

## Parent movement in South Korea

- From carers to advocates and experts

Jonsul Yoon

President, Korean Parents Network for People with Disabilities

### Abstract

This article introduces a development of parent movement, which is also called as family movement, in South Korea. Unlike western world where parent movement began in late 1940s' and early 1950s', parents of children with disabilities in South Korea remained as devoted carers who struggled to solve difficulties, faced by their children, as individuals in isolation until 1990s'.

Prior to 1990's, Special Education Act did not ensure the education right of children with disabilities, which resulted in frequent refusals of school admission. In 1991, parents first organized a coalition on legislation of basic education rights for children with disabilities and started to work on general issues on education as well as tax reduction for people with intellectual disabilities.

In 2000s, parents became more assertive on inclusive education and social inclusion, which was influenced the development of general disability rights movement in South Korea. In 2003, local parents' organizations made a nation-wide coalition on legislation of the Special Education Act, and the coalition undertook four years-long campaign until the Act was established.

Since the legislation, the parents from the coalition established a nation-wide parents' organization 'Korean Parents' Network for People with Disabilities(KPNPD)', which transform parents' role from devoted individual carers to disability rights advocates and experts who know best for their children.