

Establishing Effective Partnerships with Parents of Special Needs Students

The professional Special Educator has countless interactions with parents of learning different students. It is critically important that these interactions occur within an environment of sensitivity, cooperation and common sense of purpose. In order to create such an environment, the professionals must gain an understanding of the life experiences of the parent. Current research indicates that parents experience a wide variety of intense and conflicting emotions when endeavoring to deal with the disabled child. It is crucial that professionals understand this process in order to communicate effectively and sensitively with parents.

Among the topics discussed will be:

- Stage theory as related to parental acceptance
- Manifestations of acceptance stages
- Effective communication strategies
- Conducting meaningful, productive parent-teacher conferences

Objectives:

- That the learner will be exposed to the Westhead/Smith model of parental reactions to the LD diagnosis
- That the learner will understand the fragility of the Acceptance Stage of the model
- That the learner will understand the concept of Transdisciplinary education.

© Richard Lavoie