



“Perspectives of parents: What’s working in mainstream schools today?”

Presented by: Dr Melissa Cain & Melissa Fanshawe

Methodology

We interviewed 15 parents of students

- Age 12- 17
- Acuity from 6/24 to no light perception
- Range of conditions both congenital and degenerative
- State, Catholic and independent schools
- Large urban and smaller urban towns



Theme 1: Parents' experiences of advocating for their children

- Willingness to advocate
- Positive experiences
- Negative experiences
- Misaligned agendas



Theme 2: Parents' experiences of utilising support networks and funding

- Support networks
- Mental health and well-being



Theme 3: Parents' suggestions for schools and teachers

- Person first
- Teacher attitudes matter
- Supportive parent/teacher relationship
- Parents want advice from outside agencies



Implications for practice: 'ethic of community'

- Teachers should be aware that there are many varied conditions that cause VI and thus every child's functional experience of VI is different.
- Teachers should endeavour to be proactive, reaching out to parents, students and external consultants, respecting the knowledge and experience they all bring.
- Students should be consulted to provide their solutions to educational barriers.
- Where possible, students should be introduced to role models of successful young adults with VI.





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