

How to Support Children with Physical Disability

Education Bureau 2015

Introduction

Parents always wish to provide their children with the best living and learning environment in order to nurture them to achieve success in future. With early identification and support, children with special educational needs (SEN) may adapt to everyday life and the learning environment, and develop their potentials.

What is Physical Disability (PD)?

PD refers to the disability caused by diseases of central and peripheral neurological systems, traumas or other congenital diseases of the musculoskeletal systems, which lead to hindrance or limitations in one or more aspects in daily living. In Hong Kong, physical disabilities mainly include the following categories: cerebral palsy, spina bifida, spinal muscular atrophy, muscular dystrophy, amputation, osteogenesis imperfecta and juvenile idiopathic arthritis.

Roles of Parents

- Provide the school with the SEN information of your child promptly and proactively;
- Maintain communication with the school's student support team, class teacher and subject teachers to understand your child's learning in school; and discuss appropriate support strategies with them when necessary;
- Accept your child having PD and understand his/her degree of disability and limitations. Apart from providing him/her proper care, nurture the independence of the child;
- Family members should positively and actively share the responsibility of taking care of the child with PD;
- Teach and encourage your child to express his/ her physical conditions to others, and enhance his/her self-acceptance and communication abilities with others;
- Provide your child with more learning opportunities to maximize his/her mobility, develop his/her intellectual potential and widen his/her social circles;
- Pay attention to the physical state of your child, and regularly check the auxiliary aids fitted and replace them whenever necessary; and
- Accompany your child to receive rehabilitation therapy and continue training at home.

For further information on supporting children with SEN, parents may refer to the "Parent Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education" on the Education Bureau (EDB) website (please see the back page for the website).

Support Services and Strategies

In general, subject to the assessment and recommendation of specialists and with the consent

of parents, students with more severe PD or multiple disabilities may be referred to special schools for intensive support services. Other students with mild PD may enroll in ordinary schools. Schools will provide the following support in accordance with the needs of the students:

Special Schools

Schools for children with PD provide education services for students with more severe PD or multiple disabilities. Apart from providing academic curriculum, these schools also employ auxiliary and specialist staff to provide therapeutic services (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, etc.), and procure rehabilitation equipment and devices so as to help students with PD develop their potential in full.

Ordinary Schools

- Adapting and/or expanding the school curriculum to cater for different needs of students;
- Providing an equitable assessment for the students to display their competencies through special examination arrangements,
- e.g. reasonable adjustment of time allowance or provide supervised breaks during assessment;
- Facilitating students' access to different corners of schools and use of facilities through improvement works, purchase of auxiliary aids, etc.;
- Providing appropriate assistance or special arrangements for students with PD so that they can participate in various learning activities to enrich their learning experiences and realize their full potential;
- Building an inclusive culture by encouraging students to help each other according to students' special needs, e.g. carry heavy objects, write school diary, escort students with PD to use lifts, etc.;
- Arranging students with mobility impairment to sit near the classroom entrance to ensure that there is enough space for them to move around or place their auxiliary aids such as wheelchairs, crutches, etc.;
- Maintaining close contact with parents to understand students' conditions and needs for adjustment;
- When necessary, various kinds of sharing sessions on health knowledge can be held for parents to enhance their understanding of PD; and
- When necessary, schools may contact related professionals such as doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, etc. to understand students' conditions and rehabilitation needs.

Useful Websites and Telephone Numbers for Enquiry

Education Bureau

<http://www.edb.gov.hk>

Hong Kong Regional Education Office (Tel: 2863 4646)

Kowloon Regional Education Office (Tel: 3698 4108)

New Territories East Regional Education Office (Tel: 2639 4876)

New Territories West Regional Education Office (Tel: 2437 7272)

General Enquiries on Special Education (Tel: 3698 3957)

Educational Psychology Service Section

- Hong Kong (Tel: 3695 0486)
- Kowloon (Tel: 3698 4321)
- New Territories East (Tel: 3547 2228)
- New Territories West (Tel: 2437 7270)

Special Education Resource Centre (Tel: 3698 3900)

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/special/resources/serc/index.html>

Parent Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/special/resources/serc/download/ieparentguide.pdf>

Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education

http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/special/support/wsa/ie%20guide_en.pdf

Department of Health

- Child Assessment Service (Tel: 2246 6659)

<http://www.dhcas.gov.hk/eindex.html>

- Student Health Service (Tel: 2349 4212)

<http://www.studenthealth.gov.hk/eindex.html>

Social Welfare Department

<http://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index>

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

<http://hkcss.org.hk/e>

OneClick

<http://oneclick.hku.hk/en>