

FAMILIES, RIGHTS & DISABILITY, 23 & 24 June 2017

Information on Keynotes

Prof. Able (University of North Carolina, USA) will focus on autism as a lifelong disability requiring continual service and supports to ensure success for both the individual with autism and the family. The effects of disability on family quality of life will be highlighted along with strategies to promote successful adult outcomes for individuals with high functioning autism. A summary of interviews with adolescents with autism and their families regarding their future aspirations will be provided. An emphasis on the elements required for a family-focused transition process will be described.

Prof. Köbsell (Alice-Salomon-Hochschule Berlin, Germany) will provide information about the history and current practices of women with disabilities in Germany. Historically, women were denied motherhood and were seen as unfit for parenting - first for eugenic reasons, later becoming a mother and being judged as irresponsible and burdening the children. Until the early 1990s, women with disabilities were sterilized, often without their consent. With a new law on legal guardianship in 1992, sterilization became illegal and motherhood an option in Germany. Since then, many initiatives have been developed which support mothers/parents with disabilities - but still the right to procreate often is contested. It is a human right and considered as such by the United Nations CRPD, which has been a driving force in Germany since 2009.

Prof. McLaughlin (University of Newcastle, UK) will describe the care relationships in families of children with disabilities. This discussion will explore how interdependency is a helpful way of thinking about care, rather than the assumption that the child is a burden to the family and potentially not perceived as a caregiver within those family relationships. She will discuss how interdependency draws the public and private sectors together as well as how it helps to rethink care in families and society.

Prof. Strain (University of Colorado, USA) will focus on important intervention strategies that have been associated with rapid, durable, and socially valid changes in child behaviour, parenting behaviour, and family quality of life. These important strategies include: eliminating stigmatizing, logistical, and economic barriers to support; providing peer-to-peer opportunities; determining the length and intensity of intervention for maximum outcomes; providing supplemental health services and related supports when necessary; and assessing long-term impacts for families and society.

Prof. Traustadottir (University of Iceland) will discuss her personal journal and scholarly experiences as a result of thirty years of research with families of children with disabilities. Her approach has been to combine gender and disability perspectives in working toward social change and social justice. Much of her research examines the intersection of disability and other categories of inequality and how these create multiple layers of discrimination and social exclusion in the lives of people who have a disability with a particular emphasis on preventing violence against women who are disabled. She will discuss some of the lessons learned and challenges in the future.