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The lived experience of placing a child into residential care; what parents need you to know

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Advances in healthcare and technology have resulted in the survival of infants and children suffering from prematurity, diseases, disorders and accidents that would have claimed their lives in the past, but now are left with a diagnosis of developmental disability. It is estimated roughly 4.5 million individuals in the United States are diagnosed as having a developmental disability which affects the individual's mental and/or physical functioning for their entire life. Caring for these children at home places may be stressors on parents and families. When the burden of providing this care becomes overwhelming, parents seek out of home placements. The purpose of this study was to determine how parents negotiate the transition process once the child has been placed. Findings can offer guidance to nurses and other health care professionals to better understand this process and provide insights as to how to best assist parents in the process. This topic was explored using the phenomenological inquiry method of qualitative research. Interviews were conducted with parents of developmentally disabled children within three years of initial residential placement.

Biography

Eileen O Costello is a doctorally prepared RN with over 30 years of experience in Pediatric Nursing. She has worked with children requiring complex care and their families for over 20 years, in both acute care and home environment. For the past 18 years, she has provided nursing students with a clinical education experience in a long-term care pediatric facility in Massachusetts. Her DNP research is focused on parents' experiences of transitioning their medically complex child into residential care.

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