

Educational support of children with intellectual disabilities in foster care system

Nonhlanhla Desiree Maseko

*University of Johannesburg, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational psychology,
South Africa*

ABSTRACT

The article explore ways in which caregivers are involved in the educational support of children with intellectual disabilities using Attachment Theory and based on evidence drawn from four case studies. The article argue that every foster child needs a designated caregiver to act as that child's individual advocate. An assigned caregiver not only can intervene with the school system on the child's behalf but can offer the encouragement a child needs to achieve his educational aspirations. Qualitative research was used as the mode of inquiry since this study is concerned with the lived experiences of caregivers within the foster care settings. Eight caregivers were purposefully selected from four foster care centres that cater for orphaned and abused children as well as children with intellectual disabilities. Semi-structured interviews with participants were conducted, and field notes were used to provide contextual details. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings revealed training as a major need required by caregivers, taking into consideration that most caregivers were not trained prior to caring and supporting children with intellectual disabilities. Moreover, in most cases children placed in foster care come with diverse needs due to unhealthy experiences of neglect.

Keywords: intellectual disabilities; support; caregivers; foster care; attachment