

***Helping Children with Social – Emotional Problems**

Dr. Jitendra Nagpal*
Mrs. Divya S. Prasad[©]

“A boy or a girl may be quite smart and may become a clever and efficient person if suitable education and training are given. But if no arrangements are made for the education or training, what is the poor boy or girl to do”

- Jawaharlal Nehru

A Global Problem

The Report on Mental Health (WHO, 2001) estimates a global burden of ‘Serious Emotional Disturbances’ in children and adolescents upto 15%. The global magnitude of the problem is also re-iterated, or perhaps best summarized in the recent World Health Report (2001):

“Contrary to popular belief, mental, emotional and behavioural disorders are common during childhood and adolescence. Inadequate attention is paid to this area of mental health. In a recent report, the Surgeon General of the United States (DHHS 2001) has said that the United States is facing a public crisis in mental health of infants, children and adolescents”.

Further, “one in ten young people suffers from mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment, yet fewer than one in five receives the needed treatment. The situation in large parts of the developing world is likely to be even more unsatisfactory”.

The Indian Scenario

- India - children and adolescents constitute 40%- 44% of over 1000 million population
- 10-12 % of < 18 years suffer from disorders in behaviour, learning and development
- ICMR (2001) study found 12.8% of children and adolescents suffering from mental and behavioural Disorders.
- Child mental health care received scant attention in service, research and training aspects in the national context, despite sound policy guidelines.

In school, large numbers of socially and emotionally disturbed children with increasingly difficult learning and behaviour problems concern more and more educators. Mental health professionals are being asked to help educators with these problems. It is clear that in the foreseeable future, there will not be enough treatment time and trained personnel

* Consultant Psychiatrist & Co-Ordinator, Child Development & Adolescent Health Centre (CDAHC), VIMHANS, New Delhi

[©] Clinical Child Psychologist
Child Development & Adolescent Health Centre (CDAHC), VIMHANS, New Delhi

available to help disturbed youngsters. The philosophy of inclusive education becomes vital for developing both preventive and therapeutic educational measures.

It is not important that children with social and emotional problems also show problems in learning. However, if a child has some kind of learning problem, s/he may show repeated failures in the classroom. Because of constant experience of failure, the child may give up, withdraw or try to overcompensate and, in the process, may develop social difficulty in making and retaining friends. Lack of friends may lower one's self-esteem, which even in the absence of any actual learning problem may reduce the child's academic achievement. As a result, sometimes problem, in learning as well as social adjustment are so inter-related that it is by no means easy to separate them.

The child gets further frustrated when parents, other children and teachers reject the child. Rejection may give rise to serious negative emotional reactions from the child, influencing both his/her academic career and social relationships. Conflicts and complexes may develop within the child, making the entire life of the child more difficult and unhappy. These get worse when adequate attention to the real academic problem is not paid.

Many a time, the teacher may pay more attention to the child's problem in learning than understanding the child's emotional problem. As a result, the child's emotional problem may further increase due to lack of attention. Thus, a teacher should try to separate, recognize and deal with both the academic and social problems adequately and effectively. Only when this happens, the problem faced by the child can be focused upon and the child be actually helped.

Identification of Children with Social and Emotional Problems

A teacher can identify such children by using a simple checklist given below:

- Is the child fighting all the time?
- Is the child rude to his/her teacher or other children in the class?
- Is the child too shy?
- Does the child become very nervous too often?
- Does the child act too young for his/her age?
- Does the child look depressed/sad/lost most of the time?
- Is the child too stubborn?
- Does the child indulge in dangerous behaviour like banging his/her head on the desk/ hitting or pushing others?
- Does the child get angry too often?
- Is the child too undisciplined?

Causes of Social and Emotional Behaviour Problems

The following can be a few reasons as to why some children show social and emotional problems:

- Damage to any part of the brain may cause social problems
- Repeated failures in the class
- Constant scolding by the teacher
- Ridicule by other children
- Rejection by parents
- Poor self-concept
- Lack of self-confidence in his/her abilities
- Lack of friends
- Comparison of his/her performance with other children in class and at home by teachers and parents
- Constant fear of being unsuccessful, as the child feels that s/he cannot succeed in anything
- Punishment by teacher and parents
- Broken homes
- Tension at home
- Unhappy family
- Constant fight among parents
- Loss of, or separation from, a parent
- Abuse at home or school
- Neglect by teachers
- Attention problems
- Painful illness
- Use of drugs/tobacco/alcohol from a very early age
- Side effects from use of strong medicines
- Parental depression and stress.

Techniques for Building Self-Concept

A few selected techniques for building self-concept in a child with social and emotional problems may be as follows:

General Teaching Procedures

Many students with child with social and emotional problems have poor self-concept because of failure in all the major areas of life. Misbehaving, giving up and withdrawing are common signs of children with poor self-concept. The development of a positive self-concept is important to a child's school success, motivation, and future learning. Some teaching guidelines for improving self-concept are presented below:

Effective Teaching

Effective teaching leads to academic progress. This success is of special significance if a child with social and emotional problems is to develop a positive self-concept. It is

important to foster in such a child the belief that s/he can learn, grow, and be successful. Some of the factors that are noteworthy for self-concept development are:

- Provide encouragement and support
- Establish realistic goals
- Promote positive and long interactions between students
- Give the student responsibility
- Using book/drama therapy
- Monitor progress and provide feedback.

Providing Encouragement and Support

One of the most important aspects of good teaching of a child with a social and emotional problem is the establishment of a positive relationship between the teacher and the child. The teacher need not be over critical of the mistakes made by the child, but should on the other hand, adopt a supportive attitude and show interest in children. A teacher can provide support by spending time discussing the child's interests, hobbies and plans. A teacher can establish a healthy rapport and appreciate children with social and emotional problems. This will help them realize their potential. The teacher should focus on the child's actions and strengths, rather than pointing only towards their mistakes, misbehaviour and weaknesses.

Setting Reasonable Goals

When a student reaches goals that require considerable effort, self-worth is improved. Children feel good about themselves when they work hard to achieve a worthwhile goal. As these children have problems in learning, the goals set for them should be equal to their level of performance. For example, if a child is not able to write long answers, as s/he is shy or withdrawn, s/he may be asked to give short answers or answer orally.

Giving Responsibility

Children with poor self-concept feel happy when the teacher thinks they are capable of accepting responsibility. Giving students responsibility demonstrates a level of trust in their ability to act maturely, in responsibilities like:

- Taking messages to the office or other classes
- Carrying the teaching material to the staff room
- Leading the line
- Making a notice board
- Using equipment
- Checking/ grading papers.

Promoting Positive Interactions

Teaching children to be positive benefits all children. If the children can learn to interact positively, mix with each other nicely in a friendly manner, they will receive pleasant and



friendly reactions in return. The teacher can pair children with social and emotional problems with those children who have good leadership or friend making skills. If the teacher is creative, s/he can also develop some social group activities or instructional games that require teamwork so that the paired children share positive and pleasant experiences. A creative teacher can also design activities and games in which children with social and emotional problems and other children could participate equally, fostering the feeling of success and self-worth. This could lead

to building lasting friendships.

Using Book/Drama Therapy

This is a teaching technique that uses reading materials to help students understand themselves and their problems better. Characters in the books/drama learn to cope with problems and situations similar to those the students face. Through identifying with the characters, students release emotional tensions and achieve a better understanding of themselves and their problems. Also, characteristics, attitudes, values, and situations in reading selections can serve as models for the student.

While using this therapy, it is important that children move through three phases during or immediately after reading a book: (a) Identification – the students become personally involved and must identify themselves or see a situation similar to some of their own situations; (b) Catharsis – the students must release emotional tensions regarding the problems; and (c) Insight – through empathizing with the character or plot, the students must reach a better understanding of that which tempers their emotional drives.

While using this therapy, the teacher should instruct the students to:

- Read the story and emphasize incidents, feelings, relationships, and behaviour.
- Discuss changes of feelings, relationships, and behaviour.
- Identify similar events from their life or other reading selections.
- Explore the consequences that occurred.
- Understand the consequences or advantages of good behaviour.

Monitoring Progress

If the child is improving in his/her class performance, the teacher should regularly check improvement in his/her work and record and let the child know that s/he is improving. If a child does a mistake, the teacher should explain step by step how to do the problem correctly rather than scolding the child.

Techniques of Improving Behaviour

Children with social and emotional problems are likely to have low self-concept, lack of attention, social skills deficits and emotional problems. Because these types of problems can lead to aggressive, disruptive or withdrawn behaviour, students with social and emotional problems can become difficult to manage in the classroom. Thus, it is important to try to improve their behaviour. Most of the behaviour problems could be prevented by using effective techniques, or in turn, changed into those expected of them.

Rewards

Since children with social emotional problems show aggressive, self-injurious, violent or shy and withdrawn behavioural symptoms, it becomes important to use methods that will help improve their behaviour. The most common way by which their behaviour can be improved is by the use of rewards.

A reward is an object that may help the child conduct as expected. It would help strengthen the desired behaviour. A reward can also be a word or a sentence (for example, today Shyama has done her work very well), which will make the child happy about his/her behaviour. A reward is any event that follows a behaviour and results in maintaining or increasing the behaviour. Praise is one of the most effective and convenient ways for the teachers to use in managing student behaviour. But it should be given immediately after the desired behaviour occurs. It should be ensured that the child does not get used to the rewards. Therefore, rewards should be changed regularly.

A reward for the child is something that s/he likes or feels good about. It is not always something, which a teacher thinks, the child should like. A reward increases the occurrence of the behaviour it follows. Whether we are aware of it or not, all behaviours which we tend to repeat are followed by rewards. If a particular behaviour is not followed by rewards, we would not perform that behaviour again. Rewards are important means of changing behaviours.

Types of Rewards

There are various kinds of rewards such as:

- Primary rewards such as banana, tea, coffee, milk
- Material rewards marbles, flowers, bangles, ribbons, ball
- Social rewards such as smile, nod, hug, pat, kiss
- Verbal rewards appreciating a child's good work, saying 'well done', 'keep it up' etc.
- Activity rewards such as listening to music, watching T.V., playing with pets, playing with special toys, drawing pictures.

The Schools Potential to Help Children with Social and Emotional Problems

School plays a crucial role in the development of cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and moral functions and competencies in a child.

It may be noted that:

- Almost all children attend school at some time during their lives.
- Schools are often the strongest social and educational institutions available for intervention.
- Schools have profound influence on children, their families, and the community.
- Young peoples' ability and motivation to stay in school, to learn, and to utilize what they learn is affected by their mental well-being.
- Schools can act as a safety net, protecting children from hazards which affect their learning, development, and psycho-social well-being.
- In addition to the family, schools are crucial in building or undermining self-esteem and a sense of competence.
- Teachers have often received some training in developmental principles to be potentially well qualified to execute the philosophy of inclusive education in schools.



However, in the contemporary system of education, schools have seriously marginalized and compromised on their role in guiding, regulating the psychological development of children and promoting their psycho-social competence as they have to cope with heavy syllabi and curricula, poor teaching facilities and highly competitive examinations, low priority in national planning, limitations of resources, commercialization of education etc.

“The school, like the family, is charged with preparing the young to become successful adult workers, members of families, and citizens”. This is a large mission, and accordingly children spend a considerable amount of time in schools each year through the span of childhood and adolescent years. Not surprisingly, to accommodate the goals that have been set for them, the schools have developed into complex social institutions.

In India, most children are in school by at least 6 years of age. Although play school/nursery is a fairly universal experience, entry into first grade has generally been considered the beginning of formal schooling, with a more academic curriculum and the start of full day programme with which the child must comply and conform. While the average 6-year-old is ready cognitively, emotionally and socially for the challenges, it is also apparent that a certain number of children may not be so. Some children may show difficulties with attention and/or activity regulation and impulsivity. The challenge of separation may overwhelm others with anxiety, or the stress of coping with peer interactions may send the socially immature child into behavioural outbursts. While the pervasively affected children will require a special classroom and supportive services,

others with milder problems may improve with reassurance from the teacher and some adjustment of classroom practices.

The point where inclusive education philosophy helps is during transition to middle school, which occurs for most children at age 10 or 11 years. With the transition to middle school, there is the expectation that the student will function with more independence. Different teachers, more homework add to the expectations that student should take serious and independent interest in learning and schoolwork. At this stage, several children tend to suffer from the cumulative effects of learning failure because they have been identified too late or because they did not receive successful interventions in elementary school years. For other children, the family and home may not have provided the structure and support needed to develop the internal motivation to study. For such youth, the lure of street culture may become irresistible for its excitement and promise of easy access to material rewards. Inclusive education helps in catching these transition casualties and they are more likely to be helped back onto the track.

NEWS FROM THE STATES

TLM Exhibition in Orissa

In Orissa, nearly 2% of the child population of 5-13 age group has special educational needs. Out of the identified 133748 Children With Special Needs (CWSN), 117528 are enrolled in regular primary schools. With primary education becoming a fundamental right and with the adoption of zero rejection policy under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), it becomes an obligation to ensure quality primary education to all such children in an inclusive setting so that they become assets to themselves as well as to the society. The two programmes of SSA and DPEP are trying to ensure that all CWSN enrolled in primary schools are retained till they complete the cycle of elementary education.

In case of CWSN, the importance of teaching learning materials (TLM) is much more relevant. In a classroom setting TLM can make a difference in actively engaging all children in the classroom learning, sustaining their attention span for a considerable period of time and finally ensuring attainment of all scholastic and co-scholastic competencies, incorporated in the curriculum. The teachers, who handle the CWSN in inclusive setting, need to be oriented to follow child-centred activity-based approach with pertinent TLM related to the content being taught.



To give the teachers better exposure to a variety of TLM, a state level exhibition-cum-seminar was planned, in the State of Orissa, for teachers, producers as well as demonstrator of TLM as proposed at a one-day state level meeting of the IE Coordinators of all the 30 districts, as per the following decisions:

- Each district would organize a workshop for development of TLM at district level with the help of NGOs working in the field of disability, special schools and resource teachers. The best TLMs identified at the district level would be sent for State level exhibition.
- All leading NGOs, national level institutions would be invited to participate in the State level exhibition
- IE coordinators to be assigned different tasks
- Different committees to be set-up and assigned different tasks.

Seminar-cum-Exhibition

Following the decision of the State level meeting, workshops were organized in each district to develop the TLM with the active participation of the NGOs and special

schools. The representatives of National Institute of Mentally Handicapped, National Institute of Visually Handicapped, National Institute of Hearing Handicapped, Rehabilitation Council of India, MP Bhoj (Open) University, Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO), and IIT Kharagpur also participated in the exhibition along with the teaching learning materials developed by their respective organizations. There were 33 stalls in the exhibition. Children of local schools visited the exhibition along with their teachers. Feedback was collected from the visitors regarding the utility of the TLM. A two-day seminar was conducted to give an academic orientation to the TLM Exhibition with the help of special teachers, IED coordinators and NGO representatives and resource persons.

The resource persons presented their paper and initiated discussion on various issues of inclusive education such as:

- Understanding the child with special needs with special reference to mental retardation and learning disabilities
- Identification, inclusion and education of the visually impaired children
- Teacher development programme for dealing with CWSN. Special focus on Rehabilitation Council of India foundation course
- The status of inclusive education in Orissa under SSA/DPEP
- Role of RCI in the field of Inclusive Education
- Teacher development programmes in Orissa in the perspective of inclusive education
- Inclusive education for the hearing impaired children
- Curriculum adaptation for mentally retarded children.

The seminar was inaugurated by Dr. S.B. Agnihotri, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Government of Orissa. It was presided over by Shri S.K. Sarangi, State Project Director.

On the second day of the seminar Smt. Aparajita Sarangi, Director, Social Welfare, presided over the seminar and gave valuable suggestions for making inclusive education a success in Orissa. In post-lunch session Shri R.K. Pani, Addl. Director, OPEPA presided over the seminar and guided its deliberations.

Gains

The following gains accrued from the TLM exhibition:

- The programme provided a platform for teachers working in the field to share their experiences
- The teachers and IE personnel working in the field got an exposure to the modern trends and issues to take up different innovations in the field
- The programme proved the importance of establishing convergence with other Departments and NGOs



- The programme generated new ideas among the district level functionaries regarding implementation of inclusive education.

Follow Up

As a follow up of the exhibition-cum-seminar, steps have been taken to develop a State Resource Centre for Inclusive Education where all the selected TLMs would be displayed along with other TLMs. This step would be the precursor of a counseling center at the State level to orient the parents of CWSN so that they would be able to supplement the educational programme initiated at the school level. This could perhaps mark the beginning of a new initiative.

Initiatives in the Making: Sayantana Vedi Camps in Kerala

Background

Inclusion implies extending equal opportunities for all children, including those with disabilities, in regular schools. These opportunities should be appropriate to their special needs in a least restrictive environment aimed to enhance their academic and social skills.

During the project period of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) the integrated education programme was implemented in 55 BRCs of 6 DPEP districts. 87319 Children With Special Needs (CWSN) have identified in the 14 SSA districts in State of Kerala. The major activities pertaining to inclusive education in the State are:

- Community awareness programme (CAP)
- Parent Education Programme (PEP)
- Teacher Empowerment Programme (TEP)
- Facilities Improvement Programme (FIP)
- Learner Improvement Programme (LAP)

Syantana Vedi Camps-Meaning

The programme of Sayantana Vedi Camps falls under Community Awareness Programme (CAP) and Parent Education Programme (PEP). Sayantana Vedi Camps is one of the innovative programmes initiated in the State to promote inclusion. The term 'Sayantanam' means evening or dusk and 'vedi' means a forum, which is meant for sharing the experience of parents of CWSN. The key participants in these camps are the parents of CWSN. Headmasters, teachers and parents of non-disabled children also attend these camps along with the parents. The participation may range from 40 to 60 parents per meeting. The parents assemble and share the experiences in handling these children in their home environment.



Frequency

The frequency of the programme is once a week.

Process

The venue of these camps are Block Resource Centres (BRCs) or Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs). The resource teacher plays a lead role in discussing the following areas:

- Inclusion
- Causes of disabilities
- Types of disabilities

- Need to support the parents of CWSN
- Types of support services needed by CWSN
- Guidance and counseling
- TLM modification
- Support from peers, teachers etc.
- Legal and technical guidance to the parents of CWSN.

The resource teachers act as counselors. Besides, discussion on how to handle the CWSN at home, small group discussions under the supervision of resource teachers on a variety of relevant issues are also held. The resource teachers and general teachers also discuss curricular objectives and how to modify them to suit needs of CWSN.

All these activities are documented at BRC level and consolidated at district level. The resource teachers also document these activities at BRC level.

Beneficiary Groups

Based on the experience, Sayantana Vedi Camps have been successful for three groups- Community, Parents and Children.

Community

The community has been made aware about the issues related to CWSN.

Parents

The programme has greatly helped parents in handling their children with special needs at home with greater understanding and teaching skills.

Teachers

Teachers have learnt to manage the classrooms having CWSN in a more appropriate manner so that all children learn together.

Children With Special Needs

CWSN have shown an overall significant improvement in learning, socialization and personality development.

Syantana Vedi Camps are a good example of how support can be given to parents, teachers and CWSN alike in an informal setting. Educators have generally agreed that learning achievement is best in a relaxed atmosphere. Activity-based education, also referred to as joyful learning, is the most significant way of



teaching and promoting inclusion. These camps clearly demonstrate the value of an informal approach to promote bonding and learning. Based on the successful experience of these camps under DPEP, these are now being conducted in all 152 BRCs of 14 SSA districts of Kerala.

Tamil Nadu Case Study - NGO Experience in Inclusion

Annie Shyam¹

The Goal

As per NSSO survey 2002, approximately 18.53 million population in India comprises persons with disabilities, with 5 million CWSN in the age 0-18 years. In Tamil Nadu 71,204 CWSN have been identified and 59,560 of them have been enrolled in schools.

The advent of the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme in 2002 in Tamil Nadu looked at Inclusive Education with CWSN mainstreamed into regular schools. The programme on inclusion in SSA is being implemented in the State of Tamil Nadu with the help of competent and experienced NGOs. The Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu (SPASTN) is a part of the State Resource Group, which is also now a facilitator for implementing the Inclusive Education programme in the district of Thiruvallur. The objective of this exercise is to develop, coordinate, conduct and implement inclusive education successfully in all 14 blocks of the district.

The goal of this programme is to sensitize and build the capacities of the education system, families and communities to create an enabling environment for the enrolment and retention of all children, including CWSN, into the regular school system.

Evolution of Inclusive Education In Tamil Nadu

In order to implement “Education for All”, the Government of Tamil Nadu conducted training for master trainers to include children in schools in the remote areas under the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) scheme. SPASTN, through its advocacy and sensitization process trained master trainers in disability management in the classrooms, making use of the opportunity provided by the Government programme in

¹Director, SPASTN

Case Study of Monica: Thiruvanamallai District: Tamil- Nadu

Monica is a 9 yr old mentally retarded girl. Her parents never realized that she could go to school. They thought Monica cannot study and were apprehensive of the school due to some previous unpleasant experience. Finally, she was taken to the local school, by a resource-teacher. The class teacher was unsure at first and was at a complete loss on how to teach Monica. After the assurance and guidance given by the resource teacher, Monica was enrolled in the school. While the teacher was teaching the subjects to the whole class, Monica would sit with a blank face, and yet she never ever failed to attend school. All the time, the teacher was thinking, trying to find out new ways to involve Monica in academic activities. After two weeks, during craft class, the teacher noticed Monica actively participating in cutting the papers, while the other children cheerfully invited Monica to contribute. This gave the teacher a clue towards involving Monica in the class-room activities in different modes. Everyday the teacher came with a new activity to include Monica in the process. At the end of six months Monica’s academic achievement improved.

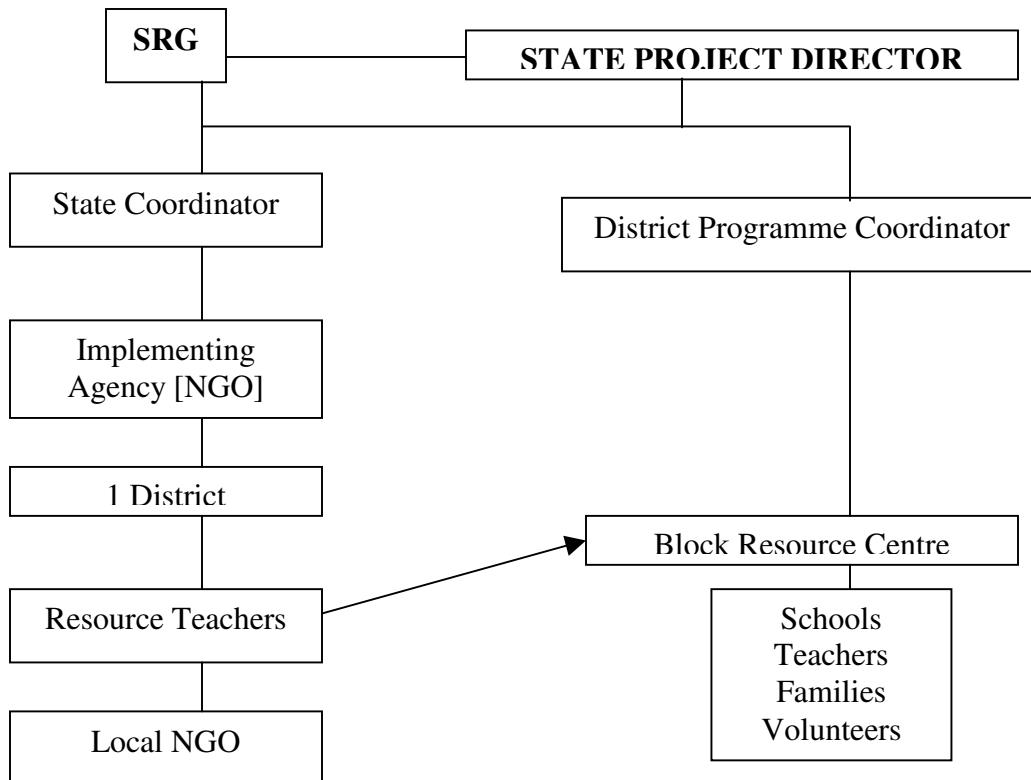
The above case study:

- Tapped the creativity of the teacher
- Taught other children in the class to accept differences, thus, inculcating in them a sense of responsibility -
- Helped develop a sense of belonging, confidence and achievement in Monica
- Created an inclusive attitude in the minds of the

advocating disability issues and the needs of person with disability in education. The opportunity for coordinating the DPEP programme in the district of Tiruvannamalai gave SPASTN an experience in implementing integrated and inclusive education. This model, considered as a good practice, was also adopted by other DPEP districts.

The spin-off resulted in coordinating the implementation of the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan programme in the districts of Thiruvallur, Tiruvannamalai and one block of Kancheepuram district. SPASTN promoted inclusion of CWSN through information sharing and networking. Till now 10,711 CWSN have been included into the regular schools. This was done through assessment camps, providing aids and appliances and training-cum-awareness programmes at all levels. The major impairments encountered were: cerebral palsy, visual impairment, hearing impairment, locomotor impairment, speech and language impairment, mental retardation, learning disability, emotional behavioural disorders, autism and multiple disability.

SSA Model In Tamil Nadu



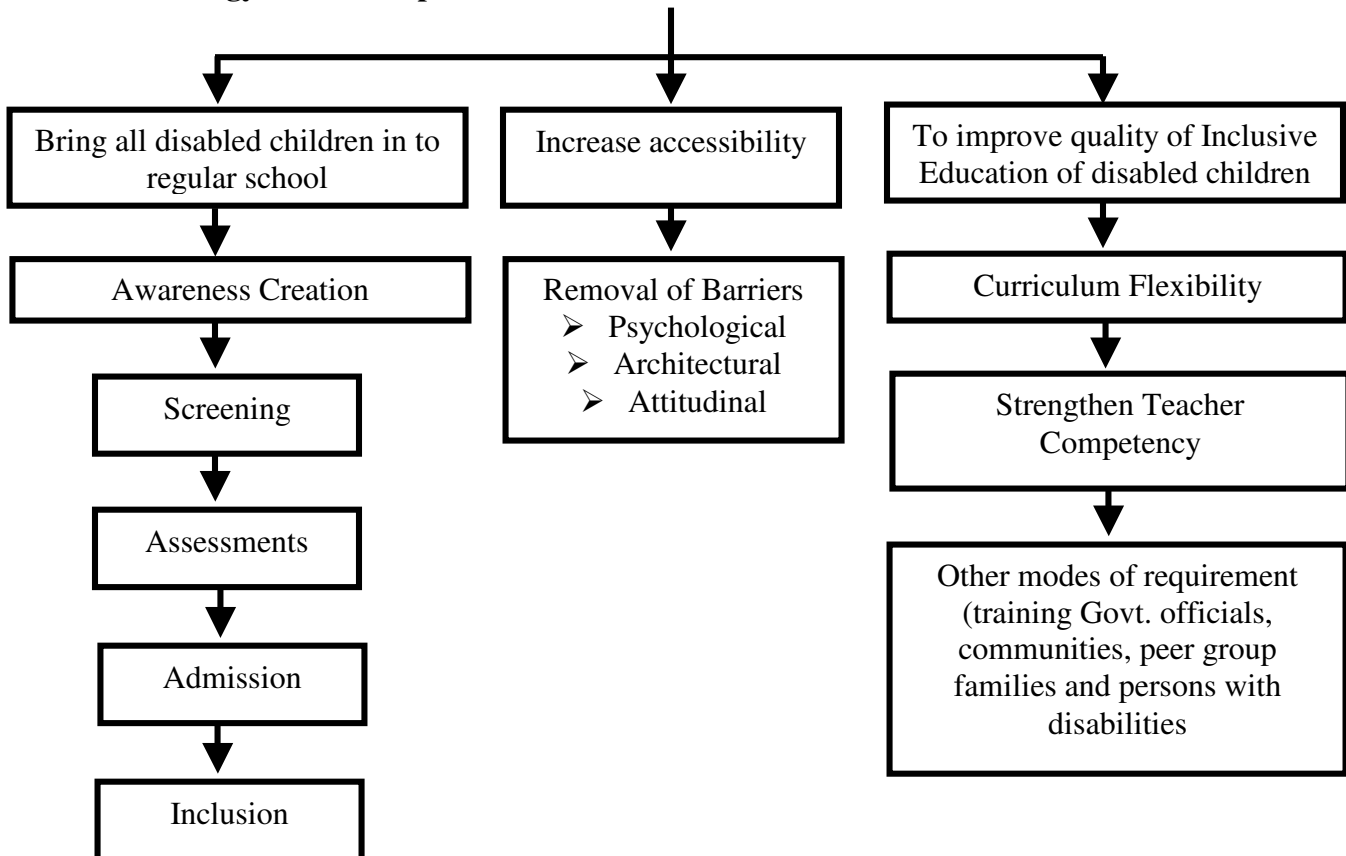
Strategies Adopted for Implementing Inclusive Education

The following strategies were adopted by SPASTN for implementing IE in the State:

- Appointment of 2 resource/itinerant Teachers per cluster
- Survey/data collection
- Community awareness

- Mobilizing children and establishing contact with families of the CWSN identified in the survey
- Screening and early detection at hospitals, Balwadis, camps etc.
- Early intervention and school readiness skills for CWSN
- Assessment by a team of professionals comprising resource teacher, Primary Health Centre Doctors, local professionals and classroom teachers
- Training/ orientation programmes for DPO, BRC supervisors, resource teachers, general school teachers, resource teachers, VEC, PTA, volunteers, parents of CWSN
- Appointment of DRG with representation of DRO, DIET, NGOs and parents of CWSN
- Linking with Rehabilitation Institutions
- Providing Resource rooms
- Providing aids and appliances and special furniture
- Provision for need-based academic and vocational support
- Parent's counselling
- Informal integration through need-based camps, rallies, public awareness programmes
- Environmental modifications (ramps, handrails, toilet modifications)
- Evaluation and monitoring.

Strategy cum Concept of Inclusive Education



Classroom Transactions

The following aspects were borne in mind for classroom transaction:

- Academic assessment
- Development of Individualized Educational Plan-IEP
- Discussion with PTA
- Inclusion of parent of CWSN in PTA
- Peer sensitization
- Conducting simulated activities for understanding disabilities
- Development of innovative teaching methodology
- Preparation of appropriate teaching-learning materials
- Implementation of IEP
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Fitment and maintenance of assistive devices
- Facilitation of peer-tutoring, buddy system and multi-level teaching
- Promotion of altered response requirements (examinations)
- Promoting inclusive cultural and recreational activities.



Home-based Interventions

Children with very severe physical and learning disabilities are often unable to attend this Inclusive Education system.

For this category of children, SPASTN provides home-based rehabilitation/education programmes through their resource teachers. The main focus of home-based education is on developing self-help skills in CWSN. These children are provided with a range of support services from the community for their long-term care. Periodic follow-up is also conducted.

Case Study of Anita

Anita is a 13 year old girl, with Cerebral Palsy, studying in an urban regular school. She did not have any problem in understanding the academic instructions, but had problems in her mobility. Her friends would help her move around the school. She would also help her friends in studies. Her laboratory experiments were adapted according to her abilities. One day her class planned to go out for a picnic, but she was hesitant to join them. Her friends compelled her to join the picnic and she finally agreed. She enjoyed the picnic in the company of her friends who willingly helped her to move around and did not make her feel uncomfortable. She is also helped by her friends during stage performances and competitions. She in turn helps them in script writing and organizing programmes for them.

Multi-sectoral Linkages

Further, SPASTN established linkages with all concerned Government Departments like Department of Health, Social Welfare, Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Department of Education etc. for medical assessment, early intervention, pre-school preparation, ID Cards, scholarships and school benefits and aids & appliances.

Innovations

Besides training, resource support and mainstreaming CWSN in schools, SPASTN has also undertaken various innovations such as Yoga, inclusive recreation facilities, simulation-park, inclusive Balwadis, vocational training etc. as part of inclusive education.

Conclusion



Thus, the experience of SPASTN shows that if organized well, inclusive education can help most CWSN. It helps them understand their own abilities as well as make full use of them. It is also clear that other children willingly accept CWSN as play-mates and academic counterparts.

Is Inclusion Appropriate for All Children With Special Needs

J.P. Gadkari*

Principles of IE

The Government of India has launched Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) with the goal of reaching out to all children including CWSN to be enrolled into the elementary schools. Through this massive initiative, those CWSN especially in the rural India, who have been excluded from any form of education, will have an opportunity for education and inclusion. This will also fulfill the commitment made by the Government through the Persons with Disabilities Act 1995 that there will be no discrimination against the Persons with Disabilities in the educational institutions.

Traditionally, CWSN were educated in separate classes or in separate schools. This led to the popular belief that special education meant separate education. Experience over the past century in all parts of the world has clearly demonstrated the social, emotional and academic benefits accruing to all CWSN when educated alongside other children in regular schools.



Mere placement of children with and without disabilities together does not produce positive outcomes. Inclusive education happens when children with and without disabilities participate and begin to learn together in the same classes.

Inclusive education represents a very concrete and meaningful concept that implies that all children are an integral part of the school system and belong to the school community. If such schools, in which students feel welcomed and part of a community are to be created, then we must begin by creating schools that welcome the diversity of all children.

The fundamental principle of inclusive education is the valuing of diversity within the human community. Every child is unique and can contribute. It is often seen that CWSN fall outside the service-oriented and success-driven society, as their abilities are different and are not always realized. When inclusive education is fully embraced, the idea that children have to become "normal" in order to contribute to the world is given up. Instead, the talents in all children are explored. One begins to look beyond typical ways of becoming valued members of the community, and in doing so, begins to realize the achievable goal of providing all children with an authentic sense of belonging.

Benefits of Inclusive Education

Here are key findings about the benefits of inclusion:

* President, Parivaar

- Develop positive attitudes based on real experience
- More acceptance and understanding of human differences
- Emotional and social development
- Broader learning environment
- Become more inclusive in way of thinking
- More opportunities to relate and learn from variety of children and adults
- Learn and practice skills in the presence of peers to gain confidence winning skills
- Access to positive role models
- Increased opportunity to contribute to school, community and workplace
- Parents of non-disabled and CWSN have increase opportunities to meet and interact and learn from each and one another.

The philosophy of inclusive education is aimed at helping all children learn so that everyone in the class benefits. Children learn at their own pace and style within a nurturing learning environment.

Overcoming the Controversy

Although the benefits of inclusion are many, the concept is still enmeshed in controversy. There is continuing debate about the efficacy and usefulness of inclusive education for all CWSN. On one end of the ideological spectrum, there is the view that segregation always benefits the student regardless of the particular disability. Yet such a view is usually seen as negative in that it does not allow the student even the chance to be included into the regular classroom. On the other hand, there is the view that inclusion always serves the best interest of the student and that all the segregated schools and classes should be disbanded. However, this view is usually seen as being idealistic and not meeting the unique needs of every child with a special need.



In trying to decide whether to include a child with a special need, the discussion inevitably focuses on evaluating the student's limitations. In some cases, the student's limitations are so severe that it seems impossible for that student to participate in many of the regular school activities. The tendency, therefore, is not to truly include the student, for apparent valid reasons. Although the decision may appear "appropriate or realistic " often these very sensible conclusions deny students the opportunity to discover a way in which they could successfully integrate themselves into the regular class. Thus, the question of what is "realistic" or "appropriate" isn't as clear-cut as it may seem.

An increasing amount of pressure is being put on school system to include students with physical, mental, and learning disabilities into regular classrooms, and thus teachers, headmasters, headmistresses, and those within the educational hierarchy are facing a dilemma to which there seem to be no easy answers. The primary concern confronting these educators is which students should be placed within the regular classroom and

which students should be placed in segregated settings - whether in segregated schools or in segregated classes within a regular school. Even within the field of Special Education, there is a wide range of ideologies as to whether inclusion or segregation serves the best interests of the student. The best course, therefore, would appear to be to adopt inclusion as a national policy, but with adequate school preparation, staff development and resource support, so that the special needs of every child receives due attention.

The Core Issue

Many principals and teachers often find them-selves undecided whether to include or segregate a student with a special need given his or her particular needs and capabilities. The central issue confronting these educators is, when is inclusion appropriate and when is inclusion not appropriate? For many teachers, the thought of having a student with a special need in their class seems like a completely unrealistic proposition. Yet these same teachers are often unaware of the possible minor adaptations, which could be made in the classroom to accommodate such students.

The other reasons for non inclusion are:

Fear of Failure

The regular teacher often apprehends that such children might not be able to cope up with the curriculum and perform at the level expected of them.

Limited Time and Energy

Teachers agree with the philosophy of inclusion but claim that they would not accept a student with a disability into their class simply because they feel that they don't have the time and energy to give the student the special attention s/he needs.

Fear of Social Rejection

Teachers feel that CWSN might not be socially accepted by the other students. The normal students will tease, imitate, or mock at the student with a special need. This, they feel, may be more detrimental to the child psychologically. Thus, the core issue to be considered here is that if we have students in our schools who have poor attitudes toward individuals with disabilities, are we challenging or perpetuating those attitudes by segregating students with disabilities?

We could define inclusion as a circle. One quarter of that circle is academic learning such as 3Rs. The other three quarters of the circle refer to Social education, Communication and learning to interact with peers, it is well known that children learn by imitating the role models, they see. A segregated setting, even if it has a relevant academic program, can fulfill only one quarter of the students' educational needs.

Finally, this discussion must address the most controversial aspect of inclusion: whether inclusion really does serve the best interests of the student or whether, in some cases, the student's needs are better met in a segregated setting.

The inclusion of a child with a special need in a regular school is often deterred by inadequate perception of the potential of these children, both for academic performance and social interaction. Teachers and principals also fear inclusion. This is because they have never been exposed to CWSN. The best way to combat such fears is to actually teach such children in a mainstreamed classroom.

Research Evidence

Research has shown that where CWSN are enrolled into schools alongside non disabled peers, positive things happen like access to positive role models, increased variety of experience, increased sense of self worth and belongingness etc. Inclusive education helps in creating effective classrooms where the needs of all children are addressed irrespective of abilities and disabilities. Inclusive education occurs with an ongoing advocacy, planning, support and commitment.

Conclusion

Inclusive education children can learn of support in more and more academic and social unfounded and that benefits both school community. generating a where opportunities are provided to all children. It is a part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society.



acknowledges that all and that all need some form learning. It is becoming evident that fears about the achievement of CWSN are inclusive education actually CWSN and the rest of the Indeed it helps in cohesive school culture, for learning and exploring

Transacting An Inclusive Curriculum ----- Some tips

Anupriya Chadha[#]

Plea for a Uniform IE Curriculum

The curriculum ought to be the same for all the children. This means that the student who is challenged will participate in the social studies lesson, the science experiments and the music class, along with the other children. The student's life experiences will be enriched and his /her ability to communicate and form relationships with his /her peers would increase through being included. Individuals cannot hope to converse with someone about hockey, on any level, if they have never been to the game. Similarly, a student can have no understanding of the universe if s/he has not been exposed to the concept that the world is round, nor understand the idea of magnification if there is no chance of looking through a magnifying glass or a microscope.

Hence, the curriculum needs to be the same for all children in the class. Goals may be adapted, the characteristics of the task may change, and information may be simplified. A child with challenging needs may be working on a parallel activity, but should participate in the same learning experience as the other children.

Functional Life skill-oriented Curriculum

The student with challenging needs has many opportunities to practice functional skills within the regular routine of the day. Such skills include how to play with other children on the playground, how to be quiet in the library as well as in the class room under an activity going on, how to carry out accurate messages from one person to another, how to respond when spoken to by an adult, how to share and take turns, how to put on shoes and a host of other activities age appropriate.

Adapting the Goals to Cater to Individual Needs

The amount and type of adaptation that will be required for each unit of the curriculum will vary according to the needs of the student, the subject matter to be covered and the lesson format being used. One student may be able to achieve the same goals as the other students; with small adjustments to the way in which the material is presented. Another student may be able to achieve a simplified form of the same goals. A third student may require goals that parallel the goals of the lesson but are presented at a more basic level.



This may help prepare other children in the class for the different objectives that a particular student may be

[#] National Consultant, Inclusion, SSA

working towards, so that they learn to appreciate and applaud the individual student's achievements vis-a-vis their own.

Have a meeting with the teacher assistant or other adult who will be working with the student in the classroom to decide the goals for each unit of teaching. Decide whether the student who is challenged can be expected to achieve all of the goals, some of the goals, some of the goals if they are simplified, or require goals which parallel the regular goals. Consider the ways in which the goals might be adapted, and how the characteristics of the task might be changed to meet the individual needs of the student.

Strategies for Instruction

There will be a range of abilities in the same class, and sometimes that range will be wide. Instruction will be such that students at all levels of thinking can be included and the materials and activities will be open-ended to enable all students to participate.

Follow these links for tips while including all students in class work:

Teaching Tips

- Speak slowly and clearly, but not loudly.
- Make the consequences for successful performance attractive.
- Share the completion of the student's work with another adult or peer in the class, or with an interested person outside the classroom.
- Use concrete manipulative materials to develop whole concepts.
- Photocopy notes if the student is unable to write clearly.
- Encourage peers to assist in thinking of ways in which the student can accomplish a task: "How can Meena do this assignment?"
- Invite the student to assist in lesson presentation, by participating in brainstorming, for example, or giving out materials.
- Provide a print outline of the main points that the student is to learn from listening to the lesson, reading a passage in a book, listening to a tape, or watching a video, with blanks to be filled in as the information is given.
- Allow the student extra time for assignments and tests.
- Recognize the length of time that the student can stay on task, then provide opportunities for breaks and teach the student an acceptable way to ask for a break.
- Fold paper or draw lines on it to assist the student with spacing. This is particularly useful in mathematics.
- Use different colour chalks and felt pens to emphasize important points, and to make it easier for the student to find one's place on the board or paper.
- Use highly contrasting colours.
- Enlarge the print.
- Glue the steps of a mathematical operation inside the front cover of the student's mathematics book for easy reference.

- Provide a print copy of the mathematics text so that the examples can be done on the sheet. Often, errors occur when the student copies and much time is used up. The examples can be enlarged if more space is required for the answers. One or two questions can be presented at a time to make the task less threatening.
- Provide written instructions of the steps to be followed to complete a task.
- Provide picture instructions of the steps to be followed to complete a task.
- Organize the student's materials ahead of time.
- When appropriate, offer a choice of two or three materials or activities.
- Structure the sequence of activities.

Adapt the Goals

- Simplify vocabulary of the questions.
- Simplify the reading materials by highlighting the main points in the textbook or handouts so that the student can get the main ideas.
- Provide general reading on the same topic of study, but at the appropriate reading level.
- Use the same materials and work, but teach concrete rather than abstract concepts, or simpler rather than more complicated concepts.
- Change the criteria for successful performance.
- Assign smaller amounts of work.
- Substitute a similar but easier task.
- Substitute a pre-requisite task on the same topic.
- Clarify the task directions.
- Restate in simpler language.
- Ask another child in the class to repeat the directions.
- Provide only one or two directions at a time.
- Explain unfamiliar terms.
- Write directions on the board in front of the student.
- Write directions on a small board or piece of paper on the student's desk.
- Record directions on tape so that they can be listened to one at a time.
- Use hand signals or signs for the student who has a hearing impairment.
- Provide directions in Braille for the student who has a visual impairment.
- Stand close to the student and gain eye contact before giving direction.



Change the Task Characteristics

- Tape record the answers.
- Make a chart, model, or a collage.
- Decorate a bulletin board/ notice/information board.
- Make a time line.
- Prepare a radio or TV script/skit.

- Act out a play, skit or mime show.
- Give an oral presentation using a prepared chart of pictures or photographs, or picture cue cards.
- Provide a scribe.
- Use a calculator.
- Use pictures to illustrate work.
- Provide a computer printout.

Provide Prompts

Teachers use prompts or cues for all students. Some students require a more intense level of prompting in order to accomplish a task.

Prompts should be given in the least intrusive way, and with the intention of fading them as soon as possible. This is necessary so that the student does not become bound by the prompt. If the prompting is constant and static, it may discourage the student from trying the next step of the process.

Gradually move through levels of prompts as the student begins to master each task.

- Physically assist the student to do the task.
- Then give the physical assistance necessary to complete the task.
- Give a gesture, or model the task, so that the student can copy the action.
- Give a direct verbal prompt, such as: "Pick up your pen."
- Give an indirect verbal prompt, such as: "What do you do next?"
- Allow the task itself to provide the prompt, such as waiting for the student to hang a coat on a hook while standing by the coat rack, or waiting for the student to join the line when the other children line up.

Students, who are provided with support from a teacher assistant or a volunteer, sometimes rely on that person to give the direction, rather than responding to the direction when it is given by the teacher. The teacher can make it clear that when she addresses the whole class, the student is included. It may be necessary to cue the student that a direction is about to be given and that it is time to listen.

1. Analyze the task.
2. Break the task into small teachable steps.
3. Analyze the steps the student needs to know in order to complete a task.
4. Determine which steps the student knows well, knows partially, and still needs to learn.
5. Teach the steps that are partially known, followed by the steps that are still to be learned.
6. Provide additional opportunities for practice to maintain the steps already learned as well as the ones being worked on.

Cooperative Learning Groups

Individual achievement and competition are frequently used in the classroom, but learning occurs just as well when children work together in groups. Every member of the group is responsible for helping the others to learn the material, and every member of the group has responsibility for the personal relationships within the group.

Make sure everyone knows the learning goals for the special needs student in the group. The outcome may be the same as for the others in the group, or a simplified version. It could be related to the social interactions and the way in which the student carries out his/her role.

Be sure the student has a clearly defined role, which truly contributes to the success of the group. S/he might make sure that all the members of the group are present before beginning, or bring materials to the group meetings. S/he might take photographs to add information to a final report, or take a turn as leader of the group.

If the student can function without the constant support of the teacher assistant, the other children in the group will have the opportunity to provide support when it is needed and the dynamics of the group will not be changed by the presence of an adult.

Group Activities

The student who is challenged can work with a peer or a group of students. Activities might include:

- Theatre games
- Plant a flowerbed
- Computer games
- Group statues or frozen tableaux in physical education
- Reading stories
- Choral reading
- Creating a work of art.



It is good to change the instructional groups frequently based on the purpose of the lesson.

Class Participation

Write whatever instructional adaptations you plan to make into the daily lesson plans. This means including relevant information on the objectives, the adaptations to the tasks and the materials needed for the student who is challenged to be able to participate in each lesson. If a substitute teacher or assistant is called to instruct the class, this information must be available.

It requires imagination and commitment to continually adapt the goals of the regular academic curriculum so that the learning is meaningful and has relevance for the student who is challenged. It also demands an awareness of the need to work on those skills, which will enable the individual to function with greater independence.

Group Work

Whenever possible, engage students in group work and hands-on learning. Cooperative efforts will free the teacher to teach students who may require additional assistance.

Students who are sure of themselves may be able to work by speaking briefly to the class, or working with other students. Include students with challenges in endeavours to teach others.

Team teaching may also be advantageous from time to time, and sometimes. A teacher should bring another teacher, who has additional information, in a particular subject area into his/her class room.

The teacher may want to begin the lessons by directly involving the students in group work and at other times allowing students time on their own to work through the various tasks ahead of them. It is the same with students who have a disability. The format of the teaching style might have to be varied to meet the needs of all the students.

Classroom Management

Classroom management begins with thoughtful planning. At the beginning of the year, clearly outline classroom expectations for all students. If rules are clear, then the outlined consequences will be expected.

Consequences should be consistently maintained and administered, and be the same for everyone. Students who have disabilities will break the rules like anyone else, and they should receive similar consequences.

If a particular child takes a heavy toll of teachers then s/he would patience, have to use an ongoing strategy specific to the child and circumstance, making sure that an ongoing programme is used in a positive way for the student, keeping it effective and non-aversive.

Student Participation

Student participation in creating the best learning environment will create a class that manages lessons and time well. As students become more capable and able to take on responsibility, they will want to voice their opinion on aspects of school life. Teachers should be able to listen to their ideas and implement them if feasible.

Teacher as the Role Model

It is important to teach students how to act and interact with others. As teachers, maintain a positive classroom climate. All the students must be taught how to interact with others and, of course, a teacher must model respect for them with an impartial and caring attitude. No amount of teaching can overshadow one's own actions and behaviour. All of our students will benefit from a good role model, particularly in our interactions with students who have challenges.

Considerations for Review

Determine how long the student can attend to task and plan for a change in materials, a change in activity, a change in position or a change in the social grouping. Guard against underestimating the student's work limits or exceeding them. Recognize the incidental learning that occurs in informal or free time activities through individual discovery, and avoid over-programming the student's time.

Finally, review the priorities that have been set by considering the following questions:

- Will the skill be maintained naturally when it is not being worked on in the classroom?
- Is this a skill that will be used frequently?
- Is this skill appropriate for the student's peers and therefore for the student?
- Are the materials appropriate for the student's peers and therefore for the student?
- Is the activity presented in an age appropriate way?
- Does the activity enhance the student's image?
- Does this skill increase the student's independence?
- Does teaching this skill respect the student's and the family's background and preferences?
- Is there a good possibility of the skill being learned, or should it be accepted that the student will require help in this area and the time be spent learning some other skill?
- Are there social benefits to the student acquiring this skill?

