

From Help to Partnership: Empowering Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities through Leading a Parent Association

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Abstract:

This paper explores the transformation of traditional support models for parents of children with developmental disabilities into participatory, partnership-based approaches. Drawing from the personal experience of a young leader of a parent-run association, it highlights the challenges and successes encountered in fostering an inclusive, empowering environment for families. The presentation discusses the importance of shifting from a passive model of receiving help to one where parents are active participants, decision-makers, and advocates. Through examples of community engagement, peer support networks, and capacity-building initiatives, the paper offers insights into building sustainable, parent-led structures that respond to real needs and promote long-term empowerment. The case study underscores the value of lived experience in leadership and the role of grassroots organizations in promoting diversity, resilience, and social inclusion.