

Communicating with a parent who has a learning challenge ***Sensitivity to parent's reality and situation***

The more aware of, and sensitive to, a person's circumstances, the more effective your communication with them can be.

So, consider:

1. Could the parent feel threatened by you?
 - i) Does she have a fear of losing custody of her child?
 - ii) Does she have a fear of losing her role as a parent?
Sometimes parents get social validation only through their role as a parent, i.e. having a child gives the parent status or may be the first time he/she is treated as adult.
2. What role does isolation and/or poverty play in the situation?
3. What is the parent's ability level with regard to:
 - i) Reading
 - ii) Communication skills
 - iii) Physical ability
4. Is the problem/issue the result of a lack of knowledge on the part of the parent? For example, are they unaware of expectations, developmental stages, etc.?
5. Is the situation you are dealing with the result of the parent attempting to get his/her own needs met at the expense of the child? Is there a need for additional resources for the family?
6. Are your expectations realistic given the resources and abilities of the parent?
7. Are your expectations realistic given the values held by this family?