

Attitudes and rules governing work with parents: an exploration of the perspectives of speech and language therapists

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KEY FINDINGS

Timeline: getting to know each other, understanding and accepting difficulties, co-operation, separation

Collaborative practice: a universal SLT aspiration, but each SLT has a personal skill and attitude range; specific implementation is determined by characteristics of the individual family

Attitudes and rules governing work with parents: an exploration of the perspectives of speech and language therapists.

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Introduction

Speech and language therapists in England consider that the involvement of parents in preschool interventions with children with DLD is critical; however, this is not universal practice.

Even where SLTs attempt to involve parents, the process is not always successful or straightforward with difficulties reported in the engagement of families. Furthermore, the research evidence about how best to facilitate involvement is sparse. Investigating how SLTs interact and work with parents in a variety of contexts may shed light on useful practices and aid reflection on practice.

The aim of this study:

- to explore how Croatian therapists work with parents and provide a rich description of practice from the therapists' perspectives that made explicit the process and the outcomes that therapists hope to achieve.

Method

Qualitative phenomenological design; Two phases

1. Semi-structured interviews with 10 therapists from Zagreb → Timeline: procedures and outcomes
2. Focus group of 13 therapists from across Croatia → Rationales and explanations

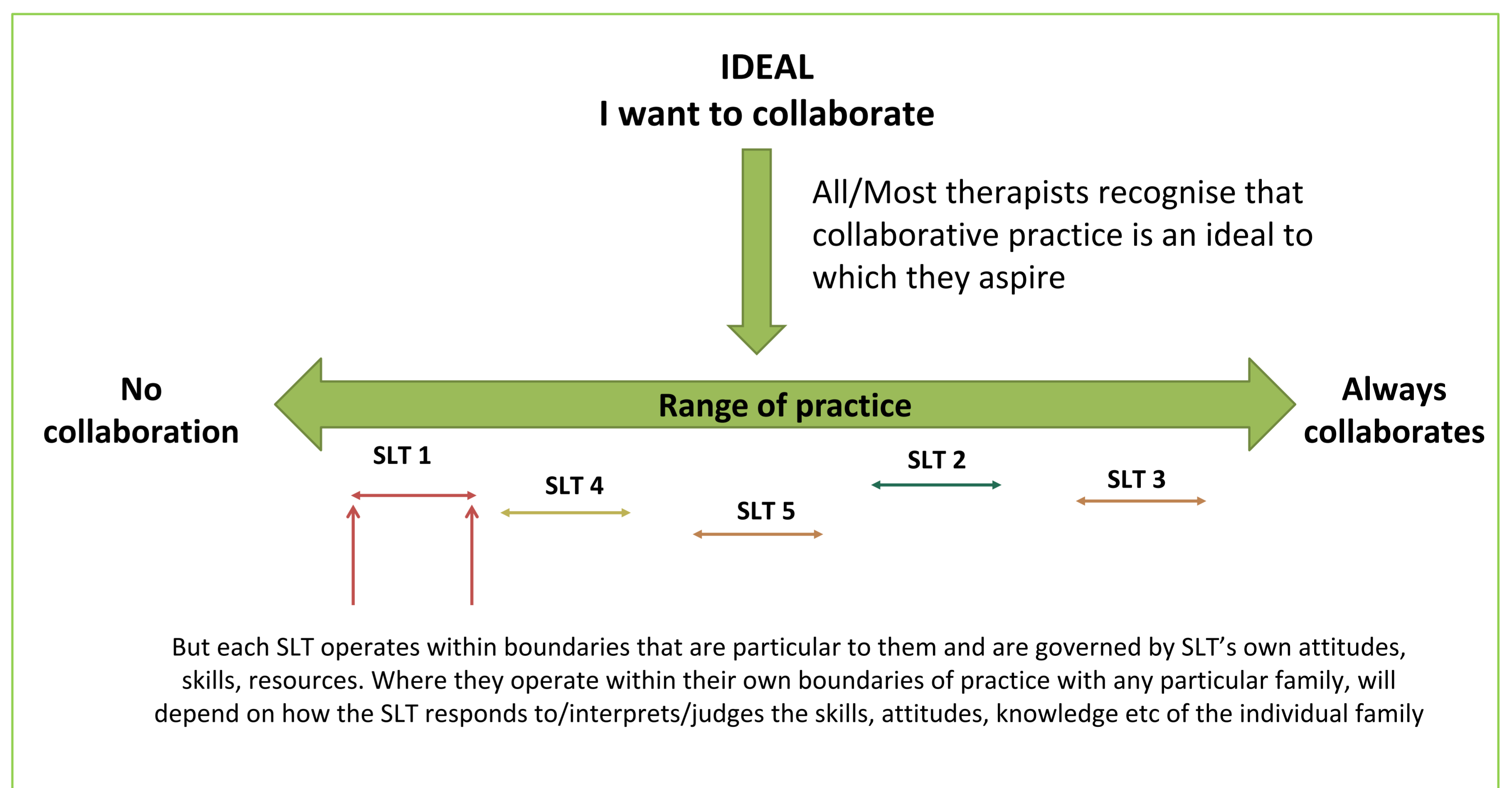
Results

Partnership timeline

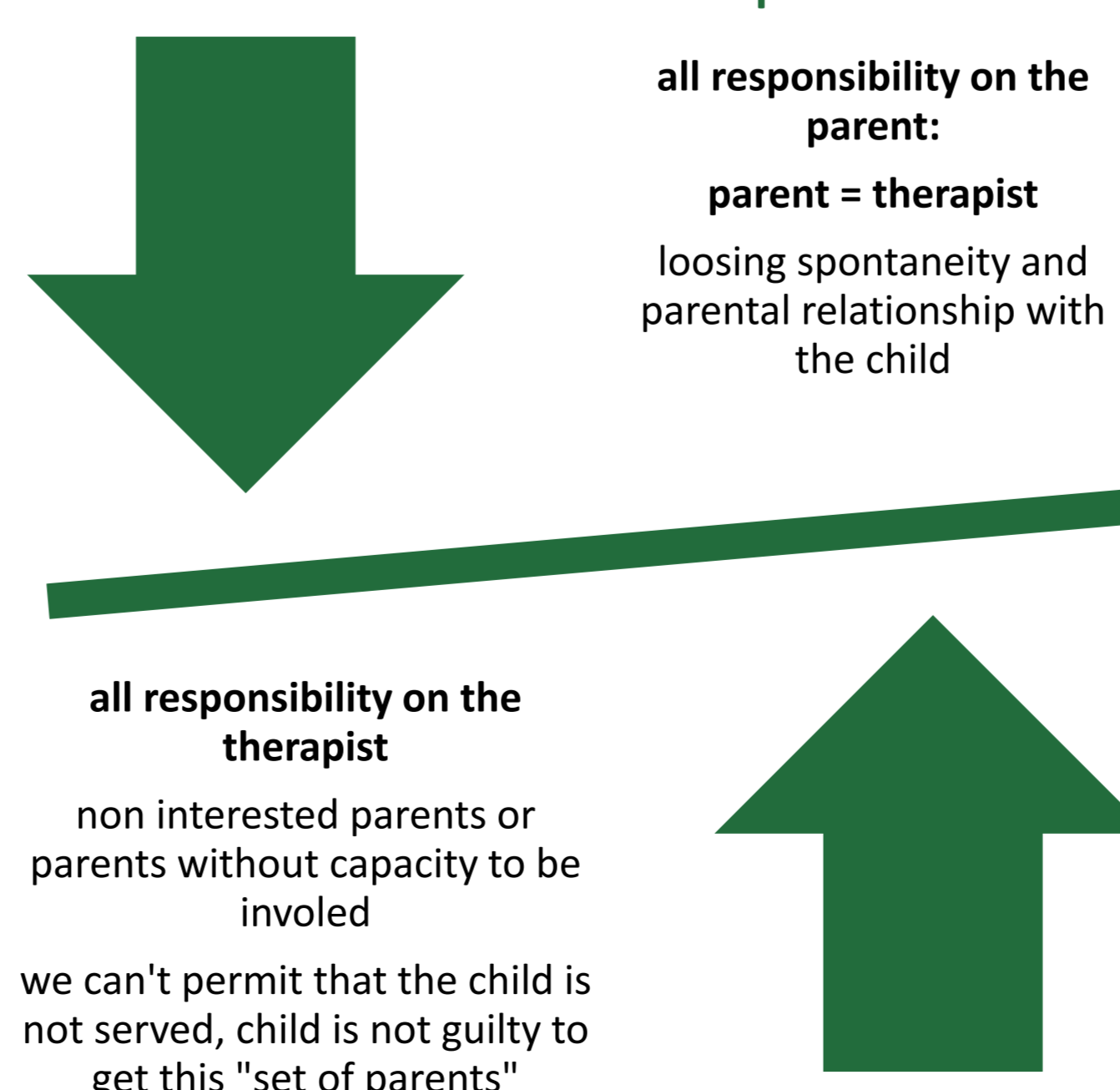


Procedures and outcomes timeline

| Time point | Procedures | General idea and outcome |
|--|---|---|
| 1 st APPOINTMENT | Expectations and plans for therapy (not specific tasks, cooperation in general) Schedule, importance of homework Rules (non-attending) Understanding parent's ideas about child's disorder and their expectations | "rights and obligations" (Int.03) "I like to hear their opinion, what they think, why they requested therapy for their child in the first place," (Int.02) |
| PERIOD OF "EARLY THERAPY" (1 st month or two) | After each therapy: talking about that appointment What they did, what was the goal, explaining homework Plans for the future therapy Teaching parents about the disorder, explaining child's difficulties, "removing the guilt" Teaching procedures and how to give feedback about things done at home and report about difficulties they encounter while doing some task with the child Putting problems in a broader context (explaining the influence language problems have on general development) | Making parents more aware of the child's difficulties Parents are adapted to the therapy (they follow, they ask) |
| THERAPY (LONGEST PERIOD) | After each therapy: short explanation What they did, Homework, Clarifications Transferring what is done in therapy in everyday life Motivating the parents not to quit when progress is very slow | Being involved in the therapy and work together: "building the therapy further together" (Int.03) |
| REPORT POINTS | Parents get report Clarifications, Future plans Advising parents to bring the report to school | Making sure parents understand the report Discussing future plans for therapy |
| COMING TO THE END | Instructions what to do after finishing the therapy Notebook = tool Encourage to monitor and follow and to ask for help Looking further: what should they expect, expecting and recognizing difficulties in the future Pointing out the strong sides of the child and encouraging parents to involve the child in activities where the child can develop the talents (music, sport, drama, etc.) | Empowering parents for future without therapy |



Therapists try to find the optimal cooperation between the extreme points:



Factors affecting the cooperation:

