Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the autistic children’s play features through exploring everyday life experiences of mothers and their narratives about their children play. This study is a mixed method research (mixture of survey and narrative research), with use of narrative inquiry by semi-structured narrative interview. Eleven mothers who have autistic children were interviewed. Developmental, and personal characteristics of children’s sample (N = 11) were described by a demographic questionnaire family, and children play behaviors has been studied and described by the scale of Social Communication Questionnaire (SCQ), and Preschool Play Behavior Scale (PPBS). Quantitative data analysis, issues (themes) that emerge from in-depth interviews have been grouped and discussed in the form of seven categories. According to narrative inquiry, the most significant features of autistic children that was emerging from mothers’ narratives, are as follows: lack of pleasure from the play, reluctance to play, escape playing, forgetfulness, lack of objective, Repetition of play-like activities, superficiality, Tendency towards unusual and sensory motor stimulating toys and activities, play resistance, inflexible playing. According to quantitative data analysis, in categories such as preferred toys, pretend play, using speech, and the concept of group participation in play, the autistic children sampled were significantly different than the assumed average of pre-schoolers play behavior scale. These findings open wider and deeper vistas towards play characteristics of autistic children and their mothers’ interactions. It encourages therapists to consider these when devising more beneficial and effective therapies.

Keywords: autism, play, mother-child relationship