

**Lesson**  
**No 22**      **Early Identification**  
**and Intervention**

## SUMMARY

You have learnt that every child is unique. Children progress rapidly in their early years. Their developmental progress occurs in certain sequences, but the pace of development may vary. However, if children display marked problems or difficulties in one (or more) developmental area(s), then they need special care and support.

In this lesson you learnt the importance of early identification, identification of children requiring special care or interventions.

## CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Disability can be defined as any limitation or restriction to perform developmentally appropriate activities which are desired by society.

Disability and Health: Children and Youth Version (ICF-CY) defined disability as –

- An impairment in body function or structure
- A limitation in activity
- A restriction in participation

The term, children with disabilities, is used to refer to the children with disabling health conditions or impairment or as a result of illness, poor nutrition or injury.

## THE MAJOR DISABILITIES

**Sensory Impairment:** Any condition which implies a loss or impairment of the sensory organs such as hearing, vision, speech and olfactory senses.

**Developmental Disabilities:** These are diverse group of chronic conditions which are due to mental or physical impairment such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Down syndrome and Asperger Syndrome falls under this.

**Learning Disability:** This refers to an impairment of cognitive abilities that manifests as a certain type of learning-related disability.

**Behavioural Issues:** Children may experience difficulty in responding to the regular forms of care and discipline that works with other children.

**Intellectual Disorder:** Delayed mental development and mental retardation can be listed as intellectual disorders in children. It has early symptoms that can be diagnosed easily

**Psychological Conditions:** Conditions such as anxiety, chronic depression and mood swings can be classified as psychological disorders. Difficult to identify and takes longer time to be detected.

**Medical Conditions:** Children suffering from weakening chronic conditions such as heart disease, muscular dystrophy, cancer, cerebral palsy, etc

## EARLY IDENTIFICATION

Early Identification refers to the process of recognizing any disability or developmental variations in early childhood years and to understand the need of early intervention.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF EARLY IDENTIFICATION**

- The purpose of early identification is to determine which children have developmental problems that may be obstacles to learning or that places children at risk.
- It can make a huge and a positive difference in the life of children and their families.
- Early identification can significantly minimize the social, behavioral, or learning difficulties the child experiences

## **IDENTIFYING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

### **Difficulty in Oral Language**

- Slow development in speaking words or sentences
- Pronunciation problems; slow vocabulary growth
- Difficulty understanding and following simple (one-step) directions
- Lack of interest in storytelling as found difficulty in recognizing or learning rhyming words

### **Difficulty in Reading and Writing Skills**

- Slow speed in naming objects and colours
- Limited phonological awareness (rhyming and syllable blending) and connection between letters and sounds
- Difficulty recognizing and learning the letters of the alphabet

### **Difficulty related to Cognition**

- Trouble memorising the alphabet, numbers, days of the week etc
- Poor memory for everyday procedures
- Difficulty with basic concepts, such as size, shape, colour, cause and effect, sequencing, and counting

### **Difficulty in Motor Skills**

- Clumsiness, Poor balance
- Difficulty with fine motor skills and manipulating small objects
- delayed gross motor skills)

### **Difficulty in Social Behavior**

- Trouble interacting with others or playing alone
- Easily frustrated, Hard to manage, temper tantrums
- Distracted easily and inattentive
- Impulsive and Hyperactive
- Difficulty in changing activities or handling disruptions to routines

## **EARLY IDENTIFICATION STRATEGIES**

National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2006) emphasises that children upto the age of six years may be identified at the earliest and necessary interventions be made urgently so that they are capable of joining inclusive education at the right age.

### **Screening**

Refers to determining the areas where children need assistance.

### **Risk Indicators and Protective Factors**

A range of environmental, biological, genetic, and prenatal conditions are associated with adverse developmental outcomes and may be considered as risk indicators or warning signs of learning disability.

## **Systematic Observations**

Systematic observations of a child's behavior and abilities over time are important. Observations may be informal or may follow a standard observation methodology to determine the areas where children need assistance.

## **Comprehensive Evaluation**

When a screening, a review of risk indicators and systematic observations suggest that a child is at risk then professionals should conduct comprehensive evaluation to determine the individual child's specific pattern of abilities and needs.

## **EARLY INTERVENTIONS**

- Early intervention means doing things as early as possible to work on the child's developmental, health and support needs.
- Early intervention services are a range of special and specific services to help young children who have developmental delays and can make a crucial difference in the children's life.

### **Advantages of Early Interventions**

- Improve children's developmental, social and educational gains.
- Reduce behavioural issues, feelings of isolation, stress and frustration that families may experience.
- Help children with disabilities to become productive and independent individuals
- Reduce the future costs of special education, rehabilitation and healthcare needs

## **STRATEGIES FOR EARLY INTERVENTIONS**

**Occupational Therapy** can help with fine motor skills, play and self-help skills like dressing and toilet training

**Physiotherapy** can help with motor skills like balance, sitting, crawling and walking

**Speech Therapy** can help with speech, language, eating and drinking skill

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITY INTERVENTIONS**

- **Family-centred**
- **Developmentally appropriate**
- **Child-focused**
- **Supportive and structured**

These interventions consist of multidisciplinary services to enhance skills, minimise developmental delays and functional deterioration and promote health and well-being of children.

## **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES FOR SUPPORTING INCLUSION**

- Assistive technology refers to “any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.”
- Assistive devices and technologies are those whose primary purpose is to maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence to facilitate participation and to enhance overall well-being.
- Assistive technology can enhance the quality of life of both children and their families through communication, mobility, self-care, household tasks, family relationships, education, and engagement in play and recreation.

**Examples of Assistive Technologies** - wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes, crutches, hearing aids, Braille, speech-audio recorders, ramps, grab bars, computer software and hardware, Lightweight, high-performance mobility devices, communication board etc.

### **BARRIERS TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES**

**Lack of Awareness:** Many people with disabilities and their families have limited awareness of assistive products and services.

**Lack of Governance Including Legislation, Policies and National Programmes:** For many states, provision of assistive technology is a relatively low area of priority.

**Lack of Services:** Assistive technology services are often in short supply and located far away from where children with disabilities live.

**Lack of Products:** In many countries, there is no production of assistive products or are produced on a small scale. It is small not only in terms of quantity, but also in terms of the range of types, models and sizes of the products.

### **EVALUATE YOURSELF**

**Q1.** Discuss the meaning and significance of early identification. Also discuss different early identification strategies.

**Q2.** Discuss the meaning and significance of early intervention. Also discuss different strategies for early intervention.

### **PRACTICE YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

Being an ECCE teacher, how will you identify developmental delay in cognitive domain? Write intervention strategies to cope up with the challenge.