



Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies  
Réseau Inter-Agences pour l'Éducation en Situations d'Urgence  
La Red Interagencial para Educación en Situaciones de Emergencia

## INEE Good Practice Guide: Inclusive Education of Children At Risk – Persons with Disabilities

War, crisis and disruption of communities can significantly increase the number of adults and children with disabilities. Gunshot wounds, landmines, violent acts of chopping off limbs are just some of the factors which lead to disabilities. Inadequate health care during times of extended conflict may result in the loss of sight or hearing. People with disabilities have the same right to educational services as other people. Often people with disabilities are perceived to be a burden by their parents, teachers and other members of their communities, who do not think they are capable of being educated or contributing to society.

Educational programs for persons with disabilities must not only focus on formal education, literacy and numeracy but also on daily life skills such as mobility, communication, and sometimes even simple skills like cooking, dressing and eating. While requiring some additional resources and expertise, addressing disability issues is not as expensive or as unsustainable as it is commonly perceived. Building the capacity of parents, teachers and communities to work effectively with people with disabilities has been shown to improve the skills of the society as a whole.

### Strategies

- **Address negative perceptions of disability**

Aside from individual educational needs, programs must also address the negative perceptions of disability that exist within individuals, their families and their communities. Often during times of crisis, these perceptions are intensified as resources become scarce. Community awareness campaigns, as well as material and moral support help to counteract these feelings.

- **Ensure that schools are prepared, and that facilities are accessible and modified for persons with disabilities**

Teachers and students should be prepared to accept persons with disabilities. Teachers and facilitators should be trained broadly in the background and justification of including children with disabilities in the classroom. They should be well-versed in principles of social justice, diversity and inclusion. Teachers and students should understand disability issues and the challenges of different types of disabilities. Buildings, classrooms and furniture should be examined to ensure that they do not prevent students with disabilities from learning effectively.

- **Balance the need for integration and learning**

Educational programs for children with disabilities should be a balanced attempt to optimize both the children's ability to learn and their integration with others. In situations where special classes are

justified, integration activities should be planned such as combined classes, sports activities, and field trips.

- **Use local resources and technology**

Communities are hesitant to include people with disabilities in programs because they believe that the costs will be too great. Community members should work together to design interventions for people with disabilities that can be made or developed locally.

| <b>Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in the Classroom</b> |   |  |
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| <b>Disability</b>   | <b>Warning Signs</b>  | <b>Things To Do</b>  |
| <b>Visual</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eyes physically not well—red, swollen, watery eyes, crossed eyes, eyes that don't appear straight</li> <li>• Student rubbing eyes</li> <li>• Difficulty reading or doing visual work. Student may bring book or object close to the eyes or shuts or covers one eye when reading or tilts head</li> <li>• Student may have difficulty with written work</li> <li>• Student may avoid playground</li> <li>• Unusual incidence of squinting, blinking frowning or facial distortions when reading</li> <li>• Unable to locate small</li> </ul> | <p><b>Classroom Adaptations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out from the student where the best place is for them to see the chalkboard i.e. the front of the class.</li> <li>• Light should not reflect on the board. Chalk should appear clearly on the board.</li> <li>• If student is sensitive to light, seat them away from the window or provide a cardboard screen to shade reading and writing.</li> <li>• Ensure that child knows their way around the school and classroom. Teachers and sighted pupils can assist by walking slightly in front of visually impaired students or to one side/holding their elbow.</li> </ul> <p><b>Teaching Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use large writing on the chalkboard and visual aids. Coloured chalk is recommended. Let students come close to the board or teaching aids to see more clearly.</li> <li>• Read aloud what is written on the chalkboard.</li> <li>• Prepare teaching aids that students can read easily or provide photocopies with large print.</li> <li>• Encourage students to use a pointer or their finger when reading.</li> <li>• Pair pupils with a seeing classmate to assist in organizing their work.</li> <li>• Use verbal praise or touch</li> <li>• Use the names of pupils during class discussion so the student knows who is talking</li> <li>• Depending upon student needs provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper with thicker lines on it to assist them in writing.</li> <li>• Magnifiers</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

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|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>objects</li> <li>Sensitivity to light</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abacus for math lessons</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Intellectual</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student hasn't reached the same level of development as their age mates i.e. oral and understanding abilities, playing/moving, behaviour.</li> <li>Head injury or serious illness</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Classroom Adaptations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce distractions – keep desk clear</li> <li>With children who are inclined to run around, seat them by the wall with bigger children beside them. Tasks can be assigned that allow them to move without being disruptive such as distributing papers, notebooks or materials.</li> <li>Recruit volunteers to come to class to provide one-on-one attention for the student.</li> </ul> <p><b>Teaching Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show child what you want him or her to do rather than simply telling.</li> <li>Use simple words when giving instructions and check that the child has understood.</li> <li>Use real objects that the child can feel and handle rather than doing paper and pencil work.</li> <li>Do one activity at a time and complete it. Make clear when one is finished and a new one begins.</li> <li>Break tasks down into small steps or learning objectives. Have child start with what they can do before moving to a harder step.</li> <li>Give plenty of praise and encouragement to the student.</li> <li>Give extra time for practice</li> <li>Pair the student with a peer who can focus their attention.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Hearing</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor attention</li> <li>Poor speech development or may talk in a very loud or soft voice.</li> <li>Difficulty following instructions</li> <li>May turn or cock head when listening</li> <li>May watch what other students are doing before</li> </ul> | <p><b>Classroom Adaptations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seat student as close as possible to teacher.</li> <li>Teachers should make sure to face students and not cover their faces while talking or talk when writing on the chalkboard.</li> <li>Make sure students can see teacher's face, hands and lips.</li> <li>Ensure that student can see both the teacher and other pupils at the same time to see how they are responding.</li> <li>Minimize classroom noise. Possibly using a quieter part of the school.</li> </ul> <p><b>Teaching Strategies</b></p>  |

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|  | <p>starting his or her work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give inappropriate answers</li> <li>• May be shy or appear stubborn and disobedient.</li> <li>• Reluctant to participate in oral activities.</li> <li>• May complain of earaches, colds, sore throat.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak clearly and loudly</li> <li>• Make sure students hearing aids are switched on.</li> <li>• Use visual aids for teaching</li> <li>• Pair the student with hearing students</li> <li>• Check with student to ensure they have understood.</li> <li>• Take time to listen to what the student is saying</li> </ul> |
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## Checklist

- Assessments should identify children's abilities as well as their disabilities.
- Assessing and addressing the needs of persons with disabilities should be included from the very start of the program and framed within a human rights context.
- Teachers should share information about impairments when students move from one grade to the next.
- Cultural views regarding disability and low expectations of people with disabilities should be addressed at various levels. The community should be sensitized to disability issues, and to the specific needs of community members with disabilities.
- Schools not equipped for children with disabilities should be assessed, and locally available materials used to renovate the facilities. Rehabilitate schools to accommodate learners with disabilities by widening doors, installing ramps, and building adapted latrines.
- All teachers should be aware of how to be sensitive to the needs of people with disability, and individual teachers targeted to meet the needs of the specific disabilities of the children within their classes.
- Difficulties in transporting children with disabilities to school could be addressed by providing bicycles or wheelbarrows for their transportation.

## Resources

- **Disabled Village Children : A Guide for Health Workers, Rehabilitation Workers, and Families**

By David Werner. (1987) ISBN: 0942364066. English and Spanish.

*This book contains a wealth of information on common childhood disabilities including polio, cerebral palsy, juvenile arthritis, blindness, and deafness. It also provides ideas for rehabilitation at the village level and instructions on how to make low-cost aids. Paperback copies can be ordered in both English and Spanish through the Hesperian Foundation or any bookseller. [Click here](#) for the*

html version. An English version can be downloaded from the [UNHCR](#) in pdf.

- **Helping Children Who Are Blind: Family and community support for children with vision problems**

By Sandy Niemann and Namita Jacob. (2000) ISBN: 0942364341. English. (Spanish edition expected in March 2002 – ISBN 0942364376)

*This books provides simple activities for families, health workers, and others teachers to help a child with vision problems develop all his or her capabilities including: assessing how much a child can see; preventing blindness; helping a child learn to move around safely; how to include learning activities in daily work; preparing for child care or school; supporting parents of blind children; and teaching common activities like eating, dressing and keeping clean.*

- **UNHCR Guidelines on Assisting Disabled Refugees**

*To obtain copies contact UNHCR, Case Postale 2500, CH-1211, Geneva Depot 2, Switzerland.*

## Additional Resources

- [Action for the Rights of Children \(ARC\) Critical Issues: Disability](#) (pdf)
- [Children and Young People with Specific Learning Disabilities](#) (pdf) By Carol Crealock & Doreen Kronick.
- [Nothing About Us Without Us : Developing technologies for, by and with disabled persons](#)
- [Understanding and Responding to Children's Needs in Inclusive Classrooms: A guide for teachers.](#) (pdf)