

PRACTITIONERS' GUIDE FOR A
NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHER IN
FOSTERING INCLUSION FOR
LEARNERS WITH GLOBAL
DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY.

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This practitioner's guide is designed to provide newly qualified teachers with the essential knowledge, strategies, and resources needed to foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment for learners with Global Developmental Delay (GDD). It offers tools and knowledge to tackle unique challenges effectively, understanding of GDD to recognize and address diverse student needs, and inclusive strategies through evidence-based practices to create a supportive classroom. By following the guidance provided, educators can establish an inclusive setting that values and celebrates the strengths and potential of every student.

Global Developmental Delay (GDD) is a condition where a child does not reach developmental milestones at the expected times. It affects various areas of development including motor skills (such as sitting and walking), speech and language (talking and understanding), social and emotional development (forming relationships and regulating emotions), and cognition (problem-solving and learning). A comprehensive and supportive approach is essential to help children with GDD reach their full potential. Johanna (2024).

According to Liao (2023), fostering inclusion for learners with Global Developmental Delay (GDD) is critical for several reasons. Firstly, inclusive education ensures equitable access to education for all children, including those with GDD. This approach promotes diversity and empathy, helping students understand and respect individual differences. Furthermore, fostering inclusion encourages positive social interactions between students with and without disabilities. These interactions help reduce discriminatory attitudes and promote a sense of belonging and worth among all students. Additionally, inclusive education promotes collaborative learning, encouraging cooperation between general education teachers, special education teachers, parents, and specialists. This teamwork ensures that the unique needs of each student are met, creating a more effective and supportive learning environment. Additionally, inclusive education promotes collaborative learning, encouraging cooperation between general education teachers, special education teachers, parents, and specialists. This teamwork ensures that the unique needs of each student are met, creating a more effective and supportive learning environment. Team (2019) In addition the long-term benefits of inclusive education are significant. It prepares students with GDD for life beyond school by teaching them essential skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and independence. Liao (2023).

To ensure a more inclusive and equitable educational environment, several key policies and legislation have been implemented, including The Equality Act (2010). The Equality Act 2010 is a comprehensive piece of legislation that brings together previous anti-discrimination laws into a single act. For early years practitioners, the key provisions include protecting children and families from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation based on 'protected characteristics,' such as race, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment. It requires reasonable adjustments for disabled children to ensure they can access and participate in early years settings. Additionally, it promotes equality of opportunity and fosters positive relationships between individuals who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. CareLearning (2024). In discussing the Equality Act 2010, it is important to understand that this piece of legislation aims to consolidate previous anti-discrimination laws into a single Act. Office (2013) states that it legally protects individuals from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. The Act outlines the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone and sets out the protected characteristics, which include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. For early years practitioners, the key provisions of the Equality Act 2010 include:

- **Protecting children and families from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation** based on protected characteristics.
- **Mandating reasonable adjustments** for disabled children to ensure they can access and participate in early years settings.

- **Promoting equality of opportunity** and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In consideration of this, Department for Education (2014) also states that The Equality Act 2010 plays a crucial role in educational settings by ensuring that all students, regardless of their protected characteristics, have equal access to education. This Act consolidates previous anti-discrimination laws and introduces the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires schools to actively promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

Alongside this there is also The Children and Families Act 2014. According to CareLearning (2024) this act emphasizes the welfare and well-being of children. It ensures that children with additional learning needs and disabilities are able to access the support and services that they need. The Children and Families Act 2014 also promotes early intervention and the integration of services across education, health and care to provide holistic support. Additionally, The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international treaty where countries commit to ensuring equal treatment for people with disabilities. Australian Federation of Disability Organisation (2018).

The principles outlined in this Convention, as articulated by UNESCO (2011), encompass the respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy (including the freedom to make one's own choices), and the independence of individuals. The Convention also underscores non-discrimination, the full and effective participation and inclusion in society, and the respect for differences and acceptance of persons with disabilities as an integral part of human diversity and humanity. Additionally, it advocates for equal opportunities, accessibility, gender equality, and the respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities, as well as their right to preserve their identities United Nations (2006). Moreover, the Education for All (EFA) movement, launched by UNESCO, strives to provide quality basic education for all children, youth, and adults by 2015. This movement focuses on six primary education goals: expanding early childhood care, providing free and compulsory primary education, promoting learning and life skills for young people and adults, increasing adult literacy, achieving gender parity, and enhancing the quality of education. Despite notable progress, challenges persist, and ongoing efforts are necessary to ensure universal access to education.

The ALN Code of Practice in Wales provides a comprehensive framework for supporting learners with additional needs by emphasizing early identification, collaborative working, and inclusive practices. According to Welsh Government (2021), The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code of Practice in Wales provides statutory guidance under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. It outlines the responsibilities of organizations, including schools, local authorities, and health bodies, to meet the additional learning needs of children and young people. The Code emphasizes early identification and intervention to ensure that all learners can achieve their full potential.

Key aspects of the ALN Code of Practice include:

- **Collaborative Working:** Encouraging collaboration between schools, local authorities, and other agencies to support learners with additional needs.
- **Individual Development Plans (IDPs):** Replacing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) with IDPs to provide a more holistic approach to supporting learners.

- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Ensuring that all learners have access to appropriate support and resources to participate fully in education

According to Adzo (2023), social justice is a key principle in creating a fair and equitable society. It involves acknowledging and addressing the numerous injustices experienced by diverse communities. Central to social justice in education is addressing and overcoming social inequalities that affect educational opportunities through systemic change. This ensures that all students have access to quality education, which provides them with a crucial foundation for future success. Promoting social justice in education necessitates a systematic approach, incorporating policies, programs, and practices at every level of the educational system. This approach strives to advance equity and equality by recognizing and addressing social inequalities.

Strategies for promoting social justice in education and increasing educational opportunities include:

- Creating curricula that are inclusive and represent the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students.
- Offering targeted support and resources to underrepresented student groups, including students of colour, LGBTQ+ students, and those from low-income families.
- Adopting restorative justice practices that address conflicts with fairness and respect.
- Equipping teachers and educational professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to teach in a culturally responsive and socially just manner.
- Involving students, families, and communities in the educational process by providing opportunities for their input and feedback.

These strategies collectively contribute to promoting social justice in education. Systematically promoting social justice in education brings numerous benefits. These include improved educational outcomes for all students, greater social and economic mobility for students from underrepresented groups, and increased diversity and inclusion within educational institutions and communities.

In discussion of Estyn (2023), report of Pontarddulais Comprehensive School. It is clear that the comprehensive school use a wide range of teaching strategies to support both ALN children and neurodiverse children. Some of the ways in which they do this is, by adapting the level of challenge and pace of teaching based on close monitoring of students' progress, teachers ensure that students are consistently engaged and intellectually stimulated. This careful balance between developing students' skills and their subject knowledge leads to rapid progress for nearly all students, particularly those with additional learning needs (ALN). Developing inclusive curricula that reflect the diversity of students' backgrounds and experiences is crucial in this context. The leaders and pastoral team keep a close watch on students' progress in learning, well-being, attendance, and behaviour to identify those who need additional support. By working closely with families and external agencies, staff are able to plan and implement tailored interventions that address learning needs, social issues, and emotional or behavioural difficulties. Offering targeted support and resources to underrepresented groups, including students of colour, LGBTQ+ students, and those from low-income families, is a vital part of this process. Effective communication with parents and carers ensures that concerns are promptly addressed. The ALN team at Pontarddulais Comprehensive School is committed to offering top-quality care and support for students with ALN. They implement various powerful interventions to bolster both their academic and social development. Another

strategy enhancing this support is the adoption of restorative justice practices that address conflicts with fairness and respect. They also have robust processes for tracking and monitoring progress, with clear criteria for intervention entry and exit, ensuring a focus on student progress. The school consistently reviews and enhances its support for ALN students, employing a variety of effective methods tailored to individual needs and considering input from students, parents, and external agencies. It's crucial to equip teachers and educational professionals with the skills and knowledge required to teach in a culturally responsive and socially just manner. Enhanced transition programs offer additional opportunities for the most vulnerable students to acclimate to the school before starting Year 7. ALN students also play a significant role in shaping school life through their participation in the 'Pupil Parliament.' The ALN team shares effective teaching and learning strategies with staff, who, in the best lessons, use this guidance to make suitable adaptations, enabling students to successfully access the curriculum. Engaging students, families, and communities in the educational process by providing opportunities for their input and feedback is key. The school's pastoral support center provides a safe space where caring staff build positive relationships with students and their families. 'Tŷ Dysgu' offers additional support to the most vulnerable students, helping to overcome barriers to learning and attendance. Collaborating with various external agencies allows the school to provide a comprehensive range of interventions, such as counselling and emotional support, to help students overcome challenges. Leaders, teachers, and support staff hold high expectations for all students, including those with ALN. Staff know their pupils well and excel at offering extensive tailored support to meet students' academic and well-being needs.

This Estyn report displays many effective teaching strategies for children with Global developmental delay some of the benefits of these strategies are, individualized support through tailored interventions and teaching strategies helps meet the unique needs of each student, promoting their academic and social development. Close monitoring ensures that any learning gaps or behavioural issues are promptly addressed, leading to continuous progress. Participation in programs like the 'Pupil Parliament' fosters a sense of belonging and active involvement in the school community. Effective communication with parents and carers ensures they are involved in their child's education, leading to better support at home. The combination of academic, emotional, and social support addresses all aspects of a child's development.

However, through critique this report there are also drawbacks for some children with GDD such as, Providing individualized support and interventions requires significant resources, including time, staff, and funding. Some students may become overly reliant on support, hindering their development of independent learning skills. The effectiveness of interventions can vary, and not all strategies may work equally well for every child, requiring ongoing adjustments. Some parents may be resistant to certain interventions or approaches, which can impact the consistency and effectiveness of support. Close monitoring and high expectations may sometimes lead to increased stress and pressure on students, affecting their well-being.

While this report offers numerous benefits for children with global developmental delay, it also comes with challenges that need to be carefully managed to ensure the best outcomes for all students.

There are many ways to support a child with GDD. One strategy that is widely supported by Wani (2022), and stated as 'A key to success', by Liau (2023) is early intervention. Research has demonstrated that early intervention is crucial in mitigating the effects of Global Developmental Delay (GDD). By promptly identifying and addressing developmental delays, children are more likely to achieve positive outcomes and overcome the barriers associated with GDD. Early intervention provides a unique opportunity to implement tailored strategies that cater specifically to the

individual needs of each child, significantly enhancing their development and learning potential. Moreover, professional and experienced early intervention teachers are proficient at recognizing the signs and symptoms of GDD in children. They possess the expertise to detect potential developmental delays that may go unnoticed by others. This early detection is vital as it allows for timely and appropriate interventions that can make a significant difference in a child's developmental path. Children with GDD may not exhibit obvious symptoms to those unfamiliar with what to look for. Consequently, the developmental gap between children with GDD and their peers can widen considerably over the years. Without early diagnosis and intervention, this gap may become increasingly difficult to close, highlighting the importance of early identification and support. The benefits of early intervention extend beyond academic performance; they also encompass social, emotional, and behavioural development, providing a holistic approach to supporting children with GDD. By ensuring early and professional intervention, children with GDD are given the best possible chance to thrive and succeed in various aspects of their lives. This proactive approach not only helps in minimizing the impact of GDD but also fosters a more inclusive and supportive environment for all children.

Inclusiveteach.com (2023), highlights several effective teaching strategies for children with Global Developmental Delay (GDD). These include -

Multisensory instruction: This technique integrates multiple senses—such as touch, movement, sight, and sound—into the learning process to accommodate various learning styles. For example, teachers might use songs with gestures, manipulatives, and visual aids alongside verbal instruction to enhance learning.

Discrete trial training: This approach breaks down skills into small, manageable steps and provides repeated practice with prompting and positive reinforcement. It is particularly effective for teaching motor, language, academic, and self-help skills.

Picture exchange communication system (PECS): This method utilizes pictures and symbols to aid nonverbal students in communication. By having students' hand over picture cards to express their needs and wants, they learn to use symbols for communication.

Positive behaviour supports: Instead of punishing negative behaviours, this strategy focuses on reinforcing positive behaviours. Tools such as visual reward charts, token systems, and immediate praise are used to motivate students.

Peer-mediated instruction: This approach involves modelling and practicing skills with peers of the same age, leveraging students' motivation to emulate their classmates. Trained peers offer support through modelling, prompting, and social reinforcement.

The website also highlights that the key to supporting a child with GDD lies in providing multimodal, scaffolded instruction that actively builds individual skills through repetition, reinforcement, prompting, and breaks. Regular assessment and data tracking ensure that teaching strategies are continuously adapted to enhance student learning and developmental outcomes.

By implementing these strategies, educators can create a supportive and effective learning environment for children with GDD. They can foster academic growth, enhance communication skills, and promote positive behaviour, ultimately helping these children reach their full potential.

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is a highly effective communication tool for nonverbal children. As described by the NHS (n.d.), PECS employs pictures or symbols to help children communicate their needs and wants. It is specifically designed for children who struggle

with initiating communication and may have limited spoken language. The primary aim of PECS is to teach functional communication skills. Research indicates that PECS can aid in the development of spoken language in children. It has been particularly beneficial for children with specific diagnoses such as Autism, Down syndrome, and learning disabilities. For some children, PECS serves as a long-term communication method. Others may start with PECS and later use it alongside spoken language, eventually relying solely on speech for communication. PECS is powerful because it highlights the importance of communication and fosters spontaneous communication. It helps children learn to initiate communication with familiar adults and peers, which is crucial for their social interactions. By teaching functional communication, children can effectively request what they need or want, reducing frustration caused by communication difficulties. The universality of pictures makes PECS especially advantageous, as they can be easily understood by anyone the child is attempting to communicate with. Additionally, PECS encourages the development of spoken language by modelling speech alongside each exchange. In essence, PECS is a valuable and versatile tool that supports the communication needs of nonverbal children, offering them a pathway to more effective and meaningful interactions with the world around them.

Some children may later catch up on developmental milestones without additional support, experiencing no permanent problems and developing as expected.

According to Liao (2023), supporting children with Global Developmental Delay (GDD) involves a range of therapies and methods, including speech and language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and other supportive interventions. Speech and language therapy aims to enhance communication skills in children with GDD, employing techniques such as physical aids, gestures, and play-based activities to improve language development. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices are also utilized to assist children with verbal communication difficulties. Through targeted interventions, speech and language therapy helps children overcome communication challenges, fostering social interaction and pragmatic skills. Occupational therapy is vital for addressing fine motor skills, sensory processing issues, and self-care abilities in children with GDD. Therapists engage children in activities that enhance hand-eye coordination, dexterity, and motor planning. Sensory integration techniques help children develop better sensory processing capabilities, enabling them to navigate their environment more effectively. Occupational therapy also focuses on improving self-care skills, such as dressing, feeding, and hygiene, promoting independence and overall functionality. Physical therapy aims to enhance gross motor skills, mobility, and strength in children with GDD. Therapists design exercises and activities targeting specific motor challenges, such as balance, coordination, and core stability. By implementing tailored interventions, physical therapy helps children develop essential motor skills and achieve greater independence in their movements. Behavioural therapy addresses challenging behaviours and emotional regulation in children with GDD. Therapists collaborate closely with the child and their caregivers to identify triggers, develop coping strategies, and teach adaptive skills. Behaviour management techniques, such as positive reinforcement and visual supports, are employed to encourage positive behaviours and reduce disruptive ones. By focusing on behaviour modification and skill-building, behavioural therapy empowers children to manage their emotions and navigate social situations more effectively. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are crucial for children with GDD. These plans outline specific educational goals, accommodations, and support services tailored to each child's unique needs. Inclusive classroom practices enable children with GDD to learn alongside their peers, promoting social integration and academic progress. Specialized educational programs, such as specialized classrooms or schools, provide additional support for children with GDD, ensuring they receive the necessary attention and resources to thrive academically.

Overcoming obstacles for children with Global Developmental Delay is possible through the implementation of effective therapies and interventions. By adopting a collaborative approach and building strong support systems, we can empower children with GDD to reach their full potential and surmount previously insurmountable barriers. As highlighted in a journal article by Siti Zairin and Mohd Norazmi Nordin (2023), The multisensory approach is a learning strategy that simultaneously engages two or more senses, including visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic-tactile senses. Visual techniques, such as using pictures and videos, help students understand abstract concepts by linking the material to their own experiences. Auditory methods, including the use of sounds and verbal cues, improve learning through multimedia materials, making verbal stimulation more accessible. Tactile approaches also play a significant role in enhancing fine motor skills among students. Activities like tray sand and clay modelling offer practical ways for students to improve their dexterity. Meanwhile, kinaesthetic applications focus on refining both fine and gross motor skills and integrating these movements with language learning.

The goals of the multisensory learning approach in teaching are varied. this approach enables teachers to ensure the effectiveness of learning objectives, plan systematically, and organize teaching strategies efficiently. It also encourages students to engage in self-exploration, fostering a deeper understanding of the material. Research by Siti Zairin and Mohd Norazmi Nordin (2023), has demonstrated that multisensory methods can significantly enhance observation and concentration, especially among special education students. By incorporating various senses in the learning process, the multisensory approach not only aids in comprehension but also makes learning more engaging and interactive. This holistic method supports the development of a wide range of skills, from cognitive and motor abilities to social and emotional growth. Consequently, students are better equipped to retain information and apply their knowledge in diverse contexts. Overall, the multisensory learning approach offers a comprehensive framework for achieving educational success, promoting an inclusive and dynamic learning environment.

This practitioner's guide has explored key elements essential for supporting children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). It covered foundational policies, legislation, and theoretical perspectives, followed by insightful case studies that highlighted real-world challenges and implications. By embracing these principles, practitioners can positively impact the lives of children with ALN, ensuring they receive the quality education and support they deserve.

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