

Community Nursing 2016: The role of parents in educating learners with Down syndrome successfully: A narrative journey: Susette Brynard 1

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The aim of the paper is to illustrate the important role that parents can play in the education of learners with Down syndrome (DS). A literature review was done to obtain background information on the concept DS and on the history and possibilities of education for learners with DS, as well as on the role of the parent in the education of learners with DS. A qualitative case study, focusing on the narrative approach was implemented to illustrate the management of the educational opportunities and thus, the self-fulfillment of all learners with DS. The educational history of an academically successful girl with DS was followed in order to establish what lay behind her success. From the findings it can be deduced that parents and educators should collaborate to enhance the educational opportunities of learners with DS. The contribution this paper makes is to convey to educators and parents the important role they can play in the advancement of the education of learners with DS, as a possible way to give these learners a better chance to live a meaningful life. The assumption is that if learners with DS receive optimal stimulation and encouragement from their parents and teachers in collaboration with one another, from an early age, their educational skills and self-fulfillment will benefit to a large extent. This will improve their opportunities to become valued human beings. The aim of the paper is to illustrate the important role that parents can play in the education of learners with Down syndrome (DS). A literature review was done to obtain background information on the concept DS and on the history and possibilities of education for learners with DS, as well as on the role of the parents in the education of learners with DS. A qualitative case study, focusing on the narrative approach was implemented to illustrate the management of the educational opportunities and thus, the self-fulfillment of all learners with DS. The educational history of an academically successful girl with DS was followed in order to establish, what lay behind her success. From the findings, it can be deduced that parents and educators should collaborate to enhance the educational opportunities of learners with DS. The contribution this article makes, is to convey, the educators and parents the important role they can play in the advancement of the education of learners with DS, as a possible way to give these learners a better chance to live a meaningful life.

The assumption is that, if learners with DS receive optimal stimulation and encouragement from their parents and teachers in collaboration with one another, from an early age, their educational skills and self-fulfillment will benefit to a larger extent. This will improve their opportunities to become valued human beings. Susette Brynard is currently a Lecturer in Education Management at the University Free State, South Africa. Previously, she was Head of the Department of Natural Sciences, Bloemfontein College of Education. She has completed her BSc degree from the University Free State. While lecturing Biology at an education college, she commenced her studies at the University of the Free State, where she received BEd (honors) and MEd Degrees Cum Laude and then her PhD. She received numerous awards during her studies and published 2 papers on education and development of Down syndrome learners. She has been involved in creating opportunities for Down syndrome children and provided support for parents and families with Down syndrome children for many years. She is doing ground-breaking work on the role of parents in the education of Down syndrome learners.

Foot Note: This work is partly presented at event of the 6th World Congress on Community Nursing, June 20-21, 2016, at Cape Town, South Africa