

family

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Abstract

A list of points drawn up by the International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicaps to mark International Year of the Family. They all relate to issues of justice and equality for people with disabilities and their families, with an emphasis on inclusion in the community. **Keyword: Inclusion**

LEARNING MESSAGES

The fifteen points listed below are those drawn up by the International League of Societies of Persons with Mental Handicaps to mark the International Year of the Family.

- 1 All people are valued members of the world community.
- 2 People with a mental handicap and their families are equal participating members of their communities and have the same rights:
 - to participate in decisions which affect their lives.
 - to diversity of choice for housing, education, work, recreation and leisure.
 - to equity and justice.
 - to be empowered to take their full place in the community.
 - to dignity and privacy in all aspects of their lives.
- 3 We are likely to experience disability at some time in our lives, either personally or through members of our family or community.
- 4 Society can add to or lessen disability.
- 5 People with a mental handicap have abilities. They can and do contribute to society. Their ability to contribute is usually underestimated.
- 6 People with a disability have the right to be consulted, to make informed choices and to exercise control in planning their own lives.
- 7 People with a disability and their families and carers have an important contribution to make to policy development, planning and delivery of services and to training about disability issues.
- 8 It is normal to be different.
- 9 People with a disability have useful knowledge about their own needs, strengths and abilities.
- 10 Families with a member who has a disability have knowledge about their own needs, strengths and abilities.
- 11 Families need information.

- 12 Support for families with a member who has a disability makes economic sense.
- 13 Definitions of the family must reflect the wide range of family arrangement and forms found in society.
- 14 Usually it is in the best interest of the family member with a disability to remain within the family environment at least during childhood. Families require practical support in order to fulfil this role. We need to avoid state exploitation of families.
- 15 The interests, safety and welfare of the person with a disability should as far as possible be shared by both parents. Fathers and mothers both have a vital role in creating a beneficial family environment. Both can make a valuable contribution to the functioning of supportive organisations and where possible should be actively involved in such organisations.