

Student ID: 1203383 **Module code:** EAEC6002

Assignment title: Undertake a piece of research on up to three strategies used to support a child with additional learning needs in the early years.

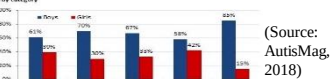
Introduction Throughout this poster will be researched information on two strategies that are in place to support a child with Additional Learning Needs in the early years. One ALN will be chosen and researched thoroughly. The chosen ALN to be studied in this poster is Autism. There will be an in depth focus on the processes and procedures in place to support the children with the additional needs, along with references being made to children’s rights and legislative frameworks. A critique will be made of whether or not inclusion is supported throughout the Foundation Phase and all early years’ settings, where additional learning needs is involved. The poster will include an introduction of the focussed ALN, including research of two chosen strategies that are in place to support the chosen ALN and will include theoretical knowledge including codes of practice and children’s rights. The poster will be presented in an academic style using an organised approach to demonstrate knowledge and learning of the topic. There will be a variety of academic resources used to conduct the research including journal articles, books and websites.

Inclusive Practice According to Extension (2015) in the field of education, inclusion can be defined as including children into their educational development, no matter what their ability. Plimley et al. (2007) agrees and states there are many pro’s to autistic children receiving inclusive practice. These include having time to build relationships and friendships along with an opportunity to learn at their own pace and not at the same speed as every other child without the disability. However Veale (2016) states that as children grow up with their disability, they refer to themselves as ‘self-concept’ which can lead to children being excluded in their education due to feeling different to everyone else. Rodgers and Wilmot (2011) agree and state the characteristics of exclusion include: the child thinking they cannot do something or thinking they are unloved. From this Brain and Mukherji (2005) state it could lower a child’s self-esteem and risk their development. Furthermore (Braungarts-Rieker et al. (2001) argues the reasons behind this is that children are influenced by their attachment experiences and social context in which they live in.

What is Autism? Autism Speaks (2018) states Autism can be described as a range of conditions characterised with challenges including social skills, speech delay and behaviour issues which can be defined as a ‘spectrum’ disorder. Pound (2006) agrees it is caused by a number of different combinations of genetic and environmental issues. Mencap (2018) states there are a number of warning signs which may indicate if a child has autism including speech delay, a love for routines and sensitive to loud noises. Veale (2016) states in 2011 over 20% of children had an additional learning need. However NEU (2017) state there has been an increase of 3% over the last 6 years and today 23% of children in Wales are diagnosed with an Additional Learning Needs.

Baroness Mary Warnock Brown (2003) states Mary Warnock laid the foundations for SEN over 30 years ago. She is famously known for having a ‘no-nonsense approach’ towards ethical practice and went against what many people thought of disabilities back then. Warnock (2010) states in 1978 the Warnock report was published, however it came at the wrong time. In the early 70’s mentally disabled children had been deemed educable at all, however Warnock fought against what people believed and supported inclusive practice. The Telegraph (2018) agrees it was a tough time for Warnock as the current population then were against helping disabilities, therefore this report was going against what they preached.

Debate: Girls and boys on the autism spectrum AutisMag (2018) states as the graph below illustrates boys are almost 6 times more likely to be diagnosed than girls on the autistic spectrum.



(Source: AutisMag, 2018)

According to Autism Speaks (2018) 1 in 42 boys are diagnosed with Autism, compared to 1 in 189 girls. This shows boys are over 3 times more likely to be diagnosed with autism. There are many reasons for boys being diagnosed more than girls which may include: Autism Female Phenotype- Veale, (2018) states this is where autism doesn’t fit in with women’s profile associated with autism, therefore men are at an advantage making women have an under diagnosis. Pound (2006) agrees girls are better at camouflaging their difficulties, whereas boys tend to show their week points. Applied Behaviour Analysis (2018) states gender dysphoria is another reason, where children’s personal difficulties effect their development to their sex difference. This being, one sex may believe they are at a disadvantage to the opposite sex as there may be more support available or they may feel vulnerable. Polanen et al. (2017) states only 3% of staff working in education are male. This can cause distress towards male as they feel at a disadvantage to girls as they don’t have anyone to talk to, whereas girls have female staff to discuss issues with.

Support Strategy 1- Staff training Even though this is not a direct support strategy to children with autism, without the correct support for the staff providing support for the child, the child would see very little developmental progress with their ability. The Equality Act 2004 states children of all abilities should have inclusive support from trained professionals.

Overton (2009) states staff training is an opportunity for staff to attend training courses which are nationally recognised qualifications. These include: First Aid, Safeguarding and Speech and Language Development. From this follows Continual professional development which Nettleton and Friel (2015) states is best described as ensuring staff’s knowledge and understanding in specific topics is kept up to date regularly by attending training courses. This support strategy is a method which develops early intervention and will support autistic children by ensuring the professional that offer their support are up-to-date with their training and know of all procedures and guidelines to follow. Veale (2018) agrees by staff being trained to the best standard, an autistic child will be offered the best start in life with the support and knowledge from the professional. Polanen et al. (2017) agrees and states it will prepare children and help children be resilient for what’s to come in life. However Reed and Canning (2012) states CPD is a highly beneficial support strategy however it can be a time consuming process as new training providers offer new training frequently. Herbert (1994) argues that autism has been neglected by professionals supporting the children are lacking in skills and knowledge. One main reason for this is due to a lack a funding. BBC (2017) agrees and states that training funding is at its lowest. 600 welsh schools have wiped out their budget for CP leaving only 0.65% of staff attending training. However Coughlan (2017) also states that schools have been invested in by over £40bn and with precision budgeting and support for developing staffs knowledge from the headmaster/headmistress, training should be increasing. Reed and Cannin (2012) agree and state if headships take lead and plan their budget according to the needs of the children e.g. if an autistic child needs a member of staff trained in speech and language development, then that is what the funding must be spent on, instead of wasting the budget on unnecessary items which will not support a child with ALN.

By training staff this is an excellent early intervention method as children receive the correct trained support needed with current knowledge of the topic. This allows skills and knowledge to be shown to the child from the trained staff e.g. sign language or communication skills. All of which will develop a child’s knowledge. However Autism Speaks (2018) argues and states whilst the staff attends training, the child will be alone without one-to-one support. This can put huge strain on a child’s development and could lead to behaviour issues as it is an activity out of their routine. They are used to coming to school and being supported by their one-to-one teacher, however with the teacher not there they are seen to fend for themselves. Veale (2018) states Sigmund Freud believed children with an additional learning need develop by controlling their own mind and ID. He strongly believes ALN children can’t do this alone and need adult support to complete tasks. Pound (2006) agrees and states by setting a child’s mind to complete a task and deliver guidance in a positive manner, the child will feel re-enforced that they can do it. Maynard and Thomas (2009) states if educational professions continue to give great support and guidance in early intervention, the future will take hold of itself. Rodgers and Canning (2011) agrees and states by professionals reinforcing positive education, it becomes possible to remove potential barriers to their play and interaction with the over-ride of positive attitudes.

Support Strategy 2- SEN School BBC (2018) state an SEN school is an education plan in place for a child with an additional learning need e.g. one-to-one education. With this plan in place the child’s disability or difficulty can be focussed on in more depth than a mainstream school. Veale (2018) agrees and states an SEN school supports Jean Piaget’s theory which demonstrates that children of all abilities learn at different stages of development and the correct support and resources in place is essential to reinforce their development. MENCAP (2018) states the schools are for children with issues such as social interaction difficulties, behavioural issues and learning difficulties.

A local example of an SEN school is Ysgol Heol Goffa which is based in Llanelli. YHG (2014) describes the setting as a local authority day special school, supplying education for children aged 3-19 whom have an additional learning needs. The support available in the schools include physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. All of which will benefit children with autism as those are some of the main characteristics of autism. BBC News (2018) states a recent interview of the headmistress in Ysgol Heol Goffa by the BBC states there are many support packages in place which will support autistic children including psychologist on hands for parental or family advice, sensory rooms to develop children’s senses and a soft play area/sensory garden. Heol Goffa work alongside families and offer afterschool clubs to give parents a rest. One example of their clubs is an arts and craft club, which is run on a weekly basis and is open 3pm-6pm. This given parents free time to complete chores/tasks without having to worry about their child for that duration. MENCAP (2018) states The SEN Code of Practice is a legislation in place, which was introduced in 2002. This framework will be followed by SEN schools just like Heol Goffa. The main objective of the code is to ensure children with the difficulties receive support to learn more efficiently, including different levels of work to suit their ability and appropriate learning areas. Pound (2006) agrees and states the code is an inclusive approach and sees each child indivial for who they ae. NEU (2017) states the Welsh Government have come up with a solution to support children with an additional learning needs and their idea is to change the law in which will effect autistic children. The new ALN Tribunal Bill will be made law and is in place to prevent conflict between parents, families, children and the government and by doing this children with an additional need with be receiving the support they need. Thomas and Lewis (2016) agree this law will bring fundamental support to children with autism and is set to bring big developmental changes e.g. a statement is being re-named to development plan and SEN is changing to ALN.

A support strategy like an SEN school can support early intervention in many ways such as, the child receives correct support tailored to their needs instead of being drowned in at a mainstream school. However Kalsdottir and Garaorsdottir (2010) state the diagnosis of autism can range anything from 2 months up to 5 years, resulting in a chid having to stay in a mean stream school and struggle for that amount of time without the correct support in place. In an SEN school the correct resources will be available to support each disabilities needs e.g. for a child with communication issues, there will be a sensory room which is a calm environment where the child can discuss issues calmly and alone with the one-to-one practitioner. Whereas in a mainstream school the loud noise of a classroom may put the child off from saying something important as they feel anxious or not confident enough. One issue SEN schools have to deal with is funding. According to NEU (2017) currently SEN schools receive £10,000 per child that starts at the setting, which seems like a lot, however after equipment/resources are purchased and staff are paid, there is not much left. YHG (2018) state there are currently 82 children at Ysgol Heol Goffa and most require intimate care e.g. one-to-one support. This put financial pressure on the school as they are spending a lot of their budget on staff wages whereas they could be using it to buy new resources or going out on field trips. Special Education Support Services (no date) agrees that SEN schools are at great financial pressure to keep up-to-date with current and innovative methods to support children with an ALN.

Parker (2018) states one teachers experience from a mainstream school results in her feeling stressed on a daily basis after dealing with children with additional needs in her classroom with no additional support e.g. one-to-one support. Her love and passion for inclusion lead her to presume her career in becoming a teacher however now working as a teacher in a school she feels alone due to her lack of knowledge and expertise in the field due to lack of training. Parker (2018) also states the teacher often goes home crying due to the cut in additional teaching support such as LSA’s. As an example, an autistic child in her classroom is currently four years behind his peers with knowledge and states the government would not let a sick child go without medication so why should a disability be in a continuum where no support is given.

Conclusion To conclude it is evidential that additional learning needs are strongly supported today more than ever. With legislative frameworks and reports in place such as the Warnock report, it has changed how we see disabilities. There are many support strategies in place to support autism from PECS, one-to-one support to staff training and SEN schools, all of which are fundamentally important in shaping a young child’s development in early year’s settings and acts as an excellent source to support early intervention. Inclusive practice today is linked to the Foundation Phase as teachers must plan lessons to each individual child no matter what their needs or ability. As discussed, Autism is rising within the population, however with all the different support strategies in place it looks as though it will be strongly supported.

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