

Parental perspectives on the inclusion of their children with developmental disabilities

Vlachou, Anastasia* and Mavropalias, Trifon**
*University of Thessaly, Greece, **8th Elementary School, Greece

The trend towards inclusive education can be partly attributed to the parental advocacy movement towards inclusion. In spite of the importance of parents in making decisions regarding inclusion for their children with disabilities, most inclusion studies have focused on teachers and parents of typically developing children while very limited studies exist concerning parents' of children with disabilities perspectives on this issue. Thus, the aim of this study was 1. to examine Greek parents of children with autism and with Down Syndrome perceptions towards the inclusion for their child with disabilities, as well as 2. what parents view as advantages of their child's current placement and which placement they view as ideal. About 100 parents completed surveys regarding their opinions on their child's current educational placement, their desire for changing the current placement, and their views on inclusive education. The preliminary analysis indicated that diagnosis, age and current placement influence parental opinions on the ideal educational placement for their child. Parents of children with Down syndrome, as well as parents of younger children and those whose children are already placed in general education programs are more positive towards inclusion than parents of children with autism, of older children or children currently attending special education. Implications are discussed.