



EPILEPSY



WHAT IS EPILEPSY?

Epilepsy can be defined as a medical condition that affects a person's brain and causes them to have seizures (NHS, 2020). Epilepsy is common and affects 500,000 children within the United Kingdom (Epilepsy Action, no date). According to (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2023) "a seizure is a burst of uncontrolled electrical activity between brain cells (also called neurons or nerve cells) that causes temporary abnormalities in muscle tone or movements (stiffness, twitching or limpness), behaviours, sensations or states of awareness" reoccurring seizures often lead to a diagnosis of Epilepsy. Although Epilepsy can occur at any age it is found that it usually starts during childhood or in people over 60 years (NHS, 2020).

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Signs and symptoms of epilepsy within children can be difficult to recognise than one might think, due to the several types of seizures, the more common seizures include a simple partial seizure, complex partial seizure, and a Tonic-clonic seizure. The signs and symptoms of a simple partial seizure can include twitching or stiffness in one part of the body such as the hand or arm, another sign of a simple partial seizure includes tingling in the arms and legs, often found that simple partial signs and symptoms mean that a more serious or complex seizure is about to occur. Complex partial seizures signs and symptoms include making sudden loud noises, smacking lips, and playing with different objects. Differently to simple and complex partial seizures, a tonic-clonic seizure is the stereotypical idea many people have of what a seizure looks like. There are 2 stages of this type of seizure, this includes stage one being clonic, the people will be unconscious body goes stiff and they will fall to the floor. The second stage being clonic whereby the body jerks, due to the muscle spasms, often people lose control of their bladder or bowel. A tonic-clonic seizure usually lasts for a couple of minutes, when the person comes around, they often do not remember what happened and are extremely tired (NHS, 2020).

BARRIERS & STRATEGIES

Every child is different, even if they suffer with the same medical condition, therefore children who suffer with epilepsy will not always have the same barriers to education and learning, however it is often found that children who are epileptic have further additional learning needs and struggle to concentrate (Epilepsy Action, no date A). A child with epilepsy can cause them to miss school due to an epileptic fit or due to appointments, therefore it can leave a negative effect on their learning due to them missing vital parts of their education (Epilepsy Action, no date A). Although the child may miss parts of their education it is important that schools and settings ensure that the child is getting the best possible education that they can access due to the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) every child has the right to an education, also stated by the UNCRC every child has the right to an education in which it can be adapted for them so they can access the curriculum despite disabilities and they should be provided with opportunities to be educated as best they can be. (UNICEF, no date) suggests that despite all the factors affecting a child education they have the right to be educated regardless of their needs for them to be educated to their highest potential. It is important that practitioners are aware of the Equality Act 2010, its purpose is to protect those with distinctive characteristics such as disabilities like epilepsy, the Equality Act 2010 emphasises the law on inclusivity and ensures no children are being discriminated due to having Epilepsy (Epilepsy Society, no date). Strategies practitioners could use is sending small work sheets home for the child to do with parents so they are still able to access the curriculum even though they may be missing time in schools.

Another challenge epileptic children could face is that it can be extremely difficult for them to gain independence especially in schools, in some schools epileptic children are found to have two supporting adults around them, this is due to the fact that if the child was to have a seizure one adult would put them into the recovery position and the other staff member to is time the fit or call for an ambulance. It is important that risk assessments are put in place to ensure that the child can access independence within the school and taking part in normal activities, risk assessments are important as it allows adjustments to be made to ensure a child can reach independence within activities (Epilepsy Action, no date B). Schools need to ensure that measures are put into place for all learners including ones who are epileptic have access to same opportunities due to the fact that it can be discriminatory and go against the Equality Act 2010 (Epilepsy Action, no date B). Strategies are to be put in place to ensure a child can be independent, an adult who is with the child always carry their medication if the epileptic child requires medication, minimising risk of a longer or another seizure (Epsy, 2022). Further strategies that should be put in place by the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) include ensuring that all staff who are involved with that child on a day to day basis have the correct training such as first aid and epileptic training to ensure that they are able to provide the best care they can for that child when a seizure occurs.

**ONE IN EVERY
220 CHILDREN
UNDER 18 WILL
HAVE A
DIAGNOSIS OF
EPILEPSY.**

(EPILEPSY ACTION, NO DATE C)

OVERALL

To conclude epilepsy is a quite common medical condition that occurs within children's health, and it is extremely important that people around that child are equipped with appropriate skill and knowledge to be able to support a child during a seizure. Children who suffer with epilepsy are no different to other children and should be provided with the same support as others under the UNCRC and the Equality Act 2010.

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