



Communicating Research in Clear Language

Family Care for Children with Disabilities

What is the research about?

Many families living with children with disabilities deal with the hard task of balancing the needs of their child with those of the entire family. In this study, the researchers surveyed parents to find out what influences some families to consider out-of-home placement for their special needs child, while others do not.

What did the researchers do?

The researchers used the responses to the Family Life Survey of 538 parents of children with special needs in Alberta, Canada. This survey looked at various traits of the families and their children. The survey also included questions about the social and financial resources available to the families. They then asked the families how likely they were to seek out-of-home placement for their children with special needs.

What did the researchers find?

The researchers found that increasing child age and behaviour problems may cause families to consider placement. However, they also found that placement is probably only seriously considered when families are struggling to maintain a daily routine that meets their needs.

Take home message

This study showed that families with the social and financial resources they need to maintain a routine – one that matches their ideals and needs – are unlikely to consider out-of-home placement for their child with special needs. Citing the findings of this study, the authors advocate for programs that help promote shared parental responsibilities, the removal of obstacles to primary caregiver participation in the workforce, and the need for more affordable and flexible day and health care options for children with special needs.

Note: This [Research Report](#) was written by D. McConnell and colleagues and published in the Journal of Child and Family Studies. 2015.