



Effectiveness of Individual Therapy in Revadim Schools

Executive Summary

November 2014

Program Description

Revadim began in 2010 as a joint initiative of Rashi, JDC Israel and the Jewish Federation of Detroit. Its goal is to support the empowerment and renewal of public elementary schools, focusing on those in the geographic or social periphery. The Initiative operates alongside the formal education system and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The schools in Revadim benefit from professional and organizational support, aiming to reach within a few years considerable improvement in their management and in their pupils' achievements.

As part of Revadim, pupils who suffer from developmental delays or learning difficulties receive individual therapies, including paramedical treatments (occupational, physical and speech therapies), emotional and social treatments (e.g. art, animal, music and drama therapies). These one-on-one treatments presume that systematic individual therapy that addresses the child's needs will lead in a short time to significant improvement in school performance, scholastic achievements and wellbeing.

The Research Goal

Examining the effectiveness of the individual therapies and their impact on scholastic achievements

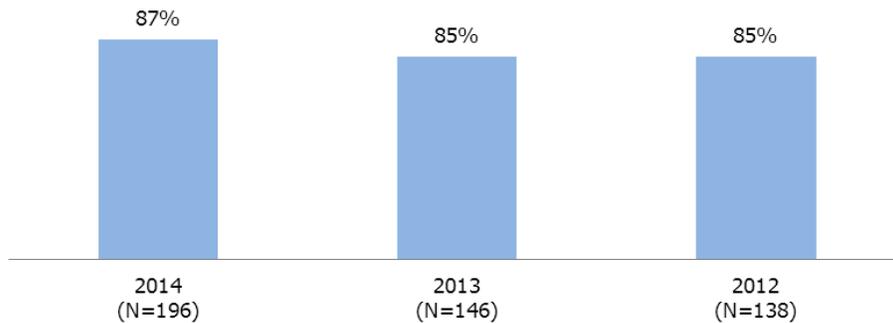
Methodology

A comprehensive questionnaire was answered by the homeroom teachers of students who received individual treatments during the school year. The questionnaire examined 8 parameters of educational performance, before and after the course of treatments (start \ end of school year). The study included 737 pupils whose teachers reported on them at the start of the year, and 290 at the end of the year. The change in the pupils' performance was examined by comparing the data for the two points in time that was available for 196 pupils. The questionnaire was developed in 2012 and is being used for the third year running.

Main Findings

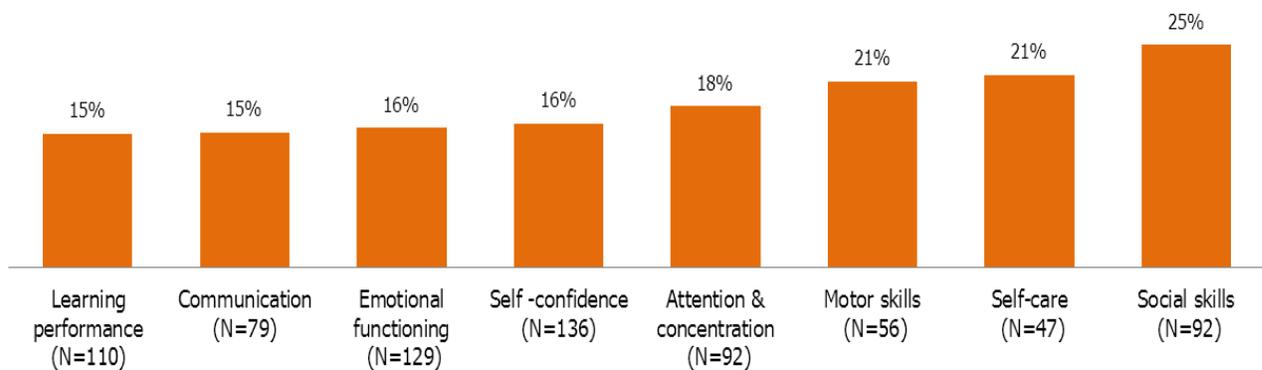
- Following individualized therapies, there was an improvement in the performance of 87% of children. The average rate of improvement was 18%. These findings are consistent with finding from the 2012-2013 studies that employed the same tools.

The rate of children showing improvement in school performance



- A significant improvement was found in the children's status in all 8 parameters that were examined. The average rate of improvement ranges from 15% (learning performance) to 25% (social skills).

The average rate of improvement in school performance following treatment



- According to the teachers' reports, 60-67% of children showed an improvement in educational achievements in each of the core subjects. The rate of improvement ranges from 31% (English) to 37% (science).
- There is a high rate of satisfaction with the program among the teachers. 58% of the teachers said that the therapies contribute to the child's general functioning to a great or very great extent, and 78% recommended that the treatment continues next year.
- The therapy that produced the greatest improvement in the pupils' performance in each of the eight parameters was pet (animal) therapy. Art therapy was found to be strongly linked to improvement in educational achievements.
- Some 89% of the children exhibited relatively severe performance difficulties which justified their receiving individual therapy; this indicates that the children receiving therapy were usually those who need it.

- An examination of the management and organization of the therapies in the schools showed that most schools ran them in accordance with instructions and standards. For example, over 90% of teachers reported that staff meetings took place on the children's status, a coordinator of therapies was appointed, and therapeutic goals were defined in consultation with the homeroom teacher. On the other hand, only 76% of teachers reported that the children's parents were updated during the year on the progress of the treatment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is possible to conclude from the current and previous studies that the individualized therapy contributes significantly to an improvement in the children's learning performance and to a reduction in developmental gaps. Moreover, there is a connection between providing therapies and improved educational achievements. However, the improvement was relatively small and noticeable mainly in external-behavioral areas such as motor skills, self-care and social skills, while internal parameters such as learning and self-confidence scored lower improvement.