

Parents' Approaches to Social Participation for Their Early Adolescents with Down Syndrome

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Background

The principle of normalization encourages the social participation of individuals with disabilities, and a variety of institutional services are available to support living in communities rather than institutions. For many individuals with disabilities, their parents and families are their primary support networks for living in a community. However, providing this care entails many difficulties that further require support.

Aim of the study

This study aims to elucidate how the parents of early adolescent children with Down syndrome (DS) think about and assist their children with social participation.

Methods

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five parents, and their data were analyzed qualitatively.

Results

The parents' responses and approaches could be grouped into the following categories: lifestyle acquisition and building a healthy body, building interpersonal relationships for support, respecting individuality, realizing a normal life, and connection between parents.

Conclusions and implications

All the parents were working on the different approach categories to help their children with DS adapt to social groups. However, the parents lacked their own support resources, particularly counseling, and they reported that connections with other parents were indispensable for supporting their children's social participation.