

Introduction

All children and young people have the right to be safe and happy and be supported to reach their full potential.Barriers must be removed to ensure that all children have full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (United Nations 2006)

Article 23 of the UNCRC (United Nations 1990) states that Governments must do all they can to support children with disabilities and their families to live full, dignified lives. A child with an additional learning need should be encouraged to be an active participant in their own community with additional support and care provided to promote their independence. The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2023) promotes inclusive education, ensuring that appropriate support is provided for all children. The United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) promotes the provision of early intervention services and support to ensure children’s full inclusion and inclusion. Article seven addresses the rights of children with disabilities ensuring that they have equal opportunities to participate in all areas of their life from an early age.

How Global Developmental Delay is identified and diagnosed

Global Development Delay (GDD) is often diagnosed when a child is significantly delayed in two or more of their developmental milestones, milestones that are expected of their age. Children are unique and they develop at different rates, this can make it challenging to apply milestone checks. Global Developmental Delay is defined by a child being diagnosed with having a lower intellectual functioning than what is perceived as ‘normal’. It is usually accompanied by delays in motor skills, both gross and fine motor.

n Wales, milestone check-ups for young children typically include assessments of physical growth, developmental milestones, and holistic well-being. These milestone checks are inline with The Healthy Child Wales Programme (Welsh Government 2023) the programme provides a schedule for routine health and development reviews from birth to school entry age. Milestone checks allow for information to be gathered and shared Collaboration between health professionals, early years practitioners and parents (Welsh Government 2023). The information gathered from these checks can provide opportunities for early identification of developmental concerns, including global developmental delay. Timely access to support services and interventions can be facilitated as needed. Developmental milestones serve as a valuable tool to help track the growth and development of babies and young children in areas of physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. By comparing a child's progress to these milestones parents and professionals can identify areas where the child may be thriving or may need additional support. Maxwell et al (2024) state that the milestones work as benchmarks for assessment and documentation of children’s development . Recognising delays from typical developmental patterns early allows for timely intervention.

Chapter 4 of the Additional Learning Needs code for Wales (Welsh Government 2023) focuses on involving and supporting children and their parents in the ALN process, outlining the importance of important communication, the provision of information and the need for collaborative decision making

Milestones provide a clear set of expectations for parents, offering informed knowledge and understanding in regard to their child's growth and development

Frosch, Schoppe-Sullivan, O'Banion (2019) explain that Bronfenbrenner identified the pivotal importance of the relationship between a child and an adult, and Bowlby’s theory explains that parents' support from professionals impacts positively on children's development. This supports Deysolong (2023) belief that good, regular communication between practitioners and parents about the child's progress helps to maintain consistency and by actively participating in their child's learning parents contribute to their academic success, development and emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, differences in cultural norms and language can impact communication between practitioners and parents leading to misunderstandings in regard to the child's progress.

In order to improve the identification of children with developmental delays so that early intervention can be provided in a timely manner, a significant emphasis has been placed on the routine use of developmental surveillance and screening. Murphy and Waters-Davies (2022)

Barriers in regard to Global Developmemental Delay

According to Glascoe (2000) when parents have concerns, they are usually justified however, Marshall, Kirby and Gorski (2016) states that approximately twenty percent of parents of children below the age of five who express concern about their child’s development, seek help and support by bringing up concerns with child care or health care professionals.

Parents become most motivated to get help for their children at the ages of three and four; this is age where developmental concerns are most commonly identified (Poon, Larosa and Shashidhar Pai (2010) Childcare providers at early years settings perform developmental screening and surveillance. However, according Pinto-Martin et al (2005) whilst providers strive to deliver high-quality care, approximately just one-fifth of providers use formalised screening tools, leaving significant developmental delays frequently under-detecting this could be due to time restraints and a lack of time. The Education Act 2002 (UK Government 2022) Schools are required to provide appropriate training for staff to understand learning needs and implement inclusive teaching strategies to support children with Additional Learning Needs effectively. Additional funding is made available to schools to help implement these changes and support inclusive education.

Welsh Government (2022) states that it is good practice in early years settings to have an open-door policy for families to feel comfortable in sharing information that may affect their child. Working with families, good Communication and relationships ensure understanding and consistency. It can be difficult for parents to accept that their child may need additional support and difficult for even experienced practitioners to share their observations with families that they have developed a relationship with. This communication however is vital to ensure the best possible outcomes for the child (Macintyre 2015).

Support strategies for children with Global Developmental Delay

According to Dauncey (2016) With regular assessment and monitoring, Individual Development Plan’s help children who have been recognised to have developmental delay, IDPs outline strategies tailored to the individual child's learning patterns, strengths, and areas for improvement, enhancing the child's engagement and enjoyment and therefore outcomes. The IDPs provides a structured framework for setting targets and tracking progress. This helps in systematically addressing the child's developmental needs and celebrating their achievements, thus also promoting their self-esteem, motivation and well being.

An Individual development plan caters for specific needs and interests of the child, ensuring that the strategies are developmentally appropriate and engaging. It is widely recognised that effective collaboration from the earliest opportunity of identifying ALN and developing an IDP is crucial to improving the system (Dauncey (2016)

Furthermore Welsh Government (2018) stress that early interventions can in some cases be sufficient in bridging the gap between the child and their peers. Additionally ,Nutbrown (2013) insists that those delivering early intervention programs have sufficient training, qualifications and understanding.with knowledge of the importance of ongoing monitoring to ensure continuity in that the appropriate support.

Script

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Question 1. - can children catch up in development as they grow older ?

For some children, the delay in their development will be short term and additional support will help them overcome it. Intervention from professionals such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists together with tailored individual development plans it is possible to bridge the gap between the child and their peers. For other children, the delay may be more significant and lead to them being diagnosed with a learning disability.

There are numerous ways that Global Development Delay diagnoses can be caused. Often, it is the result of genetic factors, such as down's syndrome or other problems with a child's₃ chromosomes

Question 2

You have explained the importance of parent involvement in the ALN process. Could you expand a little in regard to parents' involvement in the IDPs ?

IDPs encourage stronger partnerships between practitioners and parents. By including parents in all that concern their child ensures that children receive more consistent support both at home and at the childcare setting. However, Developing and maintaining IDPs require significant time, and resources. Many early years settings face limitations in staffing, funding, and time, which can hinder the effective implementation of IDPs . however. Crucial parental involvement is deemed, not all parents have the time or understanding needed to fully engage in the IDP process. This can limit the effectiveness of the plan and the child's developmental progress to effectively maximise the potential of the IDPs to support children's development; it is essential that these barriers are overcome.

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