

PARIS CONFERENCE 2017

Ms. LAKATOS Mia

Student

mia.lakatos1@gmail.com

Prospects, methodology, research and innovatory practice in social work education

Family experience with therapy dogs

Therapy dog is a dog trained for helping and therapeutic purpose, encouraging the development processes of children or young people with disabilities and are at the same time their supporters in their daily activities, used in animal- assisted therapy. For the purpose of this paper, qualitative research was conducted in September 2016, with parents of children with disabilities who use the services of therapy dogs, which focused on the types of social support and assistance provided to families of children with disabilities by therapy dogs, as well as challenges those families faced. As a method of collecting data semi-structured interview was used, designed for the purpose of this research, and qualitative data analysis was applied for the analysis of the data collected. Results show that therapy dogs provide instrumental and emotional social support as well as other types of assistance to the families, while the greatest challenges lie in taking care of the dog and lack of information.

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