

Using a Strength Based Approach to Teaching Children with Special Needs

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Abstract : The purpose of this presentation is to look at an alternative to the approach and methodologies of working with a child with special needs. The strength-based approach to education embodies a paradigm shift. It is a strategy to move away from a deficit-based methodology which inadvertently may lead to an extensive list of things that the child cannot do or is unable to do. Today, many parents of individuals with special needs are focused on the individual's deficits rather than on his or her strengths. Even when parents recognise and identify their child's savant strengths to be valuable and wish to develop their abilities, they face the challenge that there are insufficient programs committed to supporting the development and improvement of such abilities. What is a strength-based approach in education? A strength-based approach in education focuses on students' positive qualities and contributions to class instead of the skills and abilities they may not have. Many schools are focused on the child's special educational needs rather than the whole child. Parents interviewed have said that they have to engage external tutors to help hone in on their child's interests and strengths. The strength-based approach to writing statements encourages educators to find out: • What a child can do • What a child can do when he or she is given educational support • Learning more about children with special needs and their strengths and talents will broaden our understanding of how we can help them with language acquisition, social skills, as well as self-help and independence skills.

Keywords : special needs, strengths, and talents, alternative educational approach, strength based approach

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