



Northern Light Christian Counseling

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Parents' Response to Their Special Needs Children

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It takes courage to bring children into a fallen world. Our faith teaches us to accept children as gifts from God. Even so, courage and commitment cannot fully prepare parents for the challenges presented by special needs children.

Special needs children suffer physical, emotional, and cognitive problems such as autism, sense impairments, epilepsy, mental and emotional disabilities, and debilitating injuries. Parents whose children are so afflicted tend to respond similarly.

- **Disappointment:** Parents experience a crushing sense of disillusionment and despair. Well-meaning clinicians sometimes make things worse by emphasizing “worse case scenarios”, ostensibly to help the parents “be realistic” about treatment options.
- **Prudence:** Many parents have told me that they had to “disbelieve” the experts to regain a sense of hope. They were not denying the problem. Rather, they accepting their children and taking personal responsibility for their care.
- **Acceptance:** Committed parents seek current information and fellowship. They consult experts, read books, and surf the web, opening themselves to advice and support—particularly from other parents who are in the same boat.

The local church is a great place to start a support group for such parents, or to sponsor special events (e.g. a sweetheart's banquet, marriage retreat, or information seminar) with them in mind. By doing so, Christians say “We understand why people are born imperfect, we know who will heal them, and we want to be part of the work!”