

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

- AND HOW TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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HOW TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Contents

Special Needs Children	3
Notes on Disability and Labelling	4
Teaching Special Needs Children	6
Identifying Special Needs Children	7
Assessment of Special Needs	8
Setting Specific Learning Objectives	13
Teaching Programmes	15
Individual Education Plans	21
Sample Individual Education Plans	22
Teaching Resources	26
Integration Within Mainstream Classes	28
Handling Disruptive Behaviour	29
Managing Anger and Frustration	30
The Gifted child	34
A Sample School Policy on Students with Special Needs	38
Being An Effective Classroom Assistant	46

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN



More about the gifted child later.



The term 'special needs children' applies to a great variety of children, from extremely gifted in some area, to extremely physically and mentally disabled.

A child might have special needs in only one area or in many, or on a permanent or temporary basis.

First and foremost, all special needs children are children who have the right to be educated. Secondly, they are likely to need extra assistance or an individualized programme to help them make progress.

The majority can be (and in fact already are) catered for in a regular class.

All special needs children can make progress with an appropriate programme.

Regardless of the type of disability, or its cause, or whether the child is in a special or regular educational facility, the teacher has the task of providing an appropriate educational programme, and ensuring that the child makes progress.

Special needs children often don't make adequate progress unless they receive some sort of individualized programme which takes into account their special needs.

This book sets out to show teachers how to identify and assess special needs and provide appropriate programmes that meet students' special educational needs.

Precision Teaching is the key.



Doorway to Successful Teaching



NOTES ON DISABILITY AND LABELLING

STAFFROOM



I think the best place for disabled children is at a special school where their needs can be met.



I've got enough to do without having to prepare an individual programme for a special needs child.



Don't you think I've got the right to go to an ordinary school? How would you like it if you were excluded from some group?

Labelling the child's disability may help you understand the child better, or make you aware of relevant medical factors but it is also likely to result in generalizations being made which may not be true.



Oh, Down's Syndrome children can't do maths.

A statement like that becomes an excuse for not teaching the child maths and not expecting any progress.



A disability label does not tell you what the child currently knows or can do, nor what they need to know, nor how to teach them.

A disability label does sometimes help to acquire additional resources.

A label focuses attention on the disability, and how the child is different. It might be better to focus on what the child can do, and how they are similar to other children.



Often, the difference between successful and unsuccessful instances of educating special needs children in a regular class boils down to the attitude and commitment of the school and teacher.

Teachers who develop their skills in meeting special educational needs generally become more effective in teaching all students.



I think the whole school benefits from having a special needs child ... and other children certainly don't have the hang ups and prejudices that adults do.

TYPES OF DISABILITY

1A. Congenital Disability is where a child is born with a disability as a result of

- genetic factors or
- injury while still in the womb, eg. spina bifida, Downs Syndrome, muscular dystrophy.

1B. Post natal disability developed after birth as a result of

- injury
- disease
- infection eg. polio, meningitis, accidents.

2A. Permanent Disability cannot be cured or rectified although medicine, surgery, training and therapy may alleviate some or all of the symptoms.

2B. Temporary Disability might last from as little as a day or two to several years. Can be cured or healing can occur, or be rectified with special equipment. But, effects of temporary disability may be long-lasting or permanent.

3A. Physical disability impairs a bodily function in some way. May or may not be associated with other disabilities.

3B. Intellectual Disability may be a general low level of intellectual functioning, or only show in a narrow area eg. a specific disability in the area of reading.

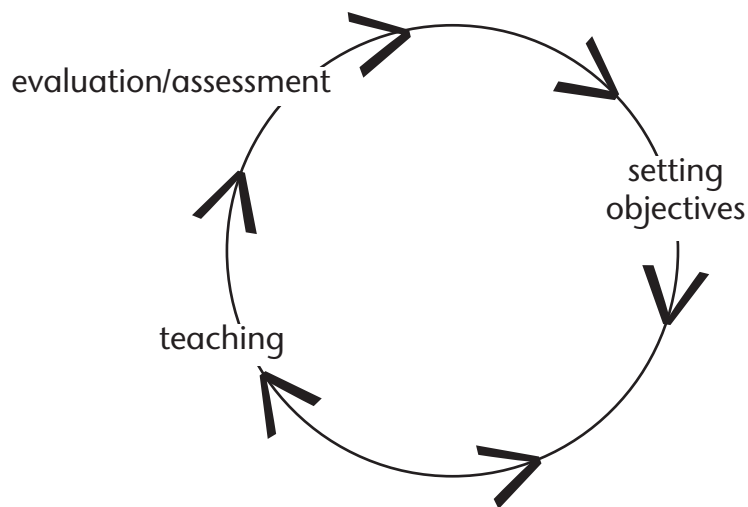
3C. Social / Emotional / Behavioural these are not necessarily the same, but are characterised by behaviour that is considered to be outside the acceptable 'norms' of society, and typically interfere with developing and maintaining social relationships.



TEACHING SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

Whatever the nature of the child good teaching requires

- careful assessment
- setting educational objectives based on that assessment
- implementing a teaching programme
- evaluation to assess progress
- setting new objectives



Teaching doesn't look that complicated.

No, but it looks different if you think of 36 wheels like that bowling along in your classroom.

The Teaching/Learning Cycle

Exactly the same applies to teaching special needs children, it's just that everything has to be done more carefully and precisely to achieve success. The precision teaching model shows teachers how to do just that.

The Precision Teaching Model

-Steps involved in successfully educating the special needs child -

Step 1. Identify children with special needs and the areas they need assistance in.

Step 2. Careful assessment.

Step 3. Set specific learning objectives.

Step 4. Plan the Individual Teaching Programme.

Step 5. Implement Teaching programme and monitor progress.

Step 6. Evaluate progress and modify programme or set new objective.

IDENTIFYING SPECIAL NEEDS



Hey! Wait a minute. If not all special needs children have obvious disabilities, how am I going to know who they are?



I'll sit quietly down at the back so the teacher doesn't ask me.



I'll hide behind this locker so the teacher doesn't know who I am.

He seems to be reading OK-but he hasn't got a clue what he is reading about.



I'll copy Daniel's answers so the teacher won't know that I can't do my sums.



I'll be naughty so that not everyone will know that I can't do this work.



Teachers' routine assessments of children at the beginning of and during the year should quickly show up children performing at a very low level and making little progress - but it is better to find out before the year begins so not as much time is wasted before an appropriate educational programme is implemented for that student

You can get information from:

- parents
- the previous teacher
- the child
- the previous school/nursery
- record cards
- health notes
- your own assessments (speech, academic, use of language concepts, physical, eg. hand-eye co-ordination; fine motor skills, emotional stability).
- behaviour or developmental check-lists
- observing the child

Running children through simple screening tests and developmental check-lists will often show up children who differ markedly from the norm, and pin-point areas for more careful assessment.

For physically disabled students, identification is easy enough, but identifying areas to focus on first will require consultation with specialists such as psychologists, speech therapists, advisers on hearing / visually impaired, occupational therapists etc, as well as parents / caregivers.

The following page lists some factors to check out when looking for and assessing special needs in the areas of language development, reading, maths and physical development.