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PREMIUM



Children with Learning Disability

## About the Author



Priyanka Subarno has a post-graduate degree in Social Work and has been working with different grassroots and research organizations in the development sector for the past 5 years. She possesses knowledge and has expertise in projects associated with Women Entrepreneurship, Gender Based Violence, Women Empowerment and livelihood sectors along with an understanding in Food & Nutrition and Education sectors as well. With Project Management and Documentation skills, she has been able to support organizations in meeting their goals.

## Introduction

The concept of learning disabilities has a wide array of problems. A learning disorder may affect the way in which a person understands the information and how he communicates it. A child with a learning disorder looks like a normal person and behave normally but the only drawback comes when it is seen academically. The disability may vary from mild; moderate to severe. These kids are often victims of public humiliation. In India, 13-14% of all school children suffer from learning difficulties. In a country like India, where problems like poverty, unemployment is seen at every nook and corner there is a problem which is often left ignored. There are children with learning disability which is a big challenge for the country since it does not have many schools that cater to the needs of such children. There is inadequacy of rehabilitation centers and schools that take special care of these students. The problem of learning disability among children is very old but the awareness created is a recent phenomenon.

Efforts have been made in India for the necessary provisions required for education of children with learning disability. In 1996, the Maharashtra government was the first in India to formally grant children with Special learning disability the benefit of availing the necessary provisions to enable them to complete education in regular mainstream schools. At first provisions were made only to IX and X examinations but later in the year 2000 it was given to students of I to XII standard. In the year 2006, the Maharashtra government extended the facility to college courses and seats were reserved in the handicap category. A judgment made in 2006 by Mumbai High Court stating that it is mandatory for every school and college to have these provisions the denial of which would be regarded as a contempt of court (Sunil Karande, Rukhshana Solapurwala and Madhuri Kulkarni; Learning Disability Clinic, Department of Pediatrics, Seth GS Medical College and KEM Hospital, Mumbai, India). An article in The Times of India states that about 10% of the kids in India have learning disability. An estimated 30 million children are known to be dyslexic. According to a sample survey in South India, the prevalence of learning disabilities among children was 12.5% had dysgraphia, 11.2% had dyslexia and 10.5% had dyscalculia.

## Rationale

The problems relating to learning disability among children have gained a lot of light in the recent past. Parents of children suffering from learning disability do face a lot of problem from schooling to their guidance at home. Problems vary from reading disorders (dyslexia), disorder of written expression (dysgraphia) to solve mathematical problems (dyscalculia) and learning disabilities with language (dysphasia). Teachers need to be aware of this kind of situations and stay prepared with the kind of provisions required. The problems of learning disability cannot be easily solved. It requires a lot of patience and hard work. The solutions of these disorders should have a definite path so that the children do not have to face any kind of difficulty or humiliation. Through these sessions of group work and by helping the children overcome these difficulties; the social worker is able to build confidence among the children and also helps them in their social interaction with other people. Children with learning disabilities tend to isolate themselves from rest of the society. They even tend to have their certain emotional backdrops which can be solved through the sessions of group work. This may also explore certain aspects of the children which can be of useful information to their parents. These sessions are designed in such a way that it helps the children to learn at least the basic rules and skills of organizing things, anger management and to teach them to work independently. The proposal takes into account these special children and how they face difficulties in learning new skills and doing a day-to-day activity and how they communicate by understanding any information and how these difficulties can be overcome through various activities and efforts put in by the social worker with the cooperation of the parents.

## Objectives

1. To teach new learning skills through different activities designed for them.
2. Teaching them to switch from one activity to another.
3. Help them socialize and to work independently so that they gain their self confidence.
4. Teach them to organize things and day-to-day activities.

## Group Structure

10 members (children) of various schools of age group 7 to 12 who have difficulty in learning (reading, writing, and mathematics).

## Setting

Private institutional setting. Parents facing situations will be referred to by the NGO.

## Structure of Intervention

- **DURATION:** 10 sessions
- **FREQUENCY:** Twice a week

- **TIME:** 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The last 30 minutes will be given for the children independent activities.

### **SESSION 1:** *Introduction and relationship building*

The first session will be based on introduction of the children as well as the parents to the social worker. Build a relationship with the children and the social worker. It will be an informal session.

**Expected outcome:** To form an informal relationship with the children and also ensure the parents that they will be cared for.

### **SESSION 2:** *Interaction with parents and teachers*

Through interaction with parents and teachers of children with disability, the worker will understand the problems of the children and what are the means and methods that they are using to overcome the situation of disorder and how they are able to reduce it. The social worker gets an insight as to what is the participation of the schools in helping these children.

**Expected outcome:** The social worker is able to understand the situation of the children and the degree of their disability.

### **SESSION 3:** *Exploring each child through interaction*

The social worker will interact with each child individually and try to explore the problems that they are facing at school and at home. Individual interaction will create a sense of safety and will help the children bond with the social worker and will be able to talk about their problems freely.

**Expected outcome:** Children will be able to open up in their actions and their thoughts. With this they will build a feeling of trust with the social worker.

### **SESSION 4:** *Social interaction*

Children with learning disorder have a tendency to isolate themselves. They do not want to socialize among other people. They have the fear of being humiliated and are shy with most of the social activities.

**Expected outcome:** Interaction with other kids in the group will help them regain their confidence to talk and interact in a group setting. This will also help in the character building of the children. With this children will learn to live in a group and understand the importance of a group and will not try to isolate itself once he/she is able to relate himself/ herself with other kids.

### **SESSION 5:** *Making them realize their potential and gain confidence*

By talking to the children and by making them do things of their interest which are their hobbies, they might find a way to develop those hobbies into their potential. This in turn will create a positive feeling in them. This will also help build their confidence

**Expected outcome:** through this activity, children might be able to learn and understand what they are good at and will be able to pursue it in a better way.

**SESSION 6:** *Enabling them in switching from one activity to another*

Children with disorder have difficulty in switching from one activity to another. They are not able to perform multiple tasks at one time. They also have a difficulty in understanding multiple instructions at a time. This can also be said as they have poor physical co ordination. In this the social worker will help the children in better co ordination practice through various reading and activities.

**Expected outcome:** Through this, the children might have a better understanding of the instructions put in front of them at a time and also through various multi tasking activities they can get a better insight of their potential. The child might show signs of disinterest and anger. He might get frustrated and have a tendency to harm the other kids. The social worker needs to be patient in handling such kind of situations.

**SESSION 7:** *Formation of different letters/words and numbers that appears similar*

Children having difficulty in writing often find it frustrating in writing syllables which have a mirror image or certain spellings in which the letter appears more than once and they even tend to have uneven writing. Letters and numbers appearing to be same can be differentiated through letter formation classes in which the worker could use big formation of letters for the understanding of the child and minimize the size of the letters/numbers once he practices it through. Uneven handwriting can be corrected by giving them limited space for writing.

**Expected outcome:** Children are able to differentiate between the different letters and also when to use them in spellings.

**SESSION 8:** *Comprehend the reading patterns*

Difficulty in identifying group of letters, slow reading process, failure to recognize words and hesitant oral reading are some difficulties faced by the children. The worker needs to help the children out through audio clips so that the child is able to comprehend the words need to be produced.

**Expected outcome:** Through syllable reading, children are able to read one word followed by one sentence which is further followed by a passage at a time without hesitation. By the end of the session, children should be able to at least recognize words and understand their meaning.

**SESSION 9:** *Making the children as well as their parents aware of the various food habits that are essential through a professional nutritionist and pediatrician*

By making the kids aware of the various food habits and the nutrition that they receive through colorful diagrams and pictures, the children will be able to generate better food habits that would be essential for their growth. Various queries related to children can be sorted out to the parents who will be profitable for handling the children in future.



**Expected outcome:** Children will eat those vegetables and food items that are essential for their growth and their eating habits will also improve. Parents will also have awareness about the nutritional value that their child needs to intake.

**SESSION 10:** *Overall evaluation of the child's progress in the past 9 sessions*

The overall evaluation of the progress of the child will be made by the help of the teachers and parents of the children. Evaluation will be made on the basis of the progress that the child has shown in the last 9 sessions and whether there is hope for more improvement.

**Expected outcome:** Improvement in the child through the various activities performed in the previous sessions.

## **Evaluation**

The planned intervention may be evaluated on the basis of three factors of the age of the child, his intelligence and the educational opportunities. Proper scales of measuring the progress of the child can be made by the teacher and parents in course of time. Evaluation here can be made after session 6 of the intervention after the child has begun to socially interact and comprehend to situations. These activities and observations can be done at regular intervals to keep track of the improvements.

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