

## **Abstract**

The aim of the study was to explore the experiences of parents who have had to deal with the realisation that their child was developing at a distinctly slower pace intellectually than their peers and how they then perceived their intellectually disabled child. A small sample was used, that comprised of seven participants. For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research method was applied to gain an in-depth understanding of the parents' experiences and perceptions of their intellectually disabled child. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher to collect data and every measure was taken to adhere to ethical considerations. Once the data had been collected through interviews, the information was analysed using thematic content analysis. Various themes were established and from these themes it was ascertained that parents' overall experience of their child's intellectual disability was met with both positive and negative feelings. Furthermore, the support which they received from external sources proved vital in enabling them to accept as well as cope with the demands of caring for a child with an intellectual disability. On the whole, parents' perceptions and attitudes towards disability were shown to further influence the impact of disability on the family as a whole.