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## **MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN EARLY YEARS**

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### **Abstract**

*All parents want what is best for their children but not every knows how to help children avoid the biggest issues in special children's behavior problems. Ignorance on the knowledge of handling special need children's needs can affect these children for the rest of their lives. Teaching children with special needs present teachers with some distinctive challenges. Children with special needs are no longer isolated in special education classrooms. Kids with special needs strive in the presence of their pairs. There are so many lessons that children with special needs can form from other kids and so many friendships to be formed. Children with disorder and other learning disabilities perform better if a classroom is setup to accommodate their special needs. Teacher's class target is to be creative and also innovative when classroom activities are involved. Managing an inclusive classroom is easier if some personalized teaching strategies for the special needs pupils are carried out. They require exiting activities and revitalizing projects that offer a resourceful curriculum within the structure of the accepted classroom programme. Teachers in a special need classroom need to modify lessons to meet the needs of every pupil in the classroom based on their abilities and carrying capacities.*

## **Keywords**

Management, Strategies, Children, Special Needs and Early years

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## **1. Introduction**

The early years of a child are full of rapid changes and transitions. Young children are all precious to caregivers and parents. They are the first to notice the lack in development of the child. Every child, whether special or non-special requires educational needs and deserves the right to a kind of education that fits into their appropriate needs. The purposes for the education of people with particular needs are equal as applied to all other children. It is in the light of the above that Bottge (2012) & AGBC (2004). Noted that education provides an enablement for all children in consonance with their capacity, to meet up full and independent lives so that they can contribute to their communities and other people and continue to acquire knowledge through their lives.

Generally speaking, education is for the all-round development of the individual (child)—moral, cognitive, creative, religious, aesthetic, public and physical. The road map to help close gaps and achieve greater equality in education is being sought worldwide through increase and offer of a range of services that include special education, with the general framework and integration of people with special needs into the conventional educational environment to reduce social stigmas and increase academic achievements for various children with special needs.

Infants and toddlers broadly acquire developmental milestones in various ways and steps, and no two children grow and develop in the same way or rate. Teachers and caregivers of special need children always get confused on how to differentiate between such children's growth timetable and developmental problem. While most children crawl before they walk, a few skip crawling but go ahead and walk. In the same vein, some children take their first steps at eight months and some until fifteen months. Most infants commence use of words at about their first birthdays while some pick up words in talking after their first birthdays (DES 2003), Tombowua (2013) & Briscoll and Cartar (2009).

## **2. Concept Clarification**

To help in the proper understanding of this issue in concept, it is pertinent to simplify the focus in concrete terms, for appropriate clarity.

## **2.1 The Concept of Education for Early Years**

Personality and social life style of a child are mostly gain at their formative year. The years prior to the individual getting to kindergarten are the most essential in their lives as it influences learning. This accounts for the value placed on the education of the young people and their career development (Christies and Dereianka, 2010). The quality of care and education which a child receives at this crucial Educational stage will propel to a great extent, the level of his or her physical and cognitive development in the future.

However, the intention of Early Childhood Care Development Education (ECCDE) as captured by Federal Republic of Nigeria NCSE (2006) & (FRN) (2013), “is to foster the proper development of the children, identify and address their problems, harness their potentials, mould their characters, enhance their learning, and equip them for life, so that their actions are channeled towards positive personal, communal and global development in all ramifications of life”. For Undiyaundeye (2015), “Early childhood education is the education offered to children who have not yet reached the statutory age of beginning primary school. It is a semi-formal educational arrangement usually outside the home in a formal setting where young children from about the age of two (2) and above years are exposed through play like activities in a group setting through social, mental and physical learning suited to the developmental stages until the mandatory age of government approved schooling”.

Notably, the last three months of prenatal life and the first two years after birth, are the most crucial period of brain growth hence more than half of the adult brain weight is multiplied at this time (UNICEF 2007 and Undiyaundeye 2013). Children require more permissive able learning privileges away from parents at regular teaching areas. For this to be achieved, new ways of collaborating are required in early childhood classrooms and teacher production.

## **2.2 Who is a Special Need Child?**

Every child is special but some require a special support to achieve their purpose in day-to-day functioning as need be. Some children need extra help due to medical, developmental needs, emotional or learning difficulty. This group of the population requires special need because they may need a therapy or extra help in school, medicine or other areas of functioning well. They are basically children who need special care or help because they have one disability or the other and require caregivers or special teachers to help them cope with the task of their existence. Special needs involve an umbrella underneath which a staggering array of diagnoses can be placed.

The duty of a parent or teacher, is to advocate for a child's needs. To do that, teachers need to fully understand what the child's needs are and also understand the options available to be integrated for life operations (Alimba 2014). In the past, some parents wasted the child's opportunity of getting integrated with other children to acquire "ability in disability" due to lack of knowledge and appropriate direction. These children disadvantage range of physical disabilities, mental, visual, intellectual and or emotional problems and others require extraordinary teachers and caregivers from their early classes regarding integration to acquire functionality in life endeavours.

### **2.3 Characteristics of Children with Special Needs**

These are children with diverse exhibition of personality characteristics in different areas. According Lerner (2000) and Gragiulo (2004) they include the following, but not limited to

- Attention disorder
- Reading difficulties 2.3
- Poor motor abilities
- Written language difficulties
- Oral language difficulties
- Social skills difficulties
- Psychological process deficits
- Quantitative disorders
- Information processing problems
- Dyslexia

### **2.4 Attention Disorder**

Attention disorder is very critical in learning. For an individual to be an effective learner, attention must be initiated and directed rightly on demand and be shifted as per required. A deficit in attention can have a negative effect on all areas of schooling. If a child is has attention lack in class, he or she would be unable answer questions correctly in class and also unable take notes. When children interrupt others in class, it leads to social problems. Children with attention disorder cannot concrete for a longer period and highly distractible.

### **2.5 Reading Difficulties**

Reading is one of the indicators of literacy which provides the learner with an opportunity to gain and share knowledge. It is a complex way requiring various skills for mastery. Noting reading strategies as a great skill for success in learning. Hallahan and Kauffin (2003) &

NASP (2010). observed that learner with phonological problem is as result of an unclear dictation of reading difficulties. Learning difficulty results in faulty auditory perception without hearing impairment, slow auditory process, lack acquaintance of reading, failure to attend to critical aspects of the word, sentence or paragraph and failure to understand that letters represent units of speech.

## **2.6 Poor Motor Abilities**

These children have trouble in dispensation of visuospatial information needed to guide their motor actions to plan complex motor activities like dancing, catching or throwing of ball with accuracy and producing fluent legible handwriting. This occurs when there is a delay in the development of motor skill and presented in the inability to sit up or learn to walk. They find it difficult to use cup, spoon or fork to eat.

## **2.7 Written Language Difficulty**

This is a learning challenge associated with spelling. Children with this disorder have difficulty in utilizing clues from a range of sources that aid in deciding on the correct spelling of a word.

## **2.8 Oral Language Difficulty**

Children with this problem have difficulty with the mechanical and social uses of language. Language deficits are experienced in areas of expression and listening comprehension. These known areas control children's ability to communicate effectively. The shortfall of language can have a major deficit on the quality of life of a child with learning difficulty as well as his or her life in education. Usually, problems with oral language difficulty include: responding to questions, understanding complex sentence structure, choosing appropriate words and difficulty in retrieving words. This makes them speak more slowly and affect their academic and social interaction.

## **2.9 Social Skills Difficulties**

These social skills challenges can be present in children, teenagers and even adults. It occurs when these groups of people have difficulty in keeping and making friends. Individuals with weak social problem solving skills may have fewer opportunities to proceed because human interaction with one another breeds advancement in knowledge and retracing of failed steps.

## **2.10 Psychological Process Deficits**

This involves the lack of cognitive, emotional or behavioural performance of an individual which is below average in individuals with learning deficits.

## **2.11 Dyslexia**

A challenge characterized by difficulty in single word decoding reflecting insufficient phonological processing abilities. It is mainly associated with various difficulties with varying forms of language to include problem of reading, a conspicuous problem with acquiring proficiency in writing and spelling.

## **3. Management Strategies for Children with Special Needs**

When a caregiver or parent observed some abnormalities with children, the following steps are required to assist the child integrate for a better life later.

- Parents and caregivers should work together in having observation arrangement to record the child's behavior over time and in variety of settings.
- Sensitize parents and family with children with special needs on the way forward to assist the child to acquire inclusive education instead of being abandoned under lock and key in a room.
- The parents need trauma counseling to prevent labeling and stigmatization.
- Establish routines and offer organization for the child.
- Help the youngster to verbalize, act and understand, illuminate statements and feelings.
- Participate with the child in familiar care-giving routines and activities.
- Resources and learning support teachers should work to improve educational outcomes for children with special educational needs in a number of ways peculiar to the individual child.
- Fund should be made available in school budgets for the purchase of special toys for pupils with special needs in integrated classrooms.
- Emphasis should be placed on the training of professional teachers on special education to increase expertise.
- Parent – child interaction therapy is required for parents to acquire skills to interact in positive and productive ways.
- Parent Management Training – where parents are taught skills to deal effectively with challenging behaviours in special need children.
- Positive parenting programmed known as triple P is to equip parents with information and skills to increase self-confidence and self-sufficiency in managing child behaviour.

## 4. Conclusion

Individuals identified to be associated with special learning needs to arrive at their place of learning with varying needs. These children may not require learning in the same quantum. The children sometimes move from one location to another as they traverse in schools or require different needs in educational support system. It is pertinent for educational placement to be kept under review by schools, parents and other professional planners. Individuals, who are identified as needing special education needs, may be more appropriately. Children with special needs require an integrated curriculum to suit their peculiar nature through the provision of specialized teachers and caregivers to function as applicable in such classrooms.

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