



Accommodating Children with Different Disabilities

In Participation Settings

Tips for Engaging Children with Different Disabilities

Children have the right to influence decisions that affect them. Children with disabilities should be engaged in the development of policies and programmes relevant to them. Yet, different impairments require different techniques for engagement to ensure all children are heard equally.

Visual Impairment

- Ask children what mechanisms will help them to participate. Would they like texts provided in braille? Read aloud?
- In group settings, have everyone introduce themselves
- Use names when addressing others so all children know when they are being spoken to
- In group meetings, have children indicate they want to speak by saying their name (rather than raising a hand)

Hearing Impairment

- Use the mode of communication the child prefers (i.e. a hearing aid, sign language, lip reading, speaking, or a combination)
 - Wave or gently tap the child's shoulder to gain their attention before speaking
- When speaking to a child who can read lips:
- Face the child when speaking, do not cover your mouth
 - Speak slowly and clearly (but normally)

Speech/Communication Impairment

- Be patient
- Listen to the child, avoid interrupting them or finishing their sentences
- Ask the child to repeat what they said if you did not understand
- Consider other forms of communication like writing methods or computer technologies
- The child may want communication assistance from a person they know well

Physical/Mobility Impairment

- Ensure the facility you are using is accessible
- Choose activities that all are capable of participating in
- Be flexible/willing to adapt an activity
- Do not sit/lean on assistive devices, they are part of the child's person
- Ensure you are at the same eye level when addressing the child (i.e. sit in a chair to be at eye level with a child in a wheel chair)

Hyperkinetic Impairment

- Since hyperkinetic impairment causes a child's body or extremities to move involuntarily, it is important to:
- Speak to the child
 - Paying attention to them and not their involuntary movements
 - Continue to speak normally even if the child is moving

Psycho-Social Disability

- Treat the child with dignity and respect
- Be flexible and allow choice. The child may become anxious when they feel they do not have control
- Keep discussions calm
- Speak in a normal tone of voice

Intellectual Disability

- Children may take more time understanding, remembering, or communicating information:
- Use simple language/summarise information (yet avoid infantilising children)
 - When needed, repeat information/explain it in new ways
 - Use communication methods the child prefers (i.e. hands-on learning activities, art, music, etc.)
 - Give the child time to express themselves

Autism

- May have difficulty interacting with others so reward attempts by the child to understand/communicate
- May have delayed speech so other forms of communication can be helpful
- Encourage them to keep engaging in the activity but stop when they want to
- Create opportunities for them to communicate

Words & Expressions

That Should Be Used To Speak To or Write About Children with Disabilities



Often times people do not know how to speak to children with disabilities.

It is important to be respectful and considerate towards one another. When asking a question or conversing with a disabled child, speak directly to them rather than their caregiver.

Acceptable Words and Expressions

A person with a disability/ an impairment or a child with [name of specific disability]

For example, "a child with impaired hearing"

Non-disabled person, a person with no disability

Unacceptable Words and Expressions

Sick, lame, deformed, abnormal, mental

Avoid using phrases such as "suffers from [specific disability]"

Normal, healthy (as opposed to the disabled)