



Students' Emotion Regulation: A Qualitative Study within the “Multi-family groups in school” Concept



Introduction

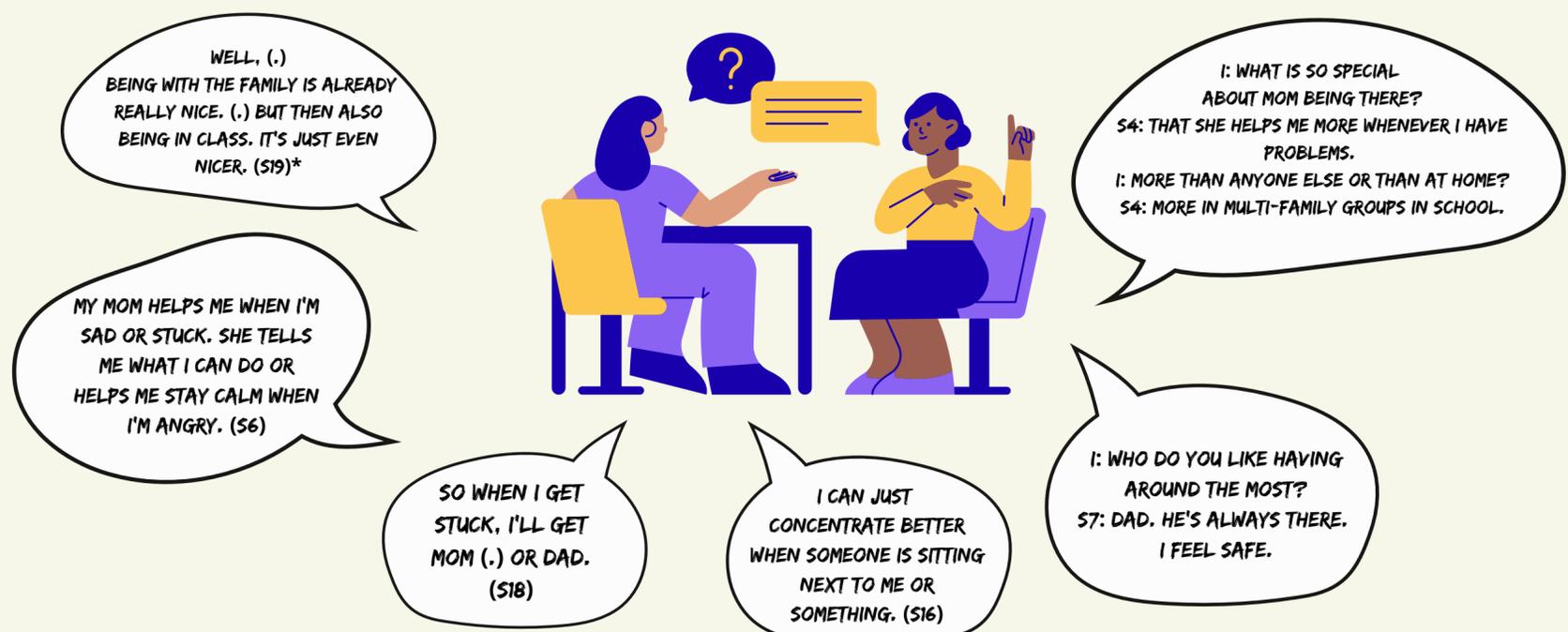
The concept of *multi-family groups in school* is a support intervention for children with learning and behavioral difficulties [1]. Here, for one day a week, a parent accompanies their child to school to work together in a special group toward achieving child's learning and behavioral goals. The intervention is part of the inclusion strategy of the federal state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania [2]. Currently, there is little research on this new concept [3]. Against the backdrop of educational justice, equal opportunities, and participation, it is essential to develop and investigate effective inclusive support options for students, particularly focusing on emotional and social development [4] [5].

Background

Learning and behavioral difficulties of children are generally multifactorial in their nature, and require a holistic approach. Often, regulating emotions is the cause of these problems [1]. It has been proposed that *emotion regulation* is a key protective factor for positive emotional and social development [6]. For *multi-family groups in school*, the family is integrated into an intervention strategy in order to address the root causes of a child's problems in a sustainable manner, instead of just mitigating their symptoms, such as acting out or social isolation [3]. Central to the idea of the concept is the systemic work of multi-family therapy (MFT) [3]. Problems are often similar, and so families can consult with each other to gain new perspectives [7]. Parents are actively involved in the work at school and become partners in their children's school education [8]. This facilitates both intra- and inter-family interactions as well as peer support, which can help bring about positive changes in the participants at an early stage [3][9].

Research Question

What do children experience in terms of their *emotion regulation* in *multi-family groups in school* in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania?



*Selection of quotes from the interviews. 'I' refers to the interviewer, and 'S1' to 'S19' to the students.

Methodology

- Episodic interviews with semi-structured interview guide
- Sample size of 19 children (5 schools, age 6-11, labeled S1 to S19)
- Evaluation with qualitative content analysis following Kuckartz [10]
- Inductive codes (based on research literature); e.g., *emotion regulation strategies, co-regulation*
- Deductive codes (based on interviews); e.g., *learning atmosphere, learning space for emotion regulation*

Results

- In summary, all children (19/19) express positive views about their parents' presence at school (98 statements). They feel supported by their parents.
- The considerable logistical effort involved in bringing parents to school one day a week is worthwhile from the children's point of view.

Conclusion

Co-regulation by parents plays a significant role in children's experience of emotional regulation. With the role of parents taken into account in *multi-family groups in school*, this concept therefor has particularly great potential to effectively support children. In this way, adaptive emotion regulation strategies can be directly addressed, thereby contributing to a healthy psychological development of students with particularly complex risk constellations. *Multi-family groups in school* thus can help get one step closer toward an equal opportunity, inclusive education system in which all children are provided with “the necessary support to facilitate their successful education” ([5], p. 21).

[1] Mahlau, K. (2025). Besondere Schüler*innen. In J. Köhler, L. V. Wuntke, Y. Blumenthal & K. Mahlau (Hrsg.), Familienklasse. Ein Inklusionskonzept bei Schwierigkeiten im Lernen und Verhalten (S. 10-14). Kohlhammer.

[2] Ministerium für Bildung und Kindertagesförderung Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (2023). „Kleine Schulklassen“ und „Familienklassenzimmer“ wichtige Angebote für die Inklusion. Ostvorpommersche Zeitung, 08.03.23. Abgerufen am 22.07.23 von <https://www.regierung-mv.de/Landesregierung/vm/aktuell/189028processorprocessor.sa.pressenmitteilung>

[3] Wuntke, L. V., Blumenthal, Y., Föllmer, J. & Mahlau, K. (2022). Multisystemisches Arbeiten in der Schule anhand des Förderkonzepts Familienklassenzimmer. In D. Nauwelaer, O. Kleinberg & C. Rätzlaff-Först (Hrsg.), Rahmen- und Gegebenheitsbedingungen für eine innovative, praxisorientierte und phasenübergreifende Lehrkräftebildung. Beiträge aus der Qualitätsoffensive Lehrerbildung in M-V (S. 65-74). Budrich.

[4] Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK) (2024). Empfehlungen zur schulischen Bildung, Beratung und Unterstützung von Kindern und Jugendlichen im sonderpädagogischen Schwerpunkt emotionale und soziale Entwicklung. Abgerufen am 10.07.25 von https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschlu-esse/2024/2024_12_13-Empfehlung-EmSoz-Entwicklung.pdf

[5] Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für die Belange von Menschen mit Behinderungen (2025). Die UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention. Übersichtsnotizen über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen. Abgerufen am 17.09.25 von https://www.behindertenbeauftragter.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/AS/Publikationserklärungen/Broschüre_UNKonvention_KK.html

[6] Lernerise, E. A. & Arsenio, W. F. (2000). An integrated model of emotion processes and cognition in social information processing. Child Development, 71(1), 107-116.

[7] Asen, E. (2017). Entwicklung der Multifamilientherapie. In E. Asen & M. Scholz (Hrsg.), Handbuch der Multifamilientherapie (S. 20-24). Carl-Auer.

[8] Dawson, N. & McHugh, B. (2017). Elternpräsenz in der Schule: Vom Familienklassenzimmer zur Familienschule. In E. Asen & M. Scholz (Hrsg.), Handbuch der Multifamilientherapie (S. 263-276). Carl-Auer.

[9] Huel, J. (2017). Familienklassenzimmer-Strukturen, Werkzeuge und Methoden. In E. Asen & M. Scholz (Hrsg.), Handbuch der Multifamilientherapie (S. 227-296). Carl-Auer.

[10] Kuckartz, U. (2018). Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Methoden, Praxis, Computerunterstützung. Beltz.