



A Guide to Local Supports and Services for

Children with Special Educational Needs

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By

Southside Partnership
in association with
Blackrock Education Centre

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Foreword

The primary aim of this resource is to provide information on the identification of learning difficulties, along with the assessment procedures, educational entitlements and other support services available to children living in the Southside Partnership area.

As well as providing general information on accessing services, specific sections offer more detailed information on the following learning difficulties:

- ▷ Speech and Language Difficulties and Disorders
- ▷ Dyslexia
- ▷ Dyspraxia
- ▷ Hyperactivity or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- ▷ Asperger Syndrome/Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- ▷ Tourette Syndrome
- ▷ Fragile X Syndrome
- ▷ Intellectual Disability

The information in this text will be of assistance to parents, teachers, youth workers, psychologists, physiotherapists, language therapists, occupational therapists, social workers and GPs - indeed anyone with an interest in this area.

Notes to Readers

This resource sets out to create an awareness of what is available for children experiencing certain learning difficulties within a geographical area covered mainly by the Southside Partnership region. (Dublin: Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and Whitechurch areas). As such, it does not claim to cover the wide range of learning difficulties which can exist or all the steps which could be taken in terms of their diagnosis and treatment.



A Basic Guide and Information Tool

The authors have designed this resource as a basic guide and information tool, one which should be used in conjunction with discussions with relevant teachers, health workers, GPs etc. The book is not intended to be a fully comprehensive list of all services and supports, nor is it necessarily a recommendation of any of these services.

It is also important to note that specific learning difficulties do not always present as a single entity. Very often, they can be multi-faceted and co-exist with other difficulties.

Because of the changing nature of service provision, new research and new supports, the information contained in this resource may change.



Acknowledgments

Southside Partnership wishes to acknowledge the support of Blackrock Education Centre in sponsoring the publication and distribution of this resource.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to compiling the information in this resource, particularly the schools, health centres, parent groups, volunteer groups, the East Coast Area Health Board, the National Educational Psychological Service and the Department of Education and Science.

Members of the Original Southside Partnership Working Group

- ▷ Two second-level and seven primary schools in the Southside Partnership area
- ▷ Three Parent Support Groups (EASE, HADD & ASPIRE)
- ▷ The Lucena Clinic, Dun Laoghaire (including a psychologist, social worker, speech & language therapist)
- ▷ Enable Ireland (formerly CPI), Sandymount
- ▷ Froebel Teacher Training College, Blackrock
- ▷ Representative from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- ▷ Southside Partnership, Dun Laoghaire

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Introduction

This is a revised edition of “Local Supports and Services for Children with Learning Difficulties” (2002) compiled in association with Southside Partnership and Blackrock Education Centre. The booklet has been updated and reprinted in 2005.

Information in this edition is accurate at time of going to press. However, because of the changing nature of service provision, in particular special educational needs, the information contained in this resource may change.

Recent legislation in Ireland has particular relevance to all schools, parents, teachers and children, particularly those children with special needs. New laws have come into place whose function it is to protect all children, ensuring that their constitutional rights are protected throughout their years in school.

Education Act 1998

Education Welfare Act 2000

Equal Status Act 2000

Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

While the legislation sets out to make available to each person, including each person with a disability or other special educational needs, ‘support services and a level of education appropriate to the needs of that person’ (Education Act 1998) parents should first of all consult with the School Principal and Class Teacher regarding their concerns about their child.

A child who has been identified as having low achievement and/or a learning difficulty will come to the attention of the Class Teacher and may already be receiving supplementary teaching or extra assistance from the Learning Support Teacher.

Parents will be consulted at every stage of this process.

If further support is considered necessary, the Principal will advise on procedures for availing of special needs services. If necessary, he/she will arrange for Psychological Assessment.

Each school is now obliged to have an Enrolment/Admissions policy and to make this available to parents. Each school will also have a policy on Special Education Needs as part of the overall School Plan.

Background to Project

Southside Partnership's Special Support Project for Children with Learning Difficulties was set up in 1998 in response to the concerns of parents, parent groups and teachers whose children/students presented with learning difficulties and who were not achieving in school. As a result, these children were at risk of either leaving school early without sitting State Examinations or achieving at a low level in these examinations.

These parents and teachers expressed an urgent need for information on support and other services available locally. The Southside consortium was therefore set up to respond to this issue in a co-ordinated and targeted manner. It had three main objectives:

- 1 **Identify and assess** the following groups of children:
 - a) Those with specific, identified learning difficulties who would be making the transition to second-level schools within the Partnership area.
 - b) Those who were currently in first year in these schools but who had not been assessed previously. (This identification and assessment was continued in 2000 for the same groups).
- 2 **Develop an Individualised Education Programme** for these children; attempt to access an addition-to-quota teacher in each of the second-level schools which had enrolled these children; support and implement such resources.
- 3 **Provide training and support for parents and teachers** working with these children through accessing the expertise of the consortium in relation to the learning difficulties identified.

Section One

Procedures for Arranging an Assessment

Depending on the nature of the difficulty, the child/young person may need to be referred to either medical or psychological services. This requires written parental consent. If a medical assessment is deemed necessary, parents can get a referral through a GP or district nurse. In the majority of cases, more serious problems of a medical nature are usually detected in early childhood.

The following steps should be taken to arrange an assessment for a child/young person who is suspected of having a learning difficulty or who is having difficulties in school.

- 1 A meeting should be arranged with the parents and the child's teacher to discuss the child's current progress. At this stage, it is likely that the teacher has already carried out an assessment or has consulted the Learning Support Teacher in the school about the child's difficulties.
- 2 An assessment with a qualified professional (eg a speech and language therapist or a psychologist) may need to be arranged. This assessment should describe the nature and extent of the problem and should offer specific advice on remediation and support.

Psychological Assessments

Following consultation with the Principal and Class Teacher a psychological assessment may be arranged through consultation with one of the following:

- ▷ An educational psychologist working in the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), an agency linked to the Department of Education and Science
- ▷ An area psychologist working for the Health Service Executive, East Coast Area
- ▷ An educational psychologist in private practice
- ▷ Psychologists working in child guidance clinics in hospitals
- ▷ In some cases, through an agency or organisation specialising in the assessment and treatment of a particular difficulty.

Assessment through the School

The following is the general procedure for arranging an assessment with an educational psychologist through the school:

- ▷ Following consultation with the teacher(s), and having received written parental consent, the School Principal applies to NEPS for an assessment
- ▷ The psychologist appointed to the school will respond and, where appropriate, may carry out a full-scale assessment. In a number of cases, a comprehensive consultation may be all that is required.

Most primary schools have a psychologist working with NEPS assigned to the school. Where none is as yet assigned, contact should be made by the Principal of the school with the Health Service Executive, East Coast Area, or NEPS itself.

All second-level schools have a NEPS psychologist assigned to them.

- ▷ Depending on the nature of the difficulty, the child or young person can also be referred to a child guidance clinic in one of the childrens' hospitals or to Lucena Clinic. (Referrals must come from a GP or an Area Medical Officer).

Assessments Procedures for Pre-School Children

At pre-school level, parents should contact their GP, the district nurse or Health Service Executive, if they are concerned about their child's early development.

If the child is first brought to a General Practitioner, it is likely that s/he will be referred to a consultant paediatrician.

If the child's difficulty is brought to the attention of the district nurse, the child will be referred to the Area Medical Officer or developmental clinic. The Area Medical Officer can further refer the child to the area psychologist employed by the Health Service Executive, to a consultant or another Health Board professional (e.g. speech and language therapist, physiotherapist).

**Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children
Crumlin**

Temple Street Hospital

Tallaght Children's Hospital

Lucena Clinic

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

See Useful Addresses Section 13

Private Assessment

If parents opt for a private assessment, the Psychological Society of Ireland provides a list of qualified specialists. Contact (01) 671 7122.

Additional Support

- ▷ If the child or young person is diagnosed as having a learning difficulty, s/he may need special teaching and supports
- ▷ Such supports may be arranged following consultation with the Principal and Class Teacher

- ▷ Supports such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychological services are provided through the Health Service Executive, hospitals and voluntary non-statutory agencies. In general, a referral from the School Principal, GP or psychologist will be needed to avail of these services.

Post-Primary Schools

Principals of post-primary schools may make an application to the Department of Education and Science for extra resources for students. Such applications may be based on information received from the primary schools and/or in some cases based on the supports the student received in primary school.

In addition applications for resources may be based on current educational needs.



Section Two

Accessing In-school Supports for Children with Learning Difficulties/ Special Educational Needs

Introduction

The level of resources allocated to schools in recent years to meet the special educational needs of children with disabilities has grown very significantly.

However, in the past, the structures in place were part of a centralized delivery of special education services.

Following a review, the Department of Education and Science has recognized the lack of locally based services and co-ordination of special education services. As a result of these findings the National Council for Special Education was established in 2003.

National Council for Special Education

Among its functions the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) will

'Make available to the parents of children with disabilities information in relation to the provision for their children regarding education'

'Consult with schools, health boards and other relevant bodies in relation to the provision of education and support services to children with disabilities'

SP.ED.01/05 Appendix 1

It is intended that the council will have local offices and will have a key role in the development and delivery of services for people with special needs. It will have a research and advisory role and will establish expert groups to consider specific areas of special needs provision. It will also establish a consultative forum to facilitate inputs for the educational partners and other interested parties.

Special Educational Needs Organisers

The Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) will be a focal point of contact for parents/guardians and schools and will process application for resources for children with disabilities who have special educational needs.

Parents may contact their child's school to find out who the SENO is for their child's school and to become informed on the new structures now in place.

From 1 January 2005 the National Council for Special Education, through the local Special Educational Needs Organiser, will be processing applications for resource teacher support for children with low incidence disabilities and deciding on the level of support appropriate to the school.

The Department of Education and Science has outlined a number of disability categories. Only pupils who have been appropriately assessed, who meet the relevant criteria for a diagnosis of a learning difficulty under one or more of these categories, may receive provision from a special education/resource teacher/special class or special needs assistant.

What are 'low incidence disabilities'?

Low incidence disabilities include the following:

- ▷ Physical disability
- ▷ Hearing impairment
- ▷ Visual impairment
- ▷ Emotional disturbance
- ▷ Severe emotional disturbance
- ▷ Moderate general learning disability
- ▷ Severe/profound general learning disability
- ▷ Autism/autistic spectrum disorders
- ▷ Specific speech and language disorder
- ▷ Assessed syndrome in conjunction with one of above low incidence disabilities
- ▷ Multiple disabilities

Many of these children attend mainstream schools and it is important that they are identified as early as possible and that the schools arrange for the assessment and diagnosis of their special educational needs and take appropriate steps to provide for those needs. While some of these children will be referred to special schools, some parents will wish for their child to be supported in mainstream school.

It is important that only those pupils who have learning difficulties arising from their disabilities and whose special educational needs cannot be met fully by the class teacher and/or the learning support teacher should be supported by resource teaching or special class placement.

The Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) is the focal point for school and parents in order to provide additional support such as:

- ▷ Processing applications for Special Needs Assistant support for children with disabilities

The SENO works in conjunction with the Department of Education and Science in relation to the following:

- ▷ Examining applications for special equipment or assistive technology
- ▷ Examining applications for transport arrangements for children with disabilities and making recommendations to Department of Education and Science
- ▷ Identifying appropriate educational settings for individual children with special educational needs

The Resource Teacher

The Resource Teacher is an additional post allocated to assist a school or cluster of schools in providing an education which meets the needs of children assessed as having difficulties.

Resource teachers are allocated where there are a number of children with special educational needs arising from a disability who are fully integrated into mainstream national schools where there are no other adequate support teaching resources available to the children.

The Role of a Resource Teacher

"A Resource Teacher assists schools in providing support for children with special educational needs arising from a disability by:

- ▷ Assessing and recording children's needs and progress
- ▷ Setting specific, time-related targets for each child and agreeing these with the class teacher and principal
- ▷ Direct teaching of the children, either within a separate room or within the mainstream class
- ▷ Team-teaching – if the children involved are deriving benefit from it
- ▷ Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, suitable textbooks, the use of Information Technology and suitable software, and a range of other related matters
- ▷ Meeting and advising parents, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher, as necessary
- ▷ Short meetings with other relevant professionals, in the children's interest e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists, visiting teachers, special school or special class teachers."

Circular SP.ED 08/02

The Special Needs Assistant

Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist in the care of pupils with disabilities in an educational context. They may be appointed to a special school or a mainstream national school to "assist school authorities in making suitable provision for pupil(s) with special care needs arising from a disability" (Department of Education and Science, 1999).

More specifically, a Special Needs Assistant may be appropriate where a pupil 'has a *significant* medical need, a *significant* impairment of physical or sensory function, or where their behaviour is a danger to themselves or to other pupils.

In many cases the special needs assistant will be providing care to help with toileting and feeding'. It would be expected that this level of care should diminish as the child matures. Circular 24/03

"The principal may, where appropriate, deploy an individual Special Needs Assistant to support several pupils with special needs. This may involve the Special Needs Assistant in more than one classroom." Circular 24/03

The duties of the Special Needs Assistant are of a non-teaching nature and include tasks such as these:

- ▷ Preparation of class materials (under direction of class teacher)
- ▷ Tidying up a classroom
- ▷ Assisting children to board and alight buses
- ▷ Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene
- ▷ Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities

The service may be provided on a full or part-time basis.

Applying for a Special Needs Assistant

An application for a Special Needs Assistant should be considered where, for example, a pupil has a significant medical need for such assistance, a significant impairment of physical function, or where his/her behaviour is such that s/he is a danger to themselves or to other pupils, or where a child cannot cope with school structures/organisation/classroom activities.

The school should give complete details of those students who require support from a Special Needs Assistant. They should also include specialists' reports from psychologists, physiotherapists etc. detailing the reasons why the student needs a special needs assistant and the benefits that s/he would derive from such supports.

Further Information

See: Information Note to Schools on the Duties of a Special Needs Assistant Funded by the Department of Education and Science, available from the Special Education Section of the Department of Education and Science, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. Tel: (01) 873 4700.

Refer also to Circular 01/05

Integration in Teaching and Learning

"Although children with special educational needs may learn at a different pace and in a different way from other children, they need to belong to a peer group and to mix with children of different abilities in a variety of situations.

Wherever possible schools should provide additional help for children in the mainstream classroom or if necessary in small groups. This will also have the effect of minimizing the disruption to the normal class programme that can happen if individual children are being withdrawn at different times for tuition.

Various categories of special education teachers are deployed in the education system e.g. visiting teachers, learning support teachers, resource teachers for travellers."

Circular SP.ED.24/03

Establishing Special Classes in a Mainstream School

Special classes can be established within schools which will cater for pupils with special educational needs. Disabilities may arise from the following:

- ▷ Visual or Hearing impairment
- ▷ Mild, Moderate or Severe General Learning Disabilities
- ▷ Emotional Behavioural Disturbance
- ▷ Autism and Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- ▷ Physical Disability
- ▷ Multiple Disabilities
- ▷ Specific Learning Disability/Dyslexia
- ▷ Specific Speech and Language Disorders

It is advisable to contact your local Special Educational Needs Organiser with a view to establishing a special class in your local school.

Please also refer to Circular 9/99 – “Applications for Special Classes for Children with Disabilities”.

Further Information

See Circular 9/99, Circular 24/03 and Circular 09/04: Applications for Special Classes for Children with Disabilities, available from:
 Special Education Section 1
 Department of Education and Science

Post Primary Schools

The same level of support and/or special provision received by a pupil in primary school may not automatically transfer to second-level school. It is advisable for parents to fully inform the second-level school of a student’s additional or special education need in good time, prior to enrolment.

Principals of post-primary schools may make an application to the Department of Education and Science for extra resources for students. Such applications may be based on information received from the primary schools and/or in some cases based on the supports the student received in primary school. In addition, applications may be based on the current educational needs of the child.

Section Three

Support Services for Children with Speech and Language Difficulties and Disorders

Children with Specific Language Impairment present with speech and language difficulties where their skills are not developing in line with expected developmental sequence ...

Specific deficits may occur in many or all areas of pre-linguistic/linguistic skills... the children may present with difficulties in comprehension, expression and use of spoken or written language ...

(Time to Speak, a document by Speech and Language Therapists, 1993)

"Pupils with specific speech and language disorders and difficulties are those whose non-verbal ability is in the average band or higher and whose skill in understanding or expressing themselves through the medium of spoken language is severely impaired. Their difficulty is not attributable, however, to factors such as defective hearing, emotional or behavioural disorders, or a physical condition. Many children present with speech or language delays where the pattern of development or communication skills follows the usual developmental course, but the child's skills may be simply delayed in comparison to other children of the same age."

(Department of Education and Science Special Education Review Committee SERC Report, 1993)

Diagnosis and Assessment

Before a child can be identified as having a specific speech and language difficulty or disorder, the following steps must be taken:

- ▷ Through assessment by a psychologist on a standardised test, the overall ability of the child must be confirmed as having at least the potential to be in the average range.
- ▷ Other factors such as hearing impairment or behavioural or emotional difficulties must be ruled out as primary causative factors.

If, following assessment by a speech and language therapist, it is felt that the child's development of language skills is significantly delayed/disordered in pattern, the therapist may, with parental consent, refer the child to a psychologist for assessment. The outcome of this assessment will aid in confirming a diagnosis.

Children who present with a significant speech and language disorder may also present with any of the following disorders:

- ▷ Autism and Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- ▷ Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
- ▷ ADD and ADHD
- ▷ Dyslexia
- ▷ Dyspraxia

Children with physical/sensory difficulties - hearing impairment, cleft palate, developmental delay - can also present with speech or language delay/disorder.

Access to Services

The services of a speech and language therapist can be accessed through:

- ▷ Health Centres in the Health Services Executive in the area
- ▷ Private practice speech and language therapists
- ▷ Public Hospitals
- ▷ Voluntary non-statutory agencies

Speech and Language Service available through the Health Service Executive

The Southside Partnership area is serviced by Community Care Area 1 and 2 of the Health Service Executive - East Coast Area.

Community Care Area 1

The following have Health Centres with Speech and Language Therapists. There is an open referral policy. Referrals can be made directly by a parent, school principal, Area Medical Officer, GP, Public Health Nurse etc.

Loughlinstown Health Centre

Blackrock Health Centre

Dun Laoghaire Health Centre (service available 1 day per week)

Community Care Area 2

Ballinteer Health Centre

Baggot Street Hospital

See Useful Addresses Section 13

Waiting Lists

Waiting time for initial assessment may take up to six months.

Speech and Language Therapists in Private Practice

In addition, parents may be able to arrange an assessment through a private practice speech and language therapist. For further information, contact the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists.

Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT)

Public Hospitals

The following public hospitals provide Speech and Language Therapy for children. A medical referral is generally necessary to access these services.

**Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children
Crumlin**

Temple Street Hospital

Tallaght Children's Hospital

Non-Statutory Agencies and Special Schools

The following also provide Speech and Language Services. However, unless the child has additional needs, they will not be able to access these services.

The Central Remedial Clinic

Enable Ireland (formerly CPI/Cerebral Palsy Ireland)

Lucena Clinic

See Useful Addresses Section 13

Lucena Clinic caters for children who have emotional and/or behavioural problems. It is an out-patient service and a medical referral is required. If children are availing of the services of Lucena Clinic they may not be able to access speech and language services from the Health Service Executive, as their needs may more appropriately be met in a multidisciplinary setting.

Beechpark Services, Stillorgan and Tallaght

This is a service for children and adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This service is based in Tallaght for children in mainstream school. They receive a service in an outreach manner with Speech and Language Therapists and other professionals working with families at home and teachers in pre-schools, primary and second-level schools. (See page 28)

Special Schools for Children with Autism, Stillorgan

Children attending Ballyowen Meadows for children aged 4 to 12 years and Setanta School for children aged 12 to 18 years receive a curriculum which is language based and have access to speech and language therapists and other professionals from the Beechpark Service - Parents can contact the schools directly.

Mainstream Schools with a Speech and Language Unit

Good Shepherd National School

There is a waiting list for this unit and those applying for a place should do so before March of the upcoming school year. Speech and language therapy reports as well as psychological assessment reports need to be included with application.

Ballinteer Community School

This school has a speech and language unit. Those applying for a place should do so immediately after Christmas of the upcoming school year. Speech and language therapy reports, psychological assessment reports, school reports and other relevant reports should be included with the application.

Support Group

Caint is a support group for children with speech and language impairments and their families. It lobbies for improved services and helps parents access information.

Caint

c/o Geraldine Graydon

See Useful Addresses Section 13

Section Four

Support Services for Children with Dyslexia

Identifying Dyslexia (sometimes called Specific Learning Difficulty)

Dyslexia is usually defined as a specific learning disability affecting reading, spelling or writing. In addition, the child may have difficulties with short-term memory, sequencing and information processing.

In 1993, the Special Education Review Committee established by the Department of Education and Science used the term "specific learning disability" instead of dyslexia and defined it as "*impairment in specific aspects of reading, writing and arithmetical notation, the primary cause of which is not attributable to assessed ability being below the average range, to defective sight or hearing, emotional factors, a physical condition or to any extrinsic adverse circumstances*".

The Task Force definition of dyslexia proposes a somewhat broader concept: "*Dyslexia is manifested in a continuum of specific learning difficulties related to the acquisition of basic skills in reading, spelling and/or writing, such difficulties being unexpected in relation to an individual's other abilities and educational experiences. Dyslexia can be described at the neurological, cognitive and behavioural levels. It is typically characterised by inefficient information processing, including difficulties in phonological processing, working memory, rapid naming and automaticity of basic skills. Difficulties in organisation, sequencing and motor skills may also be present.*"

(Task Force Report on Dyslexia July 2002)

In the Irish context, the Report of the Task Force on Dyslexia (2002) has provided guidelines to aid the identification and assessment of learning difficulties arising from dyslexia. The Task Force outlined the following list of difficulties:

Indicators of a possible Learning Difference (Age 3-5 years)

Many of these indicators may also be noted in children with learning difficulties not arising from dyslexia.

- ▷ Is later than most children in learning to speak
- ▷ Has difficulty in pronouncing some, especially multi-syllabic words
- ▷ Has difficulty separating spoken words into sounds and blending spoken sounds to make words (i.e. has difficulty with phonological awareness)
- ▷ Experiences auditory discrimination problems
- ▷ Is prone to spoonerisms (e.g. fips and chish for fish and chips)
- ▷ Has difficulty with rhyming
- ▷ Has difficulty with maintaining rhythm
- ▷ Is unable to recall the right word
- ▷ Is slow to add new vocabulary

- ▷ Exhibits delays in acquiring emergent literacy skills (e.g. understanding that written language progresses from left to right, discriminating between letters, words and sentences)
- ▷ Experiences problems learning the alphabet
- ▷ Has trouble learning numbers, days of the week, colours and shapes
- ▷ Has trouble learning to write and spell his/her own name
- ▷ Is unable to follow multi-step directions or routines
- ▷ Is developing fine motor skills more slowly than other children
- ▷ May have difficulty telling and/or retelling a story in the correct sequence

Indicators of a possible Learning Difficulty arising from Dyslexia (Age 5-7+ years)

Many of these indicators may also be noted in students with other possible learning difficulties.

- ▷ Is slow to learn the connection between letters and sounds (alphabetic principle)
- ▷ Has difficulty separating words into sounds and blending sounds to form words (phonemic awareness)
- ▷ Has difficulty repeating multi-syllabic words
- ▷ Has difficulty reading single words in isolation
- ▷ Has poor word attack skills, especially for new words
- ▷ Confuses small or 'easy' words e.g. at/to; said/and, does/goes
- ▷ May make constant reading and spelling errors including letter reversals, word reversals, word substitutions etc
- ▷ Oral reading is slow and laborious
- ▷ May be slow to learn new skills, relying on memorizing without understanding
- ▷ Reading comprehension is better than single word reading
- ▷ Has trouble learning facts
- ▷ Has difficulty planning or organising
- ▷ Uses awkward pencil grip
- ▷ Has slow and poor quality handwriting
- ▷ Has trouble learning to tell the time
- ▷ Has poor fine motor co-ordination
- ▷ Has more difficulty with function words (e.g. is, to, of) than with content words (e.g. cloud, run, yellow)
- ▷ Reading comprehension is below expectation due to poor accuracy, fluency and speed
- ▷ Listening comprehension is better than reading comprehension

Indicators of a possible Learning Difficulty arising from Dyslexia (Age 7-12+ years)

Many of these indicators may also be noted in students with other learning difficulties.

- ▷ Has continued difficulty reading text aloud or silently
- ▷ Reading achievement is below expectation
- ▷ Still confuses letter sequences e.g. felt for left

- ▷ Poor reading accuracy, fluency or speed interferes with reading comprehension
- ▷ Spelling is inappropriate for age and general ability
- ▷ Poor writing ability
- ▷ Is unable to learn multiplication facts by rote
- ▷ Still confuses directional words e.g. left, right
- ▷ Forgets to bring in homework
- ▷ Has difficulty remembering what day, month it is
- ▷ Has difficulty remembering his/her telephone number, or birthday
- ▷ Poor planning, organisational skills
- ▷ Lacks self-confidence and has poor self-image
- ▷ Is slow at discerning and learning prefixes, suffixes, root words and other morphemes as part of reading and spelling strategies
- ▷ Poor spelling contributes to poor written expression (e.g. may avoid use of unfamiliar words)
- ▷ Uses avoidance tactics when asked to read orally or write
- ▷ Experiences language related problems in maths (e.g. when reading word problems and directions, confuses numbers and symbols)
- ▷ Has slow or poor recall of facts
- ▷ Lacks understanding of other people's body language and facial expressions
- ▷ Has trouble with non-literal or figurative language (e.g. idioms, proverbs)
- ▷ Has poor time management

Indicators of a possible Learning Difficulty arising from Dyslexia (Age 12 years +)

Many of these indicators may also be noted in students with other learning difficulties.

- ▷ Is still reading slowly and without fluency, with many inaccuracies
- ▷ Misreads words (e.g. hysterical for historical) or information
- ▷ Has difficulty modifying reading rate
- ▷ Has an inadequate store of knowledge due to lack of reading experience
- ▷ Continues to experience serious spelling difficulties
- ▷ Has slow, dysfluent and/or illegible handwriting
- ▷ Has better oral skills than written skills
- ▷ Has difficulty planning, sequencing and organising written text
- ▷ Has difficulty with written syntax or punctuation
- ▷ Has difficulty skimming, scanning or proof-reading written text
- ▷ Has difficulty summarizing or outlining
- ▷ Has problems in taking notes and copying from the board
- ▷ Procrastinates and/or avoids reading and writing tasks
- ▷ Does not complete assignments or class work or does not hand them in
- ▷ Is slow in answering questions, especially open-ended ones
- ▷ Has poor memorisation skills
- ▷ Still mispronounces or misuses some words
- ▷ Has problems recalling the names of some words or objects

- ▷ Has poor planning and organisational skills
- ▷ Has poor time management skills
- ▷ Has more difficulty in language based subjects (e.g. English, Irish, History) than in non-language based subjects (e.g. mathematics, technical graphics)
- ▷ Lacks self-confidence and has a poor self-image

Task Force Report on Dyslexia (2002) (Page 120-122)

Assessment Procedures and Waiting Lists

If it is suspected that a child or young person has a learning difficulty arising from dyslexia, it is important that the condition be diagnosed as soon as possible by means of a consultation and/or assessment (See Section 1).

An assessment may be carried out by one of the following:

- ▷ A psychologist working in the National Educational and Psychological Service (NEPS)
- ▷ A psychologist employed by the Health Service Executive, East Coast Area
- ▷ An educational psychologist in private practice
- ▷ A psychologist employed by the Dyslexia Association of Ireland

Assessments carried out by Dyslexia Association Ireland cost €300 plus, which is similar to fees charged by Educational Psychologists practising privately.

Special Teaching and Supports

Class Teacher A student who has been identified as dyslexic may receive additional support from the class teacher.

Learning Support Teacher Students with specific learning difficulties, including those arising from dyslexia, which are not severe enough to qualify for special education provision may receive supplementary teaching from a learning support teacher.

Resource Teaching Support Teaching provision is intended for pupils with special needs (eg the visually impaired, hearing impaired, moderate general learning disability, Asperger Syndrome etc.) whose capacity to learn and integrate is reduced by the disability itself. Such children are in a group which is distinct from those in the specific learning difficulty group. Parents should refer to school's own policy on Special Education Teaching and consult with the class teacher and School Principal.

Reading Schools The following schools cater for children with reading difficulties. The pupil teacher ratio is 9:1 (September 2004).

Catherine McAuley National School

St Oliver Plunkett National School

St Rose's National School

See Useful Addresses Section 13

Enrolment Criteria

Conditions for entry to these three schools include:

- ▷ The child must be referred by a psychologist
- ▷ The child must have average/above average intelligence
- ▷ The child must have a specific reading difficulty
- ▷ The child must be aged between eight and twelve years.

Placement is normally for a period of either one or, as in most cases, two full school years. Attendance for a third year is permitted only in exceptional circumstances. A psychologist's assessment through a standardised test of intelligence should place the child's general intellectual ability within the average/above average range.

- ▷ The child should exhibit an obvious discrepancy between general intellectual ability and performance on a standardised test of reading ability.
- ▷ Performance in basic literacy skills as measured by a standardised test should be at a very low level compared to the vast majority of children in a similar age cohort.
- ▷ The pupil should have completed 2nd class in primary school or be at least 8 years old and not more than 12 years old.

The Dyslexia Association of Ireland

The Dyslexia Association of Ireland is a national source of information on specific learning disabilities. The organisation can arrange talks for interested groups.

Special educational services offered by the Dyslexia Association of Ireland include:

- ▷ One-to-one tuition for children and adults on weekday afternoons in the association's national headquarters
- ▷ The association maintains an extensive list of tutors who are willing to offer private tuition, the cost of which is between €25 - €30 approximately
- ▷ Non-residential summer schools are held each July in various centres
- ▷ Special group workshops in Sandymount, Gardiner Street and Tallaght
- ▷ Exam preparation and study skills classes for students with dyslexia sitting the Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate exams and other such Department of Education and Science examinations.

Courses for Parents, Teachers and other Professionals

The Dyslexia Association of Ireland offers courses for teachers on the identification and remediation of difficulties faced by children with dyslexia. A recognised teaching qualification is necessary for enrolment. Relevant professionals such as psychologists and speech and language therapists may also attend.

Branches of the Dyslexia Association of Ireland arrange short courses for parents on how to help and support a child with dyslexia.

Computer Aids

Computers are proving to be increasingly important in assisting students with literacy and numeracy and can also be used to assist in the learning process. Schools can now apply to the Department of Education and Science for grants to purchase computers and specialised equipment for pupils with dyslexia.

National Council for Technology in Education (DCU)

Further Information and Support Groups

Dyslexia Association of Ireland

BDA - British Dyslexia Association - www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk

EASE/START RIGHT

See Useful Addresses Section 13

Section Five

Support Services for Children with Dyspraxia

Identifying Dyspraxia

The child/young person with dyspraxia may have a combination of problems in varying degrees, including:

- ▷ Poor balance
 - ▷ Poor fine and gross motor co-ordination
 - ▷ Difficulties with vision
 - ▷ Motor planning and perception problems
 - ▷ Tactile dysfunction
 - ▷ Poor awareness of body position in space
 - ▷ Difficulty with reading, writing and speech
 - ▷ Poor social skills and/or emotional and behavioural problems
- (Dyspraxia Association of Ireland)

The child or young person with dyspraxia may also have one or more of the following difficulties:

- ▷ Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- ▷ Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- ▷ Speech and Language Difficulty or Disorder

Developmental Verbal Dyspraxia (DVD) means that the acquisition of speech is delayed. Children and young people with this difficulty need intensive speech therapy over a prolonged period. Parents can avail of the services of speech and language therapists working in the Health Service Executive, East Coast Area or other agencies (See Section 3).

Assessment and Diagnosis

If parents feel that their child has a particular difficulty in the above areas, they should bring the child to a GP or to the Area Medical Officer working in the Health Service Executive, East Coast Area. From here, the child is likely to be referred to a paediatrician or a paediatric neurologist in one of the main children's hospitals.

Alternatively, the child may be referred to an educational or clinical psychologist or psychiatrist who will assist in the diagnosis of the problem and refer the child for further help where appropriate.

Special Supports and Teaching

In general, children with dyspraxia are able to participate in mainstream classes. They may have contact with some/all of the following service providers:

Hospitals: The child is likely to have initial contact with hospital consultants, and may later be referred to a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, and speech and language therapists working in the hospital.

Health Service Executive (HSE): Psychological, speech and language, physiotherapy and occupational therapy services can be availed of through the Health Centres. In some cases, a referral is necessary from an Area Medical Officer.

The following non-statutory voluntary agencies provide back-up services / specialist help for children with physical and co-ordination problems:

The Central Remedial Clinic

Enable Ireland (formerly CPI/Cerebral Palsy Ireland)

Enable Ireland runs a specific programme called COSMO for children with dyspraxia or developmental co-ordination problems. It is run by the Occupational Therapy Department at the Enable Ireland Clinic in Sandymount and caters for children in local schools.

Referrals usually come from teachers, GPs or an educational psychologist. The programme is free-of-charge and is aimed at children in the 5-12 age group. There is a waiting list of 9 to 12 months.

In some cases, children with dyspraxia may present with emotional and behavioural problems. They may be referred to:

Lucena Clinic (outpatient clinic, referral necessary)

There is an initial waiting list and then an internal waiting list for this service.

Further Information and Support Groups

The Dyspraxia Association of Ireland
c/o Siobhan Gallagher

See useful addresses Section 13

The aims of the Dyspraxia Association of Ireland include ensuring that adequate resources are made available to support the needs of children with dyspraxia. These include occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychological supports, physiotherapy and education. They also provide an information sharing and support network for parents.

Section Six

Support Services for Children with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Identifying Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, ADD/ADHD

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is characterised by attention skills that are developmentally delayed or inappropriate, and sometimes impulsivity. If the condition is accompanied by hyperactivity, it is referred to as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Characteristics of children with ADD can include the following and often arise in early childhood:

- ▷ Fidgeting with hands or feet
- ▷ Difficulty in remaining seated
- ▷ Difficulty following through on instructions
- ▷ Shifting from one uncompleted task to another
- ▷ Difficulty in playing quietly
- ▷ Interrupting conversations and intruding on other children's games
- ▷ Appearing not to listen to what is being said
- ▷ Doing things that are dangerous without thinking about the consequences

In terms of diagnosis, the above behaviours should be present for at least six months, with onset before the age of 7.

Not all infants and children with ADD or ADHD have all the features of the condition. There are also different degrees of severity. Some children may not show signs of hyperactivity, so diagnosis can be more difficult.

In addition, ADD or ADHD rarely occurs alone. Children may also present with one or more of the following:

- ▷ Emotional and/or behavioural problems
- ▷ Dyslexia or another specific learning difficulty
- ▷ Depression or anxiety
- ▷ Tourette Syndrome
- ▷ Speech and language problems

A multi-disciplinary approach to diagnosis and treatment is recommended.

Diagnosis and Treatment

The following service providers may be involved in the diagnosis and treatment of ADD and ADHD.

- ▷ Paediatrician - Our Lady's Hospital, Crumlin and Temple Street Children's Hospital
- ▷ Clinical Psychologist and Child Psychiatrist - Lucena Clinic

- ▷ Clinical Psychologists in private practice
- ▷ Educational Psychologists

Once a child is identified as having ADD/ADHD, a number of approaches may be undertaken:

- ▷ Behaviour management techniques
- ▷ Addressing speech and language problems
- ▷ Prescribing medication for the child
(which may be prescribed by a psychiatrist or paediatrician)

Specially tailored educational programmes suitable for the needs of the child may be organized by the following:

Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children Crumlin

There is a designated ADHD service in this hospital. Referrals are first made to the relevant consultant and from here patients are referred to a psychologist. There is a waiting list of eight months for psychological services and a waiting list of two to three months for neurological services. Patients attending the service are in the 3-to-16 age range.

Temple Street Hospital

An assessment and treatment service for ADHD is available at St Francis Clinic, Temple Street Hospital. The hospital has developed specialised services for families with an ADHD child. Referrals usually come from consultants in the hospital or from consultants in other hospitals. GPs generally do not refer clients to the service. The clinic may refer children to other professionals for additional services such as speech and language therapy. The waiting list for the service is short. Children from 4 to 14 are catered for.

Lucena Clinic (referral from a GP or an Area Medical Officer is necessary)

A comprehensive assessment is offered to each child and family by a team composed of a consultant clinical psychologist, a psychiatrist, a social worker and a speech and language therapist. Following assessment, a plan of intervention may be made for the child. The clinic caters mainly for children up to 16 years of age.

See Useful Addresses Section 13

A Clinical Psychologist in Private Practice

The service provided by the clinical psychologist in private practice is mainly one of assessment. A detailed psychological assessment is conducted, followed by a detailed report, treatment recommendations and a follow-up service. The recommendation may include behaviour management programmes for children and parents. Referrals may come from GPs or Area Medical Officers.

Educational Psychologists

A child with ADD/ADHD may be referred to one of the following: an educational psychologist working for the National Educational Psychological Service; a psychologist in private practice, or one employed by voluntary agencies. The educational psychologist may, where appropriate, provide an assessment of the child.

**The Psychological Society of Ireland provides a list of qualified specialists.
Contact (01) 671 7122 www.psihq.ie**

Youthreach / Community Training Centres

Many adolescents with ADD/ADHD find it difficult to cope with second-level school. They sometimes attend Youthreach centres during the day instead of formal schooling, although it must be stated that there are currently no specific programmes for young adults with ADD/ADHD in Youthreach centres. The existing service caters for adolescents aged 15 years and over who have left school early without formal qualifications. The services are provided in an out-of-school setting. A training allowance of between €32 - €81 is also paid, depending on age.

Contact: VEC/FÁS - Local offices for information

Support Group

HADD (Hyperactive/Attention Deficit Disorder Family Support Group Ireland)

This organisation aims to help and support children and young people with Hyperactivity and Attention Deficit Disorder and their families. It seeks to create a better understanding of developmental difficulties which children face because of their difficulties. It also establishes better links between professional workers and parents and assists with the improvement of diagnostic and other services.

See Useful Addresses Section 13

Section Seven

Support Services for Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

Autism is a lifelong condition which isolates the child or adult from the world as we know it. It affects the ability to communicate, form relationships and understand everyday activities.

An extremely wide range of individual differences is represented within this grouping, from individuals who have a severe learning disability, to those with average and above-average intelligence. All share the triad of impairments in reciprocal social interaction, communication, and a lack of flexible thinking. ASD impact on these areas of functioning and can have significant implications throughout the lives of those affected across the entire ability range.

Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, that adversely affects educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with Autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or changes in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has a serious emotional disturbance. (Turnbull 2002) Autistic Spectrum Disorder is identified as a separate disability in the Department of Education classification list.

Autism is a medically defined condition and, as such, does not translate directly into special educational needs. The severity of the Autism will play a role, as will any additional disabilities on the nature of any compensatory abilities, the person's experience, their motivation to learn, and the nature and quality of the education provided in any particular setting.

Educational Issues

Educational programming for students on the Autism spectrum must address a wide range of skill development. This should include academic skills, communication and language skills, social and behavioural skills, self-help skills, and leisure skills.

Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders benefit most from settings that are well-structured, task-oriented, with goals that are clear to teachers and students and offer individualized progress. This does not imply segregation but it does require knowledge of the condition by the school and teaching staff and an understanding of the type of environment in which the child is placed.

Diagnosis

As no biological markers of ASDs have been identified, symptom sets from a range of specified behaviours are used in the diagnosis of an ASD. A number of checklist-type instruments are used by professionals to facilitate the application of DSM-IV-TR and ICD-10 diagnostic criteria. Detailed information is required on cognitive linguistic levels, family history, medical, social, psychiatric and if possible, genetic background in order to differentiate ASDs from seemingly similar conditions.

Autism is generally diagnosed by one of the following: Child Psychiatrist, Clinical Psychologist, Educational or Child Neurologist.

While there is no one behavioural or communications test that can detect Autism, several screening instruments have been developed that are now used in diagnosing Autism:

- 1 **Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS)**
- 2 **Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (CHAT)**
- 3 **Autism Screening Questionnaire**
- 4 **Screening Test for Autism in Two Year Olds**
- 5 **Autism Diagnostic Interview - Revised (ADI-R)**
- 6 **Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule - Generic (ADOS-G)**
- 7 **The Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders (DISCO)**
- 8 **Gilliam Autism Rating Scale (GARS)**
- 9 **Pre-linguistic Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (PL-ADOS)**

It is important to note that many of the above diagnostic instruments may have been developed before the current DSM-IV-TR became available and may not yet fully reflect current diagnostic criteria. It is important to note also that most autism-related diagnostic instruments have been designed for use within a specific range of that population and may not be helpful or valid if used with a different portion of the population. Although the Autism Diagnostic Interview - Revised (ADI-R) and the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-Generic (ADOS-G) can be helpful in diagnosing Asperger Syndrome/Higher Functioning Autism, there is little evidence that instruments such as the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS) and the Autism Behaviour Checklist (ABC) can be of assistance in the diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome/Higher Functioning Autism, as these instruments focus on a degree of symptom severity that is not generally found in this population (Task Force on Autism Report 2001 page 57)

The Triad of Impairments

There are three main features, which when combined together, are what define whether or not an individual has Autism. These are:

- ▷ Difficulties in relating to, or understanding other people and social situations
- ▷ Difficulties in acquiring any form of communication
- ▷ A lack of imaginative ability, often substituted by obsessive, repetitive behaviour and a strong resistance to change

Intellectual Functioning

Autism occurs in children with all levels of intelligence, ranging from those who are gifted to those who are learning disabled. The standardised administration of IQ tests is, however, problematic for many children and young people with Autism. Some people with Autism also display the Savant Syndrome which is a condition in which individuals typically display extraordinary abilities in areas such as calendar calculation, musical ability, mathematical skills, memorisation, and mechanical abilities. Their unusual ability in these areas may occur in conjunction with low ability in other areas. For example an individual with autism may be able to recite the football scores and the averages of all games and players who have ever participated in the leagues, but may not be able to engage in meaningful conversation or follow multiple instructions.

Irish Autism Action

The Irish Autism Action is a nationwide organization supporting and advocating on behalf of children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their carers. Irish Autism Action also provides a parent to parent confidential listening service - this service operates on a call back basis from Monday to Friday. To contact Autism Link ring (01) 853 1000

Dolman Centre for Persons with Autism and Related Disorders

The Dolman Centre is a local based group which strives to empower individuals with communication, social impairments and challenging behaviour, and assists their families to fully participate in their communities through information regarding autism and related disorders, treatment approaches, services, literature, and current research. Dolman provide workshops and seminars on a variety of topics which are open to parents, professionals and carers.

Beechpark Services for Children with Autism

The clinical outreach service is based in Tallaght. Currently children in the Health Service Executive East Coast Area are receiving a service in an outreach manner with multi-disciplinary teams working with families at home, teachers in pre-schools and primary/second levels and providing consultation and follow-up with other agencies and services such as the Child Psychiatric Service.

The Beechpark clinical service also provides hostel accommodation for a small number of children.

The Beechpark clinical service provides outreach clinical teams. One is based on the Beechpark Campus and the others are based in Tallaght and in Donnycarney. The teams comprise of occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, psychologist, behaviour specialist, social worker, part-time psychiatrist, and nurses.

Before contacting Beechpark Services your child must have a psychiatric and psychological report.

Special Schools for Children with Autism

The Beechpark Campus at Stillorgan incorporates two special schools, Ballyowen Meadows for children aged 4 to 12 years and Setanta School for children aged 12 to 18 years with autism and related disorders.

The Campus was developed at Beechpark by the South Western Health Board with the support of the Department of Education.

Staffing at Beechpark includes a clinical team which consists of Consultant Psychiatrist, Senior Clinical Psychologist, Education Psychologist, Senior Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and Occupational Therapist.

Individual assessment is a primary focus of the clinical team's intervention in order to facilitate goal setting for each child's needs. Direct services offered to families include home-visits, counselling, telephone contact, behavioural programming, involvement in the assessment and educational planning process, assessing community services, and liaising with voluntary agencies to meet family needs.

In both schools the teaching and other staff members have been introduced to the ABA and TEACCH method of training. In March 1997, one week's TEACCH training was conducted at Beechpark Special Schools Campus. This represented the first programme of its kind in the Republic of Ireland. Both schools on Campus have integrated the TEACCH system successfully and this will continue to be adapted as required.

TEACCH is a method of delivering the curriculum that relies on structure and organization at the pupil's level of understanding. This structure includes: clear physical boundaries; use of visual clues; independent daily timetables which help pupils to predict events and facilitate transition between activities; and teaching methods which include one-to-one, individual and group work delivered in a systematic way.

Ballyowen Meadows School offers each child an Individual Educational Plan, which is reviewed annually. Children also have access to Music Therapy, Art Therapy, PE, Movement to Music, swimming and horse-riding.

Setanta School provides a curriculum that is flexible to suit the pupils individual strengths and weaknesses, and emphasis is placed on communication skills that necessitate divergent methodologies. At present a structured teaching model (TEACCH) is implemented. This model complements the long term goals for pupils in the school. These include the teaching of independent social skills, the improvement of expressive and receptive language skills, vocational training as well as independent work skills with a view to future placement. All of the above are achieved by respecting the difference autism creates within each student. Setanta provides Music Therapy, Art Therapy, PE, Movement to Music, swimming and horse-riding activities and social skills training.

An inter-disciplinary team of professionals in consultation with parents, agree upon the most appropriate Individual Education Programmes. Parental contributions and home link are considered to be effective advocates in this process.

Parents can contact both schools directly regarding admission policy.

Other Schools - The Red Door

See Useful Addresses Section 13

Section Eight

Support Services for Children with Asperger Syndrome

Identifying Asperger Syndrome

Children or young people with Asperger Syndrome may exhibit some of the following characteristics:

- ▷ Difficulty in relating to others, empathising and making friends
 - ▷ Anxiety, phobic behaviour and upset by change to routine and order
 - ▷ The child usually has obsessions which are pursued to extremes. These may involve trains, flags, computers, chess etc.
 - ▷ Language development may be delayed and language may be used in inappropriate ways
 - ▷ Poor understanding of non-verbal communication
 - ▷ Impaired imagination
- (Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland)

Asperger Syndrome may co-exist with one or more of the following conditions:

- ▷ **ADD or ADHD**
- ▷ **Emotional and behavioural difficulties**
- ▷ **Dyslexia**
- ▷ **Tourette Syndrome**
- ▷ **Speech and Language difficulties and disorders**

Diagnosis

The syndrome is generally diagnosed by one of the following:

- ▷ **Child Psychiatrist**
- ▷ **Lucena Clinic**
- ▷ **Beechpark Services**
- ▷ **Child Psychiatrist employed by the public hospitals or Lucena Clinic (see Section 1)**

Lucena Clinic (referral necessary from a GP or an Area Medical Officer)

A comprehensive assessment is offered to each child and family by a team composed of a consultant child psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker and a speech and language therapist.

Beechpark Services - See page 28: Children with Autism

Special Teaching and Supports

In some cases, the child or young person with Asperger Syndrome can participate in mainstream education with supports. In other cases, the child may attend a special school or special class.

Additional Service

For children with Asperger Syndrome up to 12 years old who also have emotional and behavioural difficulties, contact the Lucena Clinic.

Lucena Clinic (referral necessary from a GP or an Area Medical Officer)

This outpatient service offers assessment and treatment services to children and families living in the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown area. A therapy programme is provided for pre-school children, as well as individual and group therapy sessions for older children.

Support Groups

The Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland aims to assist the parents and carers of children with Asperger Syndrome by organizing seminars and workshops as well as conferences. It provides information and advice about career opportunities and training for adults with Asperger Syndrome.

Asperger Syndrome Ireland (ASPIRE)

The Irish Society for Autism

Irish Autism Action

EASE — Start Right (A parent-support group)

For parents, professionals, educators to raise awareness, educate, encourage and support.

See Useful Addresses Section 13

Section Nine

Tourette Syndrome

Identifying Tourette Syndrome

Tourette Syndrome (TS) is a neurological movement disorder characterised by involuntary repetitive body movements (motor tics) and noises or vocalisations (vocal tics). Some of the tics associated with TS include:

Motor Tics

Simple eye-rolling and blinking, shoulder-shrugging, head-shaking, neck-jerking, facial grimacing

Complex jumping, touching other people or things, smelling, stamping, twirling about, hitting oneself, the involuntary making of obscene gestures (copropraxia).

Vocal Tics

Simple throat-clearing, sniffing, barking, tongue-clicking, yelping, snorting

Complex using unacceptable words (coprolalia), repeating/copying gestures or body movements of others (echolalia), repetition of one's own utterances (palilalia).
(RTÉ, The Health Report on Tourette Syndrome, 2000)

Tics can be exacerbated by conditions such as stress, excitement, boredom and heat. They increase particularly when a person relaxes after being stressed.

The symptoms usually begin in childhood and are often accompanied by characteristics associated with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder. (See Section 6, ADD/ADHD.)

Diagnosis by a GP or Child Guidance Clinic is required (See Section 1). Most children with Tourette Syndrome are in mainstream schools.

Support Group

Tourette Syndrome Association of Ireland

See Useful Addresses Section 13

Section Ten

Support Services for Children with Fragile X Syndrome

Identifying Fragile X Syndrome

The characteristics of Fragile X may include:

- ▷ Hand flapping
- ▷ Glue ear
- ▷ Repetitive behaviour
- ▷ Repeating words and phrases
- ▷ Short attention span
- ▷ Distractibility
- ▷ Impulsiveness and over-activity
- ▷ Shyness and social withdrawal (most often seen in girls)
- ▷ Delayed speech and language development

Boys who are affected almost always have some learning difficulty. Boys are usually more severely affected than girls.

Up to a third of the girls who are affected have learning difficulties which may be mild or moderate, but are occasionally severe.

Diagnosis and Assessment

Fragile X is diagnosed through a DNA test carried out on a blood sample. Families wishing to be tested for Fragile X should seek a referral from their GP.

**The National Centre for Medical Genetics in
Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children
Crumlin**

Hospitals Initially the child is likely to have contact with hospital consultants, and may later be referred to hospital physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and speech and language therapists.

Further Information

For information on effective teaching methods for those working with children who have Fragile X, contact the Irish Fragile X Society.

See Useful Addresses Section 13

Section Eleven

Intellectual Disability

Intellectual Disability involves a greater than average difficulty in learning. A child is considered to have an Intellectual Disability when the following factors are present: intellectual functioning is significantly below average; and there are difficulties with everyday life skills. The term Intellectual Disability has been used to describe children within a very wide range of ability. The range extends from children with borderline general learning difficulties to those with severe disabilities. Intellectual Disability can be caused by any condition which impairs the development of the brain, before birth, during birth or in the childhood years. The personal capabilities in which there may be a substantial limitation are conceptual, practical, and social intelligence. Individuals with Intellectual Disability differ from those who do not have Intellectual Disabilities in how they attend to tasks. One of the major differences is that individuals with Intellectual Disabilities have a difficult time distinguishing relevant from irrelevant stimuli. Individuals with Intellectual Disability have impairments in the learning process, including attention, memory and generalization. They may also have decreased motivation.

Use of Terms

The term mental handicap continues to be used by some people in Ireland. However, the term Intellectual Disability is recognised in international research circles and is used by the Department of Health and Children to describe the condition. The Department of Education and Science use the terms Mild, Moderate, Severe or Profound General Learning Disability to describe the condition. A psychological report is required in respect of some categories of disability for the granting of resources by the Department of Education and Science. Research indicates that students with Intellectual Disability may achieve higher academic and social gains when they are included in general education classes.

Support Groups

NAMHI

St. John of God

Down Syndrome Ireland

See Useful Addresses Section 13

Section Twelve

Individual Education Plan(s)

An IEP is an individual education plan. It is a planning process which encourages and promotes planning and assessment for an individual child. The term IEP refers to both a process and a product or document (Tod, 1998).

- ▷ The process refers to the assessment undertaken over time and in context, along with the prioritising of aims and learning targets
- ▷ The product or document is a summary of the aims and targets to be met, in addition to the learning outcomes expected by all involved in the IEP.

An IEP may include not only goals relating to academic development but also those relating to motor skills, social skills, self-help skills or emotional development.

Current Context

In Ireland there is a current trend toward developing individualised education plans or programmes which address the needs of children who are experiencing serious learning difficulties. This trend comes against a background of new developments in legislation (see Appendix B) which impact upon the provision of special education services according to need.

Parent/Guardian contributions to IEP meetings are very important and parents/guardians will need to be advocates for their child while dealing with all those involved with securing appropriate provision.

IEPs are successful where they promote effective planning by teachers and assist pupils to make progress through setting and reviewing of particular learning targets.

An individual education plan should set out the following:

- 1 The nature of the child's learning difficulty
- 2 The special needs provision; staff involved, including frequency of support; external specialists involved; specific programmes/activities; materials or equipment
- 3 Help from parents/guardians at home
- 4 Targets to be achieved in a given time
- 5 Monitoring and assessment arrangements
- 6 Review arrangements and date

Tod, Janet. 1998. *Implementing Effective Practice*. London: David Fulton

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 states that the content of an individual education plan should include:

- a The nature and degree of the child's abilities, skills and talents
- b The nature and degree of the child's special educational needs and how those needs affect his or her educational needs and how those needs affect his or her educational development
- c The present level of educational performance of the child

- d** The special educational needs of the child
- e** The special education and related support services to be provided to the child to enable the child to benefit from education and to participate in the life of the school
- f** Where appropriate, the special education and related support services to be provided to the child to enable the child to effectively make the transition from pre-school education to primary school education
- g** Where appropriate, the special education and related support services to be provided to the child to enable the child to effectively make the transition from primary school education to post-primary school education and
- h** The goals which the child is to achieve over a period not exceeding twelve months.
Ref. Section 9 Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

Student Individual Education Plans should be reviewed regularly and re-evaluated in terms of student progress. It is considered good practice to involve the student himself/herself and for him/her to know what their targets are.

Special schools may have their own individual planning process in place which addresses the individual needs of students. The school may use a format such as 'Individual Profile and Learning Programme' as recommended by Department of Education and Science Learning Support Guidelines 2000, or the school may have designed its own particular IEP format.

Section Thirteen

Useful Addresses

ASPERGER SYNDROME IRELAND (ASPIRE)

Carmichael House for Voluntary Groups
North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7
Helpline: (01) 878 0027
www.aspire-irl.org

BAGGOT STREET HOSPITAL

Baggot Street, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 668 1577

BALLINTEER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Ballinteer, Dublin 16
Tel: (01) 298 8216/298 8195
www.ballinteeracs.ie

BALLINTEER HEALTH CENTRE

Ballinteer, Dublin 16
Tel: (01) 295 1111

BALLYOWEN MEADOWS SCHOOL

(For Children on the Autism Spectrum
aged 4 to 12 years)
Beechpark, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 278 0815

BARNARDO'S CHILDREN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

Christchurch Square
Christchurch, Dublin 8
Tel: (01) 454 9699
www.barnardos.ie
Opening Hours: 9.00am -1.00pm
(Monday to Friday)

BEECHPARK OUTREACH SERVICES

Bryan S. Ryan Building
Main Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24
Tel: (01) 463 2210

BENINCASA

1 Mount Merrion Avenue
Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 288 7066
www.benincasa.ie

BLACKROCK HEALTH CENTRE

George's Avenue
Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 288 2980

CAINT

c/o Geraldine Graydon
10 Bayview Drive, Killiney, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 282 3584
www.caint.com

CATHERINE MCAULEY NATIONAL SCHOOL

59 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 661 5645
www.mcstaff.ias@eircom.net

THE CENTRAL REMEDIAL CLINIC

Vernon Avenue, Clontarf, Dublin 3
Tel: (01) 805 7400
www.crc.ie

CITY OF DUBLIN VEC

Town Hall, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
www.cdvec.ie

COMMUNITY AND YOUTH INFORMATION CENTRE

Sackville Place, Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 878 6844

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (GENERAL)

Marlborough Street, Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 873 4700
www.education.ie

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (SPECIAL EDUCATION SECTION)

Cornamaddy, Athlone
Co. Westmeath
Tel: (0906) 74621 or (01) 873 4700
www.education.ie

DOLMAN CENTRE

(For persons with Autism and related Disorders)
10 Bayview Drive, Killiney, Co Dublin
Tel: (01) 282 3584

DOWN SYNDROME IRELAND

1st Floor, 30 Mary Street, Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 873 0999

DUN LAOGHAIRE HEALTH CENTRE

Centenary House, York Road
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 280 8471

DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

Suffolk Chambers
1 Suffolk Street, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 679 0276
www.dyslexia.ie

DYSPRAXIA ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

c/o Siobhan Gallagher
54 Frankfurt Avenue
Rathgar, Dublin 6
Tel: (01) 295 7125
www.indigo.ie/-dyspraxia

EASE/START RIGHT

13 Clifton Park, Shankill, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 272 0177, (01) 282 3584, (01) 298 0277

**ENABLE IRELAND
(FORMERLY CPI/CEREBRAL PALSY IRELAND)**

Head Office
Sandymount Avenue, Dublin 4
Tel: (01) 269 5355
or
Tallaght Office
Tallaght, Dublin 24
Tel: (01) 451 3618
www.enableireland.com

GOOD SHEPHERD NATIONAL SCHOOL

Churchtown, Dublin 14
Tel: (01) 298 9475
school@goodshepherd.ie

**HADD – HYPERACTIVITY ATTENTION
DEFICIT DISORDER**

c/o Stephanie Mahoney
Carmichael Centre
Carmichael House
North Brunswick Street
Dublin 7
Tel: (01) 873 5702

IRISH ASSOCIATION OF PLAY THERAPISTS

Temple Street Hospital
Temple Street, Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 869 5310
www.playtherapy-ireland.org

**IRISH ASSOCIATION OF SPEECH
AND LANGUAGE THERAPISTS**

4 Argus House
Greenmount Office Park
Harold's Cross, Dublin 6W
Tel: (01) 473 0398

**IRISH ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS
IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

c/o Special Education Department
St Patrick's College
Drumcondra, Dublin 9
Tel: (01) 837 6191

**IRISH AUTISM ACTION (A Support Group for
Children and Adults with Autism)**

41 Newlands, Mullingar, Co Westmeath
Tel: (044) 316090

AUTISM LINK

This service operates on a call back basis from Monday to Friday. Autism Link is a service provided by the Irish Autism Alliance.
Tel: (01) 853 1000

IRISH FRAGILE X SOCIETY

5 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 454 9526
www.fragile-ireland.org

IRISH LEARNING SUPPORT ASSOCIATION

c/o St Patrick's College of Education
Drumcondra, Dublin 9
Tel: (01) 837 6191
www.ilsa.ie

THE IRISH SOCIETY FOR AUTISM

16 Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 874 4684
www.iol.ie

IRISH SOCIETY OF CHARTERED PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

Royal College of Surgeons
St Stephen's Green
Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 402 2148
www.iscp.ie

LOUGHLINSTOWN HEALTH CENTRE

Loughlinstown
Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 282 2122

LUCENA CLINIC

Century Court
Upper George's Street
Dun Laoghaire
Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 280 9809
www.sjog.ie

NAMHI

5 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 676 6035

THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR MEDICAL GENETICS

Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children
Crumlin, Dublin 12
Tel: (01) 409 6100
www.genetics.ie

**NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TECHNOLOGY
IN EDUCATION**

DCU, Glasnevin, Dublin 9
Tel: (01) 700 8200
www.ncte.ie
www.scoilnet.ie

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

(Open from 9.30am - 1.00pm)
Barnardos
Christchurch Square, Dublin 8
Tel: (01) 453 0355
www.barnardos.ie

**THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CURRICULUM
AND ASSESSMENT (NCCA)**

24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 661 7177

**THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Special Education Section
DES, Cornamaddy
Athlone, Co. Westmeath
www.education.ie

**NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICE**

Frederick Court
24/27 North Frederick Street
Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 889 2700

or

Trident House, 3rd Floor
Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 283 3028
www.education.ie

NATIONAL PARENTS COUNCIL - PRIMARY

12 Marlborough Court, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 887 4034
Helpline: (01) 887 4477 (10.00am-12.30pm)
www.npc.ie

NATIONAL PARENTS COUNCIL – POST-PRIMARY

Unit 5 Glasnevin Business Centre
Ballyboggan Road, Dublin 11
Tel: (01) 830 2740
www.npcpp.ie

OUR LADY'S HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN

Crumlin, Dublin 12
Tel: (01) 409 6100
www.olhsc.ie

PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND

2a Corn Exchange Place, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 671 7122
www.psihq.org

THE RED DOOR

Autism Specific School
Newtownpark Avenue
Blackrock, Co Dublin
Tel: (01) 210 4970

SANDYMOUNT SCHOOL CLINIC NS

Sandymount Avenue, Dublin 4
Tel: (01) 261 5908

SETANTA SCHOOL

(For Children on the Autism
Spectrum aged 12 to 18 years)
Beechpark, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 288 4594

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICE

c/o Laois Education Centre
Block Road, Portlaoise, Co Laois
www.sess.ie

ST. AUGUSTINE'S SCHOOL

Obelisk Park, Carysfort Avenue
Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 288 1771
www.sjog.ie

ST JOHN OF GOD

Dunmore House
Upper Glenageary Road
Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin
Tel: (01) 285 2900

ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT NATIONAL SCHOOL

Alma Place, Carrickbrennan Road
Monkstown, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 280 8824

ST. PETER'S (part of Lucena Clinic Services)

Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6
Tel: (01) 492 3596

ST. ROSE'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

c/o Scoil Aonghusa
Balrothery, Tallaght, Dublin 24
Tel: (01) 451 7933

TALLAGHT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Tel: (01) 414 2000
www.amnch.ie

TEMPLE STREET HOSPITAL

Temple Street, Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 874 8763
www.childrenshospital.ie

TOURETTE SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

39 Elderwood Road, Dublin 20
Tel: (01) 623 0500

Section Fourteen

General Information Sources

Locations where some information on learning difficulties can be accessed:

The National Council for Special Education

The National Council for Special Education was established in 2003. Among its functions the NCSE will

'Make available to the parents of children with disabilities information in relation to the provision for their children regarding education'

'Consult with schools, health boards and other relevant bodies in relation to the provision of education and support services to children with disabilities'

SP.ED.01/05 Appendix 1

It is intended that the council will have local offices and will have a key role in the development and delivery of services for people with special needs. It will have a research and advisory role and will establish expert groups to consider specific areas of special needs provision. It will also establish a consultative forum to facilitate inputs for the educational partners and other interested parties.

The National Parents Council - Primary

National Parents Council Primary (NPC.P) is the nationwide organization for parents of primary school children and is recognised by the Education Act 1998.

NPC has four Interest Groups representing Scoileanna Lan Gaeilge/Gaeltacht Schools, Minority Religious Schools, Special Education Schools and an Integrated Education Group (representing parents of children with special education needs who are integrated in mainstream schools).

Through the NPC.P, parents are represented on many education and other committees. This representation means that a parent perspective influences policy and practice on education and related areas.

Parents Councils/Parents Association

In the Education Act it states that all schools should have a Parents' Council/Parents' Association. In practice many schools already have such an association or council in situ for many years now.

This is a Body which represents the parents of the children currently attending the school and is elected by the entire body of parents each year, meeting at the Annual General Meeting. The function is to support the students and the teachers through supporting the school and its activities on behalf of the students.

The Parents Association has a role to play in policymaking in several areas and is also the body from which the parent members of the Board of Management should be elected every four years.

The principal reason for having a parent association is to help parents to get involved in their school. The school is regarded as an extension of the home and a parents' association can foster a partnership between parents and teachers.

The National Council For Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment was established in 1987. Its function was to advise the Minister on matters related to curriculum and assessment procedures for primary and second-level education. The Education Act, 1998, established the NCCA as a statutory body and expanded its function.

Section 41, (1) of the Act states:

The object of the Council shall be to advise the Minister on matters relating to:

- a** the curriculum for early childhood education, primary and post-primary schools, and
- b** the assessment procedures employed in schools and examinations on subjects that are part of the curriculum.

The Act further states, in section 41, sub-section (2.g)

It shall be a function of the council: to advise the Minister on the requirements, as regards curriculum and syllabuses, of students with a disability or other special educational needs.

Useful Directories

Alternative Ireland Directory (Quay Co-operative, 1996)

Child and Family Directory National Children's Resource Centre, Barnardos, 1997

Directory of National Voluntary Organisations National Social Service Board (1999-2000)

Directory of Services The National Association for the Mentally Handicapped of Ireland (1999)

Irish Medical Directory

Other Contacts

Citizens' Information Centres (local, free, confidential). Free list available from National Social Service Board, with hours of opening and telephone numbers.

Community and Youth Information Centres

Health Service Executive, East Coast Area, Helpline 1800 520 520

Southside Childcare Action Network, Southside Partnership

Additional Websites

www.autism-society.org	The Autism Society of America
www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk	British Dyslexia Association
www.comhairle.ie	Comhairle - Information and Advocacy for people with disabilities
www.education.ie	Department of Education and Science
www.irishhealth.com	Provides basic information on learning difficulties such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyslexia and Autism. The site provides information on possible causes, possible signs and ways in which parents can help their child to cope with his/her particular difficulty.
www.nda.ie	National Disability Authority
www.one.world.org/autism_uk	National Autistic Society
www.scoilnet.ie	Support Information from the Department of Education and Science

Appendix A

List of Supports Available

Special School for Children with Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Beechpark Special School
(Setanta and Ballyowen Meadows Special Schools)
Stillorgan, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 278 0815 (Ballyowen) (01) 288 4594 (Setanta)

Primary and second-level classes are provided by the school. There is also an outreach service. A multi-disciplinary team works alongside the school to provide assessment and various supports for children with autism, such as special education, speech and language therapy, physiotherapy etc. (See Section 7). The Beechpark Outreach Services is based in the Bryan S Ryan Business Park, Tallaght, and they support children with autism who are in special class or mainstream classes in the Dublin area.

Special Schools for Children with Emotional and/or Behavioural Difficulties

St Declan's
Northumberland Road, Dublin 4
Tel: (01) 668 2739

St Declan's is a special school for children with "mild emotional disturbance". It caters for children who are achieving below their potential at school. Boys and girls up to the age of 12 or 13, who have run into personal or educational difficulties in another school, can be referred to St Declan's by parents, doctor, teacher or child guidance clinics (St Declan's Prospectus).

Benincasa
Sion Hill, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 288 7066
www.benincasa.ie

Benincasa is a special school for children aged 6-14 with learning difficulties and co-existing emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Children are referred from mainstream school following a psychological assessment. Pupil teacher ratio is six to one.

St Peter's (part of Lucena Clinic Services)
Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6
Tel: (01) 492 3596

Schools with a Speech and Language Unit (See Section 3)

Good Shepherd National School
Churchtown, Dublin 14
Tel: (01) 298 9475
www.goodshepherd.ie

This school has a speech and language unit, as well as a speech and language therapist. There is a waiting list and those applying for a place should do so before March of the upcoming school year.

Ballinteer Community School
 Ballinteer, Dublin 16
 Tel: (01) 298 8216 and 298 8195
 www.ballinteeracs.ie

This school has a speech and language unit. Those applying for a place should do so immediately after Christmas of the upcoming school year.

Schools for Children with Reading Disabilities

The following three schools provide classes for children with dyslexic-type reading difficulties. Children can attend the schools for a two-year period. After this two-year period they return to mainstream classes. (See Section 4)

St Oliver Plunkett National School
 Alma Place, Carrickbrennan Road
 Monkstown, Co. Dublin
 Tel: (01) 280 8824

Catherine McAuley National School
 59 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2
 Tel: (01) 661 5645
 www.mcstaff.ias@eircom.net

St Rose's National School
 c/o Scoil Aonghusa
 Balrothery, Tallaght, Dublin 24
 Tel: (01) 451 7933

Special School for Children with Mild Learning Difficulties

St Augustine's School, Obelisk Park
 Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
 Tel: (01) 288 1771
 www.sjog.ie

St. Augustines School is a special school which caters for students aged 6-18 with general learning needs. Vocational training is also provided for students. Residential accommodation is available (Monday-Friday).

Special School for Children with Multiple Disabilities

Sandymount School Clinic NS
 Sandymount Avenue, Dublin 4
 Tel: (01) 261 5908

This school caters for children with physical disabilities and learning disabilities, and offers therapeutic services where required. Individual educational programmes provided. Pupil/Teacher ratio 6:1.

The schools linked in the main body of this Guide provide programmes and other interventions for Children with Learning Difficulties. However, all schools are obliged under the Education Act 1998 to make available a policy on special education needs as part of their overall school plan.

A current list of schools nationwide both primary and post-primary can be obtained from Government Publications Sale Office, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

However, a list of primary schools may be accessed at www.education.ie.

APPENDIX B

Education Act 1998, Education Welfare Act 2000, Equal Status Act 2000, Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

The Education Act 1998

Under the terms of the Education Act (Section 7) children with disabilities are entitled to support services and a level and quality of education appropriate to meeting their needs and abilities. Support services include services such as psychological or speech and language therapy services or provision for education at a child's home that the Minister considers appropriate in the context of the Education Act.

Under the terms of the Education Act, a refusal by a school to admit a student may be appealed by a parent to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science, (Section 29).

The Education Act 1998 provides (Section 6) that one of the objects of the Act will be to give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children, including children with a disability or other special educational needs. The Act also requires the Minister, wherever practicable, to consult with persons representing people with disabilities and other special educational needs (Section 7). The Minister will have to ensure that there is made available to each person, including those with a disability or other special educational needs, an appropriate level and quality of education and appropriate support services.

The Act gives statutory recognition to the National Parents Councils and states:

- ▷ Parents will have a right of access to their children's school records
- ▷ Parents will be consulted in relation to the assessment of the psychological needs of their children and will be advised by the psychologist concerned in relation to the education and psychological development of the children
- ▷ Parents will have the right to appeal to the Board of Management against a decision of a teacher or member of staff of the school and to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against certain actions taken by the Board of Management
- ▷ Students aged eighteen or over will have a right to access to their own school records. They will also have the right to appeal to the board of management against a decision of a teacher or member of staff of the school and, to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against certain actions taken by the board of management.

Education (Welfare) Act 2000

This Act provides a comprehensive framework for promoting regular school attendance and tackling the problems of absenteeism and early school leaving.

The Act legislates for the *"entitlement of every child in the State to a certain minimum education and for that purpose, to provide for the registration of children receiving education in places other than*

recognised schools, the compulsory attendance of certain children at recognised schools, the establishment of a body, to be known as the National Educational Welfare Board”.

“With the consent of the parent of the child concerned, arrange for a child to be assessed as to his or her intellectual, emotional and physical development by such person as may be determined by the Board with the concurrence of the parent” (Section 10 (4)).

The Principal of a school shall not remove a child’s name from the school register other than on receipt of notification that the child has been registered in another school or has been registered as a child *“in receipt of education in a place other than a recognised school:”* (Section 14 (1)).

When the Board of Management of a school believes that a student should be expelled, it shall notify the “Educational Welfare Officer” who shall *“make all reasonable efforts to ensure that provision is made for the continued education of the student”*. The student may not be expelled within the next twenty school days following receipt of notification by the Education Welfare Office. These provisions, however, are:

“without prejudice to the right of a Board of Management to take such reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured” (Section 24).

In cases where a school permanently excludes, suspends or refuses to enrol a student and an appeal by parents to the Secretary General under the terms of Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 has either not been made or has been made and the action of the school upheld the National Education Welfare Board shall make:

“all reasonable efforts to have the child to whom the decision concerned relates to enrolled in another recognised school”

“such other arrangements as it considers appropriate to ensure that the child receives a certain minimum education and shall monitor the progress of the child’s education” (Section 27 (1) (2)).

The Equal Status Act 2000

This Act prohibits discrimination at ‘educational establishments’ (Section 7). The definition of ‘educational establishment’ includes ‘an institution providing adult, continuing or further education, or a university or any third level or higher level institution, whether or not supported by public funds’. The Act also prohibits service providers, including educational establishments from discriminating against people with a disability, and as between different disabilities (Section 3 (2) (g)). The Act prohibits discrimination in relation to Admissions:

- ▷ the terms and conditions of admission
- ▷ access to any course
- ▷ access to any facility or benefit provided, or any other term or condition of participation in the establishment, including the terms of expulsion or sanction against a student.

School Admission Policy – Schools are prohibited by the Equal Status Act from discriminating against children with a disability in relation to admission. Discrimination between children in relation to the way education is provided for them is a legal option only when safety is an issue, or when the

continued viability of conditions for the delivery of the service on a group basis is an issue. Schools are to ensure that principles of equality and the right of parents to send their child to a school of their choice are respected in the general context of the effective and efficient use of resources and the rights of the school patrons.

The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

One of the main positive aspects of the Education of Persons with special educational needs Act 2004 is the definition of educational disability which is as follows:

“educational disability” in relation to a child, means a restriction in the capacity of the child to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment of the capacity to learn that may be prescribed from time to time.

The Education Act 1998 has been amended to contain the same definition as the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004.

Section 3 states that a school must make all practicable efforts to assist a child who is not benefiting from the regular education programme. Where all reasonable efforts have been made and the child is still failing to achieve potential, the principal may arrange for an assessment to be carried out. To assist a school in making assessments, the National Council for Special Education will set down guidelines. Where an assessment establishes that the child does have special educational needs, the school must within one month of the assessment, have an education plan prepared. Parents must be consulted in this planning process and must be given a copy of the plan as soon as it is made.

Section 4 relates to the assessment of children and to the right of a child to have an assessment.

Section 5 deals with the procedures for the assessment of a child with special educational need.

Section 6 deals with the follow-on from the assessment.

Section 7 relates to individual education plans. In preparing the plan, the special educational needs organiser is required to convene a team of people. The team must always include the child's parents, unless they opt out. It may also include the child, depending on his or her capacity to participate in the process. The other members of the team will be determined by the range of needs of the child as identified in the assessment. While the education plan will focus on educational needs, it must have regard to any other needs identified in the child's assessment and must be consistent with those needs.

Section 8 sets out the matters to be dealt with in an education plan. The intention is that plans will be detailed and goals driven. They will set out the nature and degree of the child's abilities, skills and talents. The nature and degree of his or her educational needs, the present level of educational performance where this is relevant; the services to be provided to him or her, and the outcomes or goals which the child is to achieve over a specified period. This period cannot be longer than 12 months.

The transition of a child with special educational needs from primary to post-primary is recognised as a particularly important milestone and the plan is specifically required to address this. Where a child who has an education plan is transferring between schools, consultation between the schools must take place.

Section 14 states that in preparing or reviewing an education plan, the school or special educational needs organiser must take account of the provision which will be required for the child on his or her becoming an adult and take steps to enable the child to progress to further educational training. This will be done in consultation with the child and his or her parents. It is also the case that some children will make educational progress at a slower pace than others. The section therefore provides that where the Council is preparing or reviewing the education plan of a child who, within the following year will turn 18, an assessment will be made of how the child has achieved his or her goals. If there has been a failure to meet the goals, the effect of this on the child's development also has to be assessed. Where appropriate, measures will be included in the plan to address those effects.

This Act also provides for special educational needs co-ordinators and contains an appeal system.

This Act provides for the setting up of the Council for Special Education that will be an independent body which will deal with the needs of people with special educational needs.

APPENDIX C

National Programmes of Training in Learning Support, Special Education and Resource Teaching occur in the following colleges

Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines, Dublin 6

Education Department, National University of Ireland, Galway

Education Department, National University of Ireland, Cork

Mary Immaculate College of Education, Limerick

St Patrick's College of Education, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

St Angela's College of Education, Sligo

Education Department, NUI, Dublin

University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4

(Courses also offered by the Centre for Developmental Disabilities, UCD)

Trinity College, Dublin 2

Froebel College of Education, Sion Hill, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

APPENDIX D

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Association for the Severely and Profoundly Mentally Handicapped (2000)
A Guide to Your Child's Educational Entitlements

Department of Education and Science
Report of the Special Education Review Committee, Stationery Office, 1993

Department of Education and Science (1999) Circular 8/99
Applications for the Services of a Full or Part-time Resource Teacher to assist a school in providing Education to meet the needs and abilities of Children with Disabilities

Department of Education and Science (1999) Circular 9/99
Applications for Special Classes for Children with Disabilities

Department of Education and Science (2000)
Learning Support Guidelines Dublin: The Stationery Office

Department of Education and Science, Circular 12/00
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Application for full or part-time Resource Teacher support to address the special education needs of children with disabilities

Department of Education and Science (2003) Circular SP.ED. 24/03
Allocation of Resources for Pupils with Special Educational Needs in National Schools

Department of Education and Science (2004) Circular PPT 06/04
Appointment of Teachers to cater for students with Special Educational Needs

Department of Education and Science (2004) Circular SP.ED. 09/04
Allocation of Resources for Pupils with Special Educational Needs in National Schools

Department of Education and Science Circular (2004) SP.ED. 15/04
Allocation of Teaching and Special Needs Assistants Resources for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

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The following websites were also consulted for the purpose of this research:

www.asperger.com
www.club.ie/youthreach
www.crc.ie (website of the Central Remedial Clinic)
www.indigo.ie/-dyspraxia (website of the Dyspraxia Association of Ireland)
www.irishhealth.com
www.isn.net/-jypsy (information on Asperger Syndrome)
www.pandafoundation.ie
www.tourettesyndrome.co.uk
www.geocities.com/HotSprings/822
www.asperger.com

A Guide to Local Supports and Services for

Children with Special Educational Needs

Southside Partnership's Support Project for Children with Learning Difficulties was established in 1998 in response to the concerns of parents, parent groups and teachers whose children/students presented with learning difficulties and who were not achieving in school.

As well as providing general information on accessing services, specific sections offer more detailed information on the following learning difficulties/disabilities:

- ▶ **Speech and Language Difficulties and Disorders**
 - ▶ **Dyslexia**
 - ▶ **Dyspraxia**
- ▶ **Hyperactivity or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**
 - ▶ **Autistic Spectrum Disorder**
 - ▶ **Asperger Syndrome**
 - ▶ **Tourette Syndrome**
 - ▶ **Fragile X Syndrome**
 - ▶ **Intellectual Disability**

The information in this text will be of assistance to parents, teachers, youth workers, psychologists, physiotherapists, language therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, GPs...indeed anyone with an interest in this area.



Blackrock Education Centre
Local Children's Learning Centre

