EMPOWERING ABILITY IN DISABILITY: POSITIVE ASPECTS OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES
The presence of a child with disability can impact the family in many ways. There are increased pressures and demands on the family in terms of financial commitments, daily care and education of the disabled child. Siblings may feel ignored. These demands are often viewed negatively.
However there are positive aspects of caring for a child with intellectual disabilities. These aspects have helped individuals foster positive attitudes that have helped them contribute positively to their families, community and society at large.
WHY SHOULD WE FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE ASPECTS?
Focusing on positive aspects helps in better acceptance of the child with an intellectual disability. This encourages the child and the family to have a positive attitude towards their problems.
Having a positive attitude towards intellectual disabilities can help develop creative and vocational abilities in persons with intellectual disabilities.
Focusing on positive aspects leads to positive perceptions. Having positive perceptions allows the families to develop better coping strategies. Coping strategies help families and children with intellectual disabilities deal with day to day challenges.
Good coping strategies lead to a better quality of life for the child with intellectual disability and his/her family.
POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS OF CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES
Emotions expressed by children with intellectual disabilities are very genuine in nature. This is because they are not based on any selfish need. Happiness, joy and affection are genuinely expressed as when any situation occurs.
Individuals with intellectual disabilities never want to intentionally hurt anyone. They are pure of thought and emotion. At times, they may have difficulty in expressing themselves. But they never intend to cause harm to anyone.
Individuals with intellectual disabilities embrace their routine and work wholeheartedly and often do it better than other people. For them their routine and work are a form of therapy that helps them to deal with their disability.
Individuals with intellectual disabilities have a consistent way of doing things. If they are given a task that they have been trained for then they will do it honestly and with sincerity. Therefore, they are trustworthy.
POSITIVE IMPACT OF AN INDIVIDUAL WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY ON THE FAMILY
Caring for an individual with intellectual disabilities makes parents more tolerant and patient over time. Patience and Tolerance are powerful choices that help families direct their lives.

When parents caring for individuals with disabilities act on these choices, it allows them to build on their strengths.
Parents give unconditional love and affection to the child. They try to unify the family to create a supportive environment.

They often create networks of other parents and families who are supporting individuals with disabilities and emerge as community leaders.

They campaign for laws and policies that give better support to individuals with intellectual disabilities in the society.
Caring for a sibling with a disability requires a lot of understanding.

Brothers/sisters will often sacrifice their own pleasures and time to care for them.

This makes the brothers/sisters of individuals with intellectual disabilities more sensitive and caring individuals.
Caring for a child with intellectual disability often brings the entire family very close to each other. The family becomes a much stronger unit as a result of this.
Caring for an individual with intellectual disability helps the family develop empathy and ability to care for others.

It is difficult for the family member to understand the needs of an individual with intellectual disability as they may not be able to communicate their needs properly.

Family members often try to understand the disabled person's perspective, to better understand their needs.

This improves and develops their empathy.
It is not the disability which impacts the family but it is the interpretation of the disability or how you look at the disability that matters.

1. Having a positive attitude can make a tremendous difference to how a family approaches the care and development of a child with intellectual disabilities

2. Positive perspective fosters positive attitudes