



## PROPOSAL

Blended Intensive Program  
15<sup>th</sup> of May 2023- 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2023  
Babes-Bolyai University, Special Education Department  
Cluj-Napoca  
Romania

Total number of hours: 100 hours

Number of hours: 40 hours onsite

Number of hours: 60 hours online

ECTS: 4 credits

Academic staff involved as trainers:

Associate Professor Andrea Hathazi, PhD (Coordinator of BIP)

Lecturer Carmen Costea-Bărluțiu, PhD.

Lecturer Cristina Balas-Baconschi, PhD

Assistant Professor: Ioana Serban, PhD

Assistant Professor: Ioana Tufar, Phd

Title of the BIP: **Early intervention in children with multiple disabilities. Assessment and intervention models.**

## Content

### I. Implications of multiple disabilities in development, communication and learning.

#### *Brief description of the activity*

The workshop will focus on the identification of characteristics in development, communication and learning, with the aim to increase understanding on the specific needs in the context of multiple disabilities. The implications of multiple disabilities determine



specific modalities of interaction, communication, assessment of development and educational and therapeutic interventions.

### Objectives:

- To identify developmental and educational needs of people with multiple disabilities and their families
- To approach models of assessment in multiple disabilities
- To present functional assessment that determine an efficient intervention
- To present level and specificity of support, intervention strategies, methods and resources
- To facilitate work in interdisciplinary teams

### Competences

1. Identification of the needs of people with multiple disabilities
2. Identification of adequate assessment protocols and approaches
3. Identification of adequate tools and approaches in functional assessment
4. Description of specific intervention strategies

## II. Effectiveness of the family-centred early intervention programs for children with severe developmental risks

### *Brief description of the activity*

The workshop approaches the family definition and characteristics in the light of systemic theories and introduces the concept of second-order change in families, as a basis for family-centred interventions, that relate to an increase effectiveness. Family-centred interventions are gold standards in early intervention, that combine family empowerment and care. The individualized family service plans are anchored in family routines and involve participative care, based on collaborative approach, partnership, as well as a solid relational component. They are based on family and community support networks, and include psychological support for family members, besides child-centred interventions. An evidence-based model of family interactions (The Circumplex Model, Olson, 2000), based on flexibility, cohesion and communication as central components will be presented and analysed, with the general purpose to understand the importance of designing early intervention plans that focus on healthy family functioning, that can sustain the acceptance of a child with disabilities and the family adjustment to the challenges of raising the child while facing other obstacles inherent to family life.



### Objectives

1. To emphasize the importance of creating the conditions for change in families of children with severe developmental risks
2. To approach the family life cycles and discuss the developmental changes in family structure and dynamic at birth and during the first years of life of a child at risk
3. To identify the characteristics of participative and relational care in early intervention
4. To facilitate the increase of effectiveness of family-centred care
5. To define and assess healthy family functioning, in terms of cohesion, flexibility and communication
6. To pinpoint the features of the second-order change occurring in families during the adjustment process to the child's disability
7. To identify useful aspects in the family dynamic, that relate to adaptation of the family system to the challenge of raising a child with disability

### Competences

5. Identification of the components of the individualized family-intervention plan
6. Identification of the stage in which a parent is concerning the acceptance of a child's disability
7. To search for assessment tools of family resources and support (eg., ecomap, instruments)
8. To define operationally the family flexibility, cohesion, and communication

### III. The role of attachment security in parent-child relationship for family resilience and child development in the context of severe risks

#### *Brief description of the activity*

In order to face adversity, losses, difficulties, families need to become secure bases, the relationships need to be marked by care and warmth. This is especially true in the case of families raising children with severe risks. The workshop has as main goal the in-depth approach of attachment security and its precursors, in the case of families in general and families raising children with disabilities. Caregivers' relational history and characteristics that are associated with attachment security and insecurity will be discussed and the possible impact of stress and burden of raising a child with severe risks will be pinpointed. The caregivers' ability to mentalize will be defined and its impact and association with attachment security will be underlined. Also, the importance of both mentalizing and attachment in emotional and behavioral regulation will be discussed. Some attachment-based therapeutic models for early intervention will be presented and the role of reflective



parenting will be emphasized. Also, several practical ways to increase parental reflective functioning will be exemplified and modelled.

### Objectives

1. To define attachment and characterize attachment security in general, and in relationships exposed to difficult challenges
2. To underlie the role of attachment security in child health and development
3. To define mentalizing and reflect on its relationship with attachment security
4. To identify the association between mentalizing and attachment security
5. To analyze the components of attachment-based therapeutic models
6. To formulate objectives for attachment-based interventions

### Competences

1. Operational definition of attachment security
2. Operational definition of mentalizing
3. Development of awareness about the importance of reflective functioning
4. Applying mentalizing in own practice

## **IV. The assessment of communication skills in children with multiple disabilities**

### *Brief description of the workshop*

The workshop is focused on the different theories related to the development of communication skills in children with multiple disabilities, on the implications of multiple disabilities for the general functioning of the individual on one side and on the other side, for each component of that functioning. Evaluation has to cover all the areas involved in the stages of communication, beginning with the preverbal communication behaviors in the early stages of infancy. Children with multiple disabilities have difficulties in developing a good communication skills due to their sensory loss and the disadvantage of receiving information while a typically developed child improve his communication skills by interacting with the people and objects around him. The activity will emphasize also the development of preverbal communication starting from birth to two years in typical development which is examined in seven stages. On the other hand, children with multiple disabilities are far behind from their peers in many developmental areas due to the number and combinations of their disabilities. Their ability to communicate in a meaningful and functional way is especially very limited. Therefore all these areas need to be assessed with specific methods.



## Objectives

1. The main objective of this workshop consists in presenting a review of the most important methods used in order to assess communication skills of children with multiple disabilities.
2. One other objective is to inform the students about the cognitive and behavioral profile of these children and their implications for the development of daily life skills.
3. To present the main differences between the typical development of communication skills and the one specific in the case of children with multiple disabilities.
4. To introduce some of the most used instruments in the assessment of communication skills in children with multiple disabilities.

## Competences

1. Identifying the main difficulties within communication in children with multiple disabilities
2. Association of the difficulties with the assessment tools in each area
3. Conceptualizing a case study focused on the development of communication skills with an assessment plan.

*Evaluation:* a short questionnaire in which the students will have to present their approach for a specific case, presented within the workshop.

## V. The use of AAC systems for the improvement of communication skills in children with multiple disabilities

The workshop approaches the benefits of using AAC systems as interventions tools for children with multiple disabilities. The intervention concern communication skills such as requesting, social or conversational skills, labeling items, and receptive language. The workshop will try to give answers to a few questions such as: a) which could be a specific intervention for a specific person?; b) what are the main objectives of the intervention and c) what are the expected outcomes of the intervention for each child? Within a systematic review of AAC intervention studies, recommendations include (a) using graphic symbols instead of or in combination with gestures, (b) maximizing positioning to improve access to aided AAC systems, (c) arranging symbols within the graphic display to maximize access, and (d) using synthesized speech output ((Schlosser and Sigafoos, 2006).

The workshop will focus on the presentation of different AAC systems and techniques adapted for the communication problems of each case. It is likely that because of



comorbidity in deficits across communication and cognition in addition to deficits in motor or sensory areas, persons with severe to profound and multiple disabilities may require a higher degree of treatment intensity to acquire, maintain, and generalize communication skills. Therefore there is a great need to individualized approaches for each child in the same time with an early intervention plan involving the family and the specialists.

### *Objectives*

1. Understanding the purpose of using AAC systems to enhance communication skills in children with multiple disabilities.
2. Associating the assessment plan with the areas in which there has to be an individualized intervention.
3. Identification of the best AAC system (non-technological or technological) for the specific needs of children with multiple disabilities.
4. Evaluation of the outcomes, of maintenance and generalization regarding the use of aided AAC systems.

### *Competences*

1. Identification of the best AAC systems used in enhancing communication skills in children with multiple disabilities
2. Conception of a tailored intervention for a child with multiple disabilities in a specific environment.

Evaluation: a short questionnaire concerning the advantages and the perceived disadvantages of AAC systems.

## **VI. The Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) – Professional perspectives and practices**

The workshop is designed to address the essential elements of an IEP by describing the present level of achievement, the goals and the objectives, the methods and resources, the main content areas and the types of assessment. Furthermore, examples of various elements of the IEP will be discussed to identify their role in the development of new skills and behaviours. The participants will have the opportunity to apply specific information about different types of disability to the structure of the IEPs focusing on generating meaningful annual goals, short-term objectives, accommodations or modifications of the curriculum and creating level-appropriate activities which lead to effective implementation.



The workshop also provides resource materials, intervention strategies, checklists and assessment measures that can be adapted to different learning environments.

Competences:

1. Designing, implementing and evaluating IEPs according to the specific needs, knowledge and skills of children with different types of disabilities.

Objectives:

1. To analyse the main elements of an IEP.
2. To select specific strategies and evaluation tools to determine the present level of achievement.
3. To formulate meaningful goals and objectives based on the present level of achievement.
4. To assess the need for accommodations, augmentations and/ or modifications in the curriculum.
5. To assess how/ to which extent the goals and objectives of the IEP have been achieved.

Evaluation:

Present 2 or more arguments for the importance of identifying the present level of achievement for a child with multiple disabilities in building up their IEP. Include in your presentation the effect on the main elements of the IEP.

## VII. Reflective logs as tools for assessment, follow-up and supervision

The first part of the workshop is dedicated to the presentation of the reflective logs as tools for assessment, observation and analysis. The structure and steps of the instrument will be discussed and displayed in different versions according to the pursued content (development in different areas: cognitive, language and communication, psychomotor, behaviour, social-emotional; reflective questions about the intervention; targeted questions about challenges and difficult behaviours; opinions on progress). Examples of reflective logs will be offered as starting points for different debates regarding their utility for one professional and for the whole team. The second part of the workshop will present case studies through reflective logs as supervision tools for one professional and as resource tools for the multidisciplinary team.

Competence:

1. Evaluation of the strategies, resource materials, instruments and methods used in documented case studies through reflective logs.

Objectives:

1. To identify the main components of a reflective log.
2. To analyse the data presented in different areas of intervention.
3. To argue the importance of self-assessment as feedback for the professional.



4. To discuss the role of observations in the reflective logs for the multidisciplinary team.

**Evaluation:**

Discuss the impact of each component of a reflective log on the process of self-assessment and self-analysis for a professional. Make a list of your ideas.

Fill in the *Team Involvement Checklist* and find common points with your previous list.

Group discussion and feedback.

### **VIII. The Teamwork approaches in early intervention for children with multiple disabilities**

The students will gain competences about understanding and using EI terminology according to the teamwork main approaches to screening, assessment, and intervention

The main objectives are related to analyzing aspects about:

- the multidisciplinary team: particularities in early intervention
- the interdisciplinary teamwork models
- the transdisciplinary model of evaluating, planning, and implementing early intervention programs

### **IX. The Sign Language Interpreter involvement in the early intervention for children with multiple disabilities**

The students will be able to understand the role of the Sign Language Interpreter in the multidisciplinary team and will acquire knowledge about the language input according to the bilingual-bicultural approach

The objectives are:

- To analyze the facilitator role of the Sign language interpreter
- To discuss the bilingual-bicultural approach
- To get information about etic conduct and specific requirements when being a Sign Language Interpreter involved in early intervention team
- To examine some case studies of children with multiple disabilities whose parents are Deaf and need the Sign Language interpreter