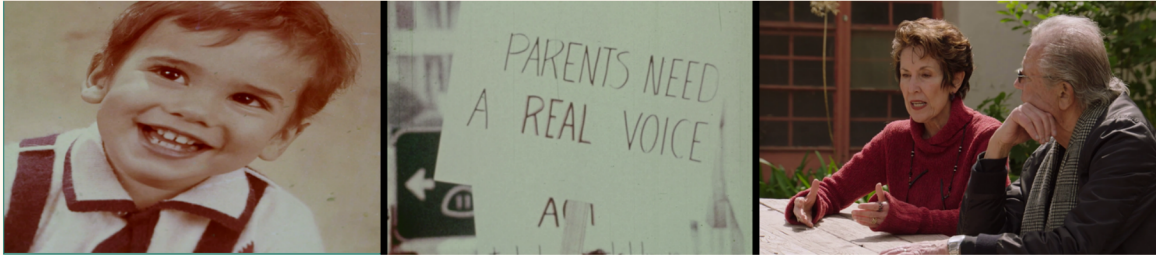


IN A DIFFERENT KEY:
THE AUTISM UNDERSTANDING TOOLKIT

WRONG IDEAS: "Ineducability"



INTRODUCTORY CONTEXT

(suggested)

Today, US law guarantees disabled children a free and appropriate public education – as spelled out in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and implemented case-by-case through the individual education plan (IEP) developed for each child in consultation between parents and educators. Despite the law, many families still struggle to fully access the services they expect for their children, while school districts face challenges in both funding and teacher training to meet the need. But when we look back – to not so long ago – we see the barriers to education for children on the autism spectrum were once far greater, because of deep social attitudes about who deserved to go to school. Here are a few scenes from the documentary IN A DIFFERENT KEY showing the lengths parents once had to go to just to get their child into a classroom, and how the world was changed by those who refused to give up.

KEY THEMES

- The obstacles to education before passage of the IDEA
- How labels like "ineducable" once gave schools a pass
- The powerful impact of parent activism.
- The role of money and status in opportunities given to autistic children
- The part schools play in an autistic child's support system

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Why are educators and schools so vital to people with autism and their families?

Should any child ever be considered "ineducable"?

How have attitudes about autistic people changed over the last 50 years?

Do they need to change more?

What role do parents play as their child's advocate?