

The rights of young children with disabilities: moving beyond the UNCRC

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Quality early years experiences are of critical importance for all children, but particularly so for children with disabilities. This presentation will explore how the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and subsequently the UN Convention on the Rights of Children with disabilities, contribute to understanding as to how those experiences need to be provided. These treaties have re-defined the discourse around disability, through recognition that children with disabilities are subjects of rights and that this necessitates more than simply the provision of specially adapted services. They require awareness of, and commitment to removing the multiple barriers at all levels of society that impede inclusion, justice and equity. They require a focus on redefining disability through a lens on functioning rather than impairment. And they introduce a shift from seeing children with disabilities as recipients of charity and welfare to being subjects of rights entitled to respect for their dignity and participation on an equal basis with all other children. These approaches have significant implications for health professionals.