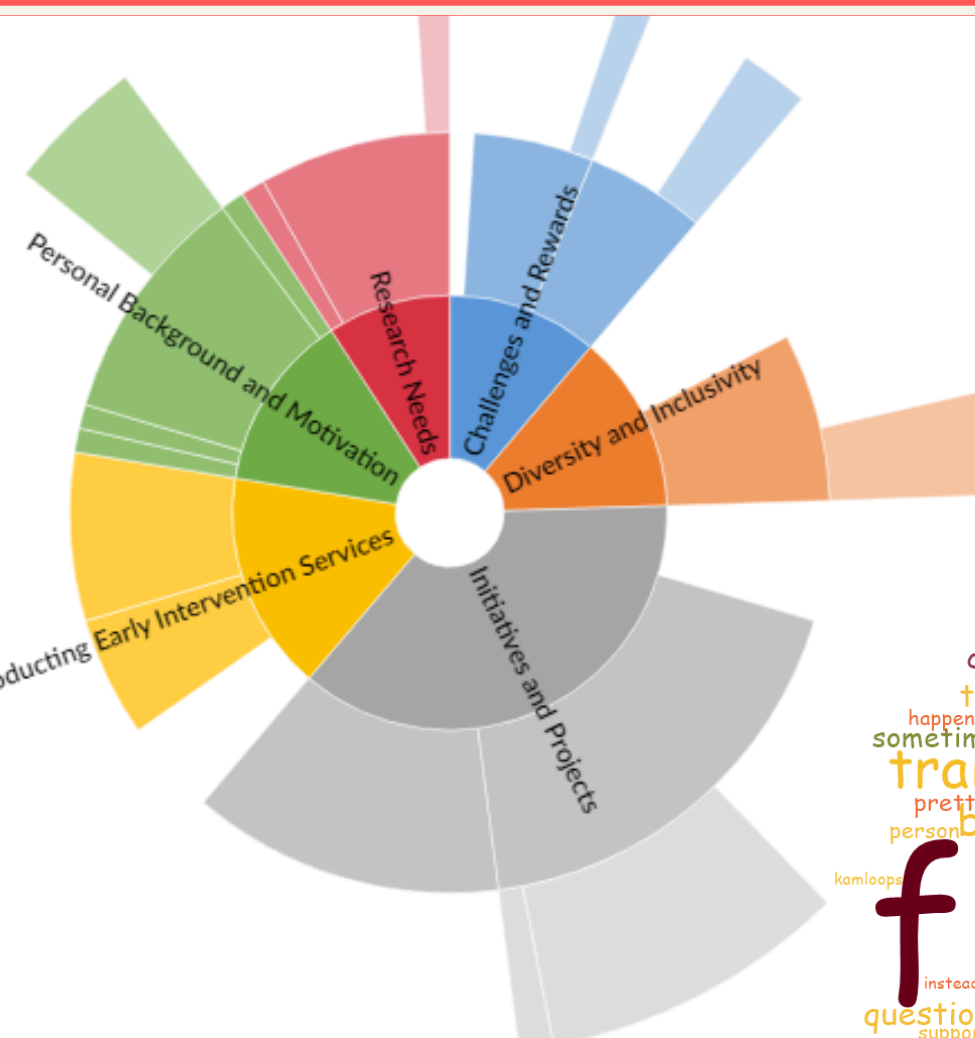
Methodology and Methods

Methodology: qualitative research (in-depth interviews)

Methods:
- **Interviewees:** Current service staff
- Virtual semi-structured interview (40-50 mins each)
- **Interview questions:** Please scan the QR Code

Data Analysis:
- **Thematic analysis** with a combination of deductive coding and inductive coding
- **Codes & Themes:** Please scan the QR Code

Findings

Barriers to accessing EI:
- Diverse clients increased **barriers to accessing EI** -
  - Dynamics of SES, language, and culture led by the changes in local population structure
  - Rapid increase in diagnostic rates of developmental disorders (e.g., autistic spectrum disorders)

Benefits of the Organization:
- Cross-professional collaborations between colleagues
- Inter-organizational collaborative partnerships with other service providers

Possibility for improvements:
- Practice-oriented research for identifying engaging strategies and addressing barriers to access

Discussions

- **Diverse Client Needs:** The increasing diversity of EI clients would be a significant and continuous influence (Smythe et al, 2021).
- **Interprofessional Connects:** Interdisciplinary and inter-organizational collaborations keep EI programs effective.
- **Information Accessibility:** Families and service providers might provide better help for childhood development.

Recommendations:
- **Practice-oriented Research:** Collaboratively partnership with researchers to explore parents' backgrounds, experiences, and attitudes toward EI programs.
- **Multilingual Hashtags:** Adding hashtags in multiple languages on social media posts to increase accessibility
- **Online Visibility:** Interacting with other organizations on social media platforms (e.g., repost, mention), or posting simple but regular posts (e.g., cross-post, photo videos)

Further Question & Future Study:
- Do families with low socioeconomic status face greater barriers to accessing EI services?
- How to help the staff member know about their clients' experience with EI programs effectively?

References