

Make the Right Connections



Inclusive Church

Colossians 3:11, Galatians 3:8, 1 Corinthians 12:

Genesis 9:5-6, James 3:9-10

Definition:

Special Educational Needs (SEN) is a legal term. It describes the needs of a child who has a difficulty or disability which makes learning harder for them than for other children their age.

1. Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- Difficulties with cognitive function
- Difficulties with adaptive behaviour

Considerations

- a. Pace
- b. Visual Aids
- c. Cyclic learning
- d. Experience connections
- e. Variety

2. Physical Disabilities

- Affects stamina or coordination (fine/gross motor skills)
- Includes hearing and visual impairment, cerebral palsy, seizure disorders and severe allergies.

Considerations

a. Accessibility

- i. Is everyone able to reach all the materials?
- ii. Is there enough clear space to manoeuvre?

b. Allergies

- i. Is there a risk of cross-contamination?

c. Soft surfaces

- i. For those who suffer seizures or have mobility challenges
- ii. Reducing echo and bounce for those who are hearing impaired

d. Games

- i. How can you adapt games to be inclusive?
- ii. Fine motor skills?
- iii. Gross motor skills?

e. Colours

- i. Bold colours (black, red and purple)
- ii. Larger fonts

3. Behaviour/Emotional Disorders

- Challenges that make it difficult to relate to others.
- Inappropriate behaviour or reaction.
- Includes ADHD, OCD, oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), conduct disorder (CD), panic disorder

Considerations

- a. Parental input
 - i. What works for them?
 - ii. What are the triggers?
 - iii. How can you partner them?
- b. Respite – this is an opportunity to give the family a break!
- c. Consistency – signs or phrases for particular situations
- d. Session planning
 - i. Is there any part of the session that may trigger a response?
 - ii. Can this be adapted?
 - iii. How can the child be removed from or coached through the situation?
- e. Additional opportunities
 - i. Opportunities to move and be redirected to the task
 - ii. Visual schedule to manage expectations

4. Autism Disorders

Complex series of disorders

- **Pragmatic Language** – Social communication including body language, eye contact, small talk, and turn-taking in conversation.
- **Social Awareness** – Ability to pick up on etiquette, social norms, taboos. Ability to form and maintain relationships.
- **Monotropic Mindset** – Narrow but intense ability to focus, resulting in "obsessive: interests and difficulty task-switching.
- **Information Processing** – Ability to assimilate and apply new information quickly or to adapt to new environments or situations.
- **Sensory Processing** – Challenges interpreting sensory information, hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity to stimuli. {hypo - underwhelmed; needs additional sensory information to feel content - excessive touching, max volume etc.}
- **Repetitive Behaviours** – Tendency to "stim" in response to varying emotions. Can be beneficial or harmful in nature. {Common examples of **stimming** (sometimes called **stims**) include hand flapping, rocking, excessive or hard blinking, pacing, head banging, repeating noises or words, snapping fingers, and spinning objects.
- **Neuro-Motor Differences** – Ability to control body movements. Ranges from clumsiness to complete loss of ability to move with intention.

General Principles

1. Ask the parents

2. Produce a one-page profile which includes:

- Child's name
- Things I enjoy –
- Medical Info and allergies –
- In an emergency –
- What can make me upset –
- Things I can do myself –
 - Toilet trained?
- Things I need help with –
- How to help me when I'm upset –
- How I communicate – verbal / non-verbal

3. Adapt the lesson accordingly

Children process information in the following ways:

- Visual (seeing pictures, visual aids)
- Auditory (hearing a story, music)
- Kinaesthetic or Tactile Learning (touch-n-feel, movement)

Examples:

- **Visually:** If the curriculum offers too few pictures to accompany a story, finding another children's book or resource could provide the visual images to show as the story is told. www.freebibleimages.org
- **Auditory:** Tell stories by varying voice tone or with two voices through the use of puppets or a simple skit, ensures that a story is appealing to a child's auditory sense.
- **Kinaesthetic:** Appropriate crafts, three dimensional figures representing the story and/or having the students put on costumes to enact the story as a drama, are simple additions and ways to engage kinaesthetic learners.
- **Simple adaptations:** A child with special needs may lack the ability to participate in a particular activity. It's often possible to modify an activity to include them or provide additional assistance to make it possible for them to do it on their own eg. pre-cutting or partially assembling a craft enables a child with weak fine motor skills to participate in a craft activity.
- **Substitute or Enhance:** Providing a single, alternative activity may be the only change required to include a child with certain limitations.

4. Consult a professional

5. Classroom Size & Teacher Ratio

6. Nature of the class

7. Timing

8. Use simple language