



Parent engagement - A case Study

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The case study presented examines the hypothesis that, support, to address a shortfall in meeting the needs of children with dyslexia, can be forthcoming when parent advocates engage with the community, especially when efforts are grounded in a culture of positive, collective self-advocacy. First, the term dyslexia is described, and the socioeconomic context of Tasmania, the study's location. The Australian Government's position on learning disabilities, dyslexia in particular, and, social reality of support for dyslexics in other states in Australia, is given. Data follows from the case study, which supports findings that in Tasmania, wide deficits in identification and support for children with dyslexia are apparent. However, data also supported the hypothesis that, through community engagement, parent advocacy, empowered effective change, advantageous for their own children, but also other children with dyslexia in the wider community. Also identified are the collaborative links and engagement across other community agencies. Using the concept of Bordieu's 'Social Capital' (1986) parent organisations as community organisations, help to overcome challenges and isolation felt by many parents, and instead work towards shared goals, sharing information, developing trust and a sense of efficacy. (E.g., within Australia bonds between the individual and 'collective' or 'community' parent and friends school associations). This case study is contextualised within Australia's island state Tasmania, and, represented here are rural and urban communities and parent support within both regions. Durkheim (1964) posits that although all bonds maybe experienced in the traditional or modern society, moral and social bonds predominate in the traditional or rural society, while economic bonds predominate in the modern or urban world. Revisiting these 'ideal' types of social bonds may offer insights into parents' meanings, and strengths and the individual's sense of belonging.