

Starting school: The importance of parents' expectations

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Abstract

Following the diagnosis of a child's disability parents can find that their expectations are shattered. As they adjust to their new situation they will begin to develop new ideas of what the future will hold. Supporting families is a key theme in current government policy, hence the development of the Early Support Programme. In this paper Fran Russell, who has a son with a learning disability, sets out the rationale for supporting parents through focusing on their expectations. She presents the findings of a research study, conducted as part of her Education Doctorate at Leeds University, which investigated parents' expectations as their disabled child started school. The findings indicate what can help and/or hinder parents developing expectations that are likely to have positive outcomes and so enhance the relationships families develop with support professionals and practitioners. Finally she proposes the development of an Early Years Transition Plan to facilitate this process based on the Family Service Plan, currently being introduced.