

## Defending the Right to Send Children with Disabilities to the Local School in New Zealand

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**Abstract :** This paper draws on one to one interviews with parents of children with high and complex needs conducted in 2019. Those interviewed were asked questions around various areas of well-being, and these were transcribed and then thematically analysed. Results were plotted to identify strategies that enhance resilience in parents of children with physical disabilities. The parents were asked to highlight challenges in the support systems they utilized, and all of those interviewed identified difficulties in the New Zealand education system. Legally in New Zealand, children have the right to attend their local primary school, but for 100% of those interviewed, this was an issue. This paper will discuss the way these parents navigated the New Zealand education system in order to defend this right for their children. The New Zealand education system is having to become more inclusive through parental actions despite precarious times of counter-movement by the New Zealand government.

**Keywords :** autoethnography, human rights, inclusion, parents voice in disability

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