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ABSTRACT

An asset-based approach such as Positive Deviance (PD) offers a credible alternate framework to need-based approaches for planning and developing projects of social relevance. Effective early childhood intervention for children with special needs is an area of priority which could benefit from an approach that seeks solutions from within the community to achieve favourable outcomes and reduce dependencies on external agencies. This qualitative study aims to better understand the application of a PD approach to coping with dual schooling of children with special needs facing early childhood challenges. Investigative inquiry into patterns of thought, emotion and behaviour of six at-risk, low resourced parents of developmentally delayed children, between the ages of 3 and 6 years of age, were carried out through individual interviews. The PD strategies employed in achieving favourable outcomes were identified. The results reported that despite the challenges and negative experiences recorded, these parents through their positive thoughts, emotional courage and adaptive and resilient behaviours seem to overcome their at-risk situations and emerge as winners. The implications for future research are discussed.