



(Source: Park, 2016)

Introduction:

For the purpose of this presentation there will be a critical evaluation of the barriers children may face with additional learning needs in Early Years. The focus will be on dyslexia and strategies such as, multi- sensory learning and technology assistance to support children in Early Years to ensure they have equal opportunities and inclusive practice.

Dyslexia definition:

NHS (2018) define Dyslexia as a common learning difficulty preventing problems with reading, spelling and writing. The British Dyslexia Association (2006) extend on the definition by suggesting that there could be a weakness in short term memory, speed of processing, organisation and spoken language. Kytja and Voeller (2004) explain that since the 19th century it is thought that dyslexia appears to be inherited through family genetics. Rutledge (2002) states that 1 in 10 people have some elements of being dyslexic. Siegel (2006) emphasises the importance of practitioners implementing a variety of reading and writing tests to ensure children receive support to enhance their development.

Multi sensory learning:

One strategy that supports children with dyslexia is multi-sensory learning. Moustafa and Ghani (2016) believe that as children learn through a multiple of senses this provides them with the opportunity to reinforce learning. Hamilton (2016) suggests that children learning through multi-sensory techniques supports all children however, it also aids children with additional learning needs. Hamilton (2016) stresses the importance of children learning through two or more senses, for example children seeing a visual and auditory representative in their environment from practitioners. An example of multisensory learning is using a holistic approach; a practitioner could provide literacy for Early Years which allows children to be physically activity using sight and sound. Boxall (2018) states that a disadvantage to multisensory learning is the cost and training to support practitioners. Practitioners need to have knowledge and understanding of how multisensory increases children's learning, for them to have the attitude to promote the techniques. By being aware of the level of the child, allows practitioners to introduce strategies to support individual needs. Jordan (2002) explains that recognising signs of dyslexia can be challenging within settings. One method to overcome challenges in Early Years, is for practitioners to understand the condition and introduce methods to support children's education (Milton, no date). Anastasiou and Kauffman (2012) agree with Milton (no date) by suggesting that education for practitioners is important to enhance Early Years.

Technology assistance:

Another strategy to support children with dyslexia is assistive technology and tools. The World Health Organization (2015) state that assistive technology covers a range of related services or assistive products. The Welsh Government (2015) argue that assistive technology is not a solution to completely aid children with additional learning needs, such as dyslexia. Tang et al (2005) suggest that assistive technology is constantly adapting within society. The Iowa department of education (2016) state that practitioners can incorporate devices to support children's learning, which could include any lessons throughout the curriculum such as literacy and numeracy. By practitioners incorporating children with additional learning needs this abides by The Equality Act 2010 in ensuring that every child is included within the setting (Family and Childcare Trust, 2017). This corresponds with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), under article 2 that every child has the right to be included and non-discriminated (UNICEF, no date).

An advantage of assistive technology is in some aspects the software available. Text-to-speech software provides children the opportunity to type into an electronic device such as computer or laptop and have the devices generate a voice (British Assistive Technology Association, 2015). By generating a voice, the device will read what has been typed into the computer, this would then allow children to recognise a difference in their work that they may not be able to see from their perspective of reading their work. Tang et al. (2005) emphasise the importance of using assistive technology to support children who have dyslexia, as it provides them with the same equal opportunities.

Conclusion:

To Conclude, practitioners working in Early Years need to be aware of children who have additional learning needs; to ensure that they are following policies and legislation for inclusive practice. There are multiple strategies to support children who are dyslexic to enhance their physical, social and emotional development. However, practitioners may use a variety of strategies depending on the individual child.

Further Reading:

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