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Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities

Behavioural Excesses & Challenging Behaviour

Erasmus+

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Classroom-based tips (focus on instructional methods)

1. **Use circle time to ask pupils to tell you how they spend their day and the others will have to listen carefully.** This will encourage active listening.

2. **Encourage empathic thinking** with questions such as, "Why do you think he is crying?" This will help pupils to reflect on their own and others' behaviour.

3. **Promote the pupil's confidence and development of new skills** by engaging her/him in problem-solving activities, for example by asking questions like: "Can you think of a way to help you remember to wait for your turn?"

4. **Use natural interaction among a pupil and an adult to practice a skill** (Elksnin and Elksnin, 2000). Naturalistic interventions refer to the creation of numerous opportunities for desired child responses. Kaiser and Grim (2006: 455-456) make the following recommendations about naturalistic interventions:
   - Teach pupils based on their interests.
   - Teach what is functional for the pupil at the moment.
   - Stop while both the pupil and the teacher are still enjoying the interaction.

5. **Read and discuss literature on social skills,** which involve topics such as dealing with new situations, dealing with bullying, making new friends (DeGeorge, 1998)

6. Note: Take into consideration the pupil's cultural or language barriers to good behaviour when discussing or creating stories.

7. **Discuss what the pupil did after a social interaction:** what happened, whether the outcome was positive or negative, and what the pupil will do in the same situation in the future (Elksnin and Elksnin, 2000; Lavoie, 2005)

8. **Note:** Take into consideration the pupil's cultural or language barriers to good behaviour when discussing or creating stories.

9. **Use multimedia to teach social skills.** A lot of pupils with learning disabilities tend to be visual learners; thus videos, simulations, virtual environments and other multimedia can be effective teaching tools (Parsons, 2006; Parsons, Leonard and Mitchell, 2006). You can also implement 4-6 (above) i.e., role playing, social stories, observing others' behaviour by utilising multimedia.

10. **Create your own social skills tools and adapt them to your pupils' needs.** For instance, you can audio/video-record your pupils in class (ensuring necessary and appropriate permissions are given) and then use the video to initiate a discussion of your pupils' social interactions. (NCTI, CITed – Centre for Integrating Technology in Education)

Note: Take into consideration the pupil's cultural or language barriers to good behaviour when discussing or creating the stories.

11. **Use photographs or still images** from videos as 'reminders of social behaviour'.

12. **Use peer-tutoring,** which involves having pupils interact with another For example you can pair up a more able pupil with a disabled pupil in order to share knowledge about social skills. Peer-tutoring can be also expanded to include other peer arrangements such as pupils interacting with disabled pupils during lunch breaks, extra-curricular activities (e.g. social clubs and sports) and during school events in order to include them and teach them social skills (Carter et al., 2005)

13. **Use simulations and other visual prompts to teach your pupils daily life skills.** For example, you can use technological means to teach about going to the grocery store, and how to interact with others in public places.

1. **Plan ahead for your pupil's behaviour excesses.** Ensure that you will gather information on possible causes for the behaviour beforehand. Use the causes to decide which actions to take.

References / Multimedia resources

- Choices, Choices (K-5)
  Choices, Choices uses real-world scenarios to help pupils learn problem-solving and decision-making skills.
- Right Choices: A Multimedia Social Skills Training Program for Adolescents (6-12)
  Right Choices is a 34-week program that uses video to help pupils learn problem-solving and decision-making skills; modules focus on topics such as conflict resolution, negotiating, and dealing with peer pressure.]

School-based practical tips (focus on instructional methods)

Class Divisions / Arrangements

1. Involve parents and other caregivers, as well as other adults that have an important role in the pupil's life. Arranging meetings between parents/caregivers and staff helps to build a rapport which in turn helps the pupil feel supported and improve her/his social skills further.

2. **Ensure that further provision is provided for those pupils such as additional support in the class,** for example with the presence of a teaching assistant, to keep them on track.

Community

Avoid 'a one size fits all approach'. Adapt the intervention to meet the individual's or particular group's needs. Pupils who speak English as a Second Language might need intensive social skill instruction to promote acculturation and peer acceptance. Pupils with disabilities might need adaptive curriculum and learning strategies. Most pupils will need a combination of different strategies that are matched to their particular deficits and backgrounds.

Other (School Signage)

Have visual prompts within the school area, which demonstrate appropriate social skills, for example, how to queue in the school canteen and interact with their fellow peers during lunch breaks.

Parents / Parents' Associations

Provide to the teachers/assistants a communication form with parents'/caregivers' phone numbers in case something happens during an excursion. This will be achieved through collaboration with parents.

Safety

1. **Organise events at your school related to social skills.** For instance, through collaboration with teachers, parents and pupils, you can ask from the pupils to be part of groups and work together to achieve specific tasks (eg. To plant the garden, or mend things at school).

2. **Involve the pupils in your decisions about events.** This will help them to cultivate their social skills. For instance, in collaboration with the pupils prepare an agenda in which there will be an event related to intellectual disabilities/social development awareness week and ask from the pupils to participate in theatre and/or do relevant presentations.

3. **Provide to the teachers/assistants a communication form with parents'/caregivers' phone numbers in case something happens during an excursion.** This will be achieved through collaboration with parents.

School Breaks

1. **Organise events at your school related to social skills.** For instance, through collaboration with teachers, parents and pupils, you can ask from the pupils to be part of groups and work together to achieve specific tasks (eg. To plant the garden, or mend things at school).

2. **Involve the pupils in your decisions about events.** This will help them to cultivate their social skills. For instance, in collaboration with the pupils prepare an agenda in which there will be an event related to intellectual disabilities/social development awareness week and ask from the pupils to participate in theatre and/or do relevant presentations.

Pupil Support

1. **Establish an inclusive culture within your school: organise workshops and seminars with academics.** This will help teachers to understand aspects of inclusion and apply inclusive practices, which will contribute in teaching social skills to the pupils.

2. **Organise seminars/workshops at your school to raise awareness about intellectual disabilities and social skills:**
- Arrange one-day workshops for teachers in which you can invite external agencies (including drama therapists) to model teachers how to implement experiential learning into their teaching for those pupils. This can help the pupils to feel part of a team, practice their group work skills, to interact productively with their peers, and to socialise.
- Invest in ongoing training for teachers in the form of on-site workshops and seminars provided by educational professionals or educational psychologists on aspects of social skills/social behaviour difficulties to raise awareness the difficulties these pupils experience.
- Provide on-site training on drama therapy/experiential learning by inviting practitioners and professionals on the use role-playing for the development of social skills.
- Equip the school with tablets and computers so as teachers and pupils can use technology for teaching/learning social skills.

3. **Involve parents and other caregivers, as well as other adults that have an important role in the pupil's life.** Arranging meetings between parents/caregivers and staff helps to build a rapport which in turn helps the pupil feel supported and improve her/his social skills further.

4. **Ensure that further provision is provided for those pupils such as additional support in the class,** for example with the presence of a teaching assistant, to keep them on track.

5. **Provide to the teachers/assistants a communication form with parents'/caregivers' phone numbers in case something happens during an excursion.** This will be achieved through collaboration with parents.

6. Provide information about social skills by arranging onsite trainings or by using the website of the school which could be related to the following evidence-based social skills programs:

    a) "Stop and Think" Social Skills Program: Part of Project ACHIEVE (Knoff and Batsche, 1995). This program has demonstrated success in reducing pupil discipline referrals to the principal's office, school suspensions, and expulsions; fostering positive school climates and pro-social interactions; increasing pupils' on-task behaviour; and improving academic performance. [Reference: http://www.projectachieve.info] **Project ACHIEVE:** is an innovative, evidence-based school effectiveness and improvement program focusing on all pupils' academic and social, emotional, and behavioural progress and success. The program uses strategic planning, professional development, and on-site consultation and technical assistance to address pupil achievement, positive school and classroom climates, effective teaching and instruction, and parent and community outreach and involvement.

    b) The EQUIP Program (Gibbs, Potter, & Goldstein, 1995) skills. Available at: http://www.researchpress.com/scripts/product.asp?item=4848#5134

EQUIP is a three-part intervention method for working with antisocial or behaviour-disordered adolescents. The approach includes training in moral judgment, anger management/correction of thinking errors, and pro-social skills. Youth involved in the EQUIP training program participate in two types of group sessions - Equipment Meetings (in which the leader teaches specific skills) and Mutual Help Meetings (in which the leader coaches pupils as they use the skills they've learned to help each other). The EQUIP program received the 1998 Reclaiming Children and Youth Spotlight on Excellence Award. EQUIP has been adapted for use in Canada, the Netherlands, and several other countries.

c) *The ACCEPTS Program* (Walker et al,1994) Offers a complete curriculum for teaching effective social skills to pupils at middle and high school levels. The program teaches peer-to-peer skills, skills for relating to adults, and self-management skills.

ACCEPTS (**A C**urriculum for **C**hildren's **E**ffective **P**eer and **T**eacher **S**kills) is a complete curriculum for teaching classroom and peer-to-peer social skills to children with or without disabilities in Grades K through 6. The curriculum, designed for use by regular and special education teachers, cognitively teaches social skills as subject matter content. The program can be taught in one-to-one, small-group, or large-group instructional formats. *ACCEPTS* includes a nine-step instructional procedure based on the principles of direct instruction; scripts that teach critically important teacher-child behavioral competencies and peer-to-peer social skills; and behavioural management procedures.

d) **The School Wide- Positive Behavioural Intervention Support Programme** (SW-PBIS).

SW-PBIS refers to a systems change process for an entire school or district. The underlying theme is teaching behavioural expectations in the same manner as any core curriculum subject. Typically, a team of approximately ten representative members of the school will attend a two- or three- day training provided by skilled trainers. This team will be comprised of administrators, classified, and regular and special education teachers. The school will focus on three- to five- behavioural expectations that are positively stated and easy to remember. In other words, rather than telling pupils what not to do, the school will focus on the preferred behaviours. Here are some examples:

- o Respect Yourself, Respect Others, and Respect Property
- o Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful
- o Respect Relationships and Respect Responsibilities

Available at: https://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners

Please note: not all instruments and projects are available in all cultural contexts. With regards to excursions, assign an assistant for the pupil for safety issues in case an episode happens.

Supportive Literature

Definition: Pupils with intellectual disabilities are more likely to exhibit behaviour problems than are children without disabilities (Dekker, Koot, van der Ende, & Verhulst, 2002). While youth with mild or borderline intellectual disabilities exhibit more antisocial behaviour than do adolescents without disabilities (Douma, Dekker, de Ruiter, Tick, & Koot, 2007), in general, the more severe the intellectual impairment, the higher the incidence and severity of problem behaviour.

Characteristics: Difficulty accepting criticism, limited self-control, and bizarre and inappropriate behaviours such as aggression or self-injury are observed more often in children with intellectual disabilities than in children without disabilities. Some genetic syndromes associated with intellectual disabilities tend to include atypical and

maladaptive behaviour. For example, children with Prader-Willi syndrome often engage in self-injurious, obsessive-compulsive behavior and **pica** causes children to be eating non-nutritive substances such as string, hair or dirt (Ali, 2001; Dimitropoulos, Feurer, Butler, & Thompson, 2001; Symons, Butler, Sanders, Feurer, & Thompson, 1999).

Adapted from: Heward, W. L. (2013). *Exceptional children: An introduction to special education*. Pearson College Div.

Websites and EU Reports

http://www.bacdis.org.uk/publications/documents/EIPBriefingPaper.pdf
http://www.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/challenging_behaviour__a_unified_approach.pdf

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