

Collective Values of the Beach Center

Rud and Ann Turnbull

Rud: We have some slogans at the Beach Center that underlines our research, so we take our research and we try to shape it in little encapsulated ideas that people can use. One is great expectations; we should expect great things from people with disabilities and their families. Unless we expect great things, we will never ask for them. Second, full citizenship, the notion that we belong just as everybody else belongs with all the rights and responsibilities pertinent thereto. Third, the notion of choice; we all want some choices around our lives. This has to do with the Medicaid business that Ann was talking about. Fourth, the notion of positive contribution. Why don't you talk about positive contribution, Ann, and then relationships.

Ann: Much research in the past only used instruments that enabled families to report the negative things about their experience, their extent of depression, their extent of stress, their extent of worry. There was very little written about the fact that yes there are many challenges associated with raising children with disabilities or children without disabilities also. But, also many positives that children with special needs contribute. One of the things about our Beach Center's legacy is we were one of the first programs that developed instruments, research tools that people could use that enable families to report positives as well as negatives, and for many families to be able to really affirm the things that they especially appreciated about their children with disabilities. That is a message that we try to get out, that nothing is ever all terrible or all wonderful. Those things are many different shades of grey and some of those shades of grey are the many positives that people with disabilities bring to their families.

Rud: The major word these days is accountability. Both No Child Left Behind acts and Individuals With Disabilities Education Act require accountability by the provider systems, and by the students and by the parents. I think that this emphasis on accountability is very important because it is going to make us perform better. It is going to drive the services. The other thought of it is this, that the people who are making policy should also be held accountable for the consequences of their decisions. Again, accountability is a two-way street. Unless they fund it and all they do is put rhetoric on the street and there has been so much rhetoric and so little reality. We have to make what happens on the books correspond to what happens on the streets and vice-versa.

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