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# Growing up with disability in Norway – family perspectives

Jan Tøssebro\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>NTNU Social Research – Dragvoll NO-7491 Trondheim, Norway

## Abstract

Background: Since the 1960s, the policies on disabled children in Norway have rejected the idea of institutionalisation. All children should grow up with their family but this is expected to take place in a division of labour between families and the welfare state – the welfare state is supposed to provide the services needed to make both the childhood and the family life as normal as possible. Aim: The aim of this presentation is to scrutinize the division of labour between families and the welfare state for families with disabilities growing up after the major inclusion reforms in the 1990s, from the perspective of families. Methods: Longitudinal survey (n=603) and interview (n=31) data on families of disabled children born 1993-95, with five waves of data gathering (1999, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012). Results: Results are conflicting. On the one hand, responses to questions on service quality suggest reasonable satisfaction. On the other hand, parents express substantial frustrations regarding their interaction with public agencies and in particular access to services. Discussion: The main part of the presentation is the discussion on how to understand the conflicting results. It is argued that even in an advanced welfare state like Norway, barriers to access is tacitly used to produce disincentives to seek public support. Measures to avoid exploitation of the system have thus substantial impact on the everyday life of the families for whom the services are intended.

**Keywords:** Children, family, service systems

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\*Speaker