

# **POLICY FOR EDUCATION TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN UNION TERRITORY, CHANDIGARH**

## **1. INTRODUCTION:**

Education has been an important sector/subject ever since India attained independence, yet Inclusive Education, particularly the education for children with disabilities received very little attention of educationists, policy makers, administrators and Central/State legislatures. The differently abled, left to their fate, underwent all sort of misery as neglected citizens. In the early 1950s, children with developmental disabilities were entirely excluded from the public education system. Subsequently, changes in the system of education were initiated and it was realized that these children also had the ability to learn. Gradually, more and more knowledge was gained about the untapped potential of children with developmental disabilities. Government services began to focus on providing support to such children, youth with disabilities and their families. The last few decades have witnessed enactment of laws and formulation of policies and procedures for including children and youth with special needs in regular classrooms.

Universalization of Education would be meaningless, if quality education is not provided to Children with Special Needs (CWSN). Inclusive education as a system embraces the varied needs of special children and meet their requirements to emerge as better adapted, accepted and confident citizens in society. Education to children with disabilities is a challenging task as every child with disability has different needs. Although the concept of inclusive education is gaining strength and momentum with the enactment of various laws by the Govt., yet implementation of such laws requires a lot of preparations, reorientation of policy, programmes and procedures as well as attitudinal changes in the stakeholders.

The Hon'ble Punjab and Haryana High Court in CWP No 22527 of 2017 in the case titled Jyoti Sehgal V/S Union Of India & Others vide its order dated 21.5.2018 observed that Union Territory of Chandigarh shall frame a Comprehensive Policy as to how to educate differently abled students in Chandigarh, by keeping in view, the mandate provided under the Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016. In compliance with the aforesaid observation of the Hon'ble Court, the Administrator U.T., Chandigarh is pleased to frame the policy for differently- abled Students to be called as "Policy For Providing Education to Differently Abled Students In Union Territory Of Chandigarh".

## **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

This policy aims to bring about a positive outlook and upliftment in the life of children with disabilities, not only through education, but also through a life long rehabilitation process. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 which covers 21 disabilities has mandated that all kinds of services and facilities be extended to children with benchmark disabilities. This will capacitate them to learn in a congenial, compatible and healthy environment wherein their efficacious participation shall empower them to realize their potential to the utmost.

### **3. DEFINITIONS:**

(3.1) In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires:-

- (i) “Appropriate Government” means,-- Chandigarh Administration.
- (ii) “Barrier” means any factor including communicational, cultural, economic, environmental, institutional, political, social, attitudinal or structural, which hampers the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society;
- (iii) “Competent Authority” means Director School Education ,Chandigarh Administration.
- (iv) “Discrimination” in relation to disability, means any distinction, exclusion, restriction on the basis of disability which is the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field and includes all forms of discrimination and denial of reasonable accommodation;
- (v) “Inclusive Education” means a system of education wherein students with and without disability learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities;
- (vi) “Person with benchmark disability” means a person with not less than forty per cent of a specified disability where specified disability has not been defined in measurable terms as well as a person with disability where specified disability has been defined in measurable terms, as certified by the certifying authority;
- (vii) “Person with disability” means a person with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment, which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others;
- (viii) “Mainstreamable” (as per International Bureau of Education – UNESCO) the integration of learners with special needs into general educational settings or regular schools, ideally facilitated by appropriate curriculum, infrastructure adjustments and by the provision of specially trained staff.
- (ix) “Neighbourhood” means the area or limits of neighbourhood within which a school has to be established by the appropriate Government or the local authority
  - (a) in respect of children in classes from I to V, within a walking distance of one km of the neighbourhood;
  - (b) in respect of children in classes from VI to VIII, within a walking distance of three km’s of the neighbourhood.

3.2 The words and expressions used in this policy, but not defined, shall have the same meaning as assigned to them in the Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016.

### **4. STEPS AND INITIATIVES FOR PROVIDING EDUCATION TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES:**

For successful implementation of the provisions of RPwD Act, 2016, following steps/initiatives are considered appropriate and necessary to be undertaken by the stakeholders:

#### **4.1 Identification and Assessment of Children with Disabilities:**

For identification and certification of Children with Disabilities, following steps are required to be taken:

- (i) Comprehensive household survey for identification of children with disabilities shall be carried out by mobilizing manpower resources of different departments like Asha Workers/ANMs, Aanganwadi Workers, Special Educators (working in Government Schools and students undergoing training in Special Education courses) possessing qualification prescribed by Rehabilitation Council of India. Education Department will act as Nodal Department for this purpose.
- (ii) Education Department, in consultation with Social Welfare Department and Health Department, shall prepare and notify plan/time frame for organizing assessment and certification camps in Govt Schools or other suitable locations.
- (iii) A common portal for sharing and uploading information of the identified CWSN shall be developed/setup by IT Department. This common platform will be useful for making information accessible to all stake holders dealing with such children.

#### **4.2 Placement of Children with Disabilities in different Educational Models:**

- (i) A checklist for class teachers shall be devised by Govt. Rehabilitation Institute for Intellectual Disabilities, Chandigarh, in collaboration with School Education Department to screen Children with Disabilities.
- (ii) A checklist for Special Educators, counselors shall be devised by Govt. Rehabilitation Institute for Intellectual Disabilities, Chandigarh, in collaboration with School Education Department to suggest educational setups based on his/her degree/severity of disability as defined by the RPwD Act, 2016.
- (iii) If the child is already enrolled in the school and is subsequently diagnosed as not mainstream-able, the child shall be relocated in the set up which is best suited to the child's needs as per screening and identification checklist (referred to above).

#### **4.3 Provision of Aids and Appliances As Per The Needs Of CWSN:**

- (i) Assessment camps for prescription of Aids and Appliances for children with disabilities shall be organized on a quarterly basis. Expenditure on these camps shall be borne by Chandigarh Administration.
- (ii) Children identified for any aid(s) and appliance(s), on the basis of prescription, shall be provided with the required aid(s)/appliance(s). The expenditure in this regard will be borne by the Education/ Social Welfare Department as per the guidelines of Assistance to Disabled persons for purchasing / fitting of aids / appliances (ADIP) scheme.
- (iii) Funds for procurement of aids and appliances, not covered under the ADIP Scheme, shall be provided by the UT or will be raised through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities.

#### **4.4 Curriculum Development:-**

Common guidelines for modification and adaptation of curriculum shall be formulated by the U.T. Chandigarh, keeping in view the ability of CWSN and their learning outcomes specific to their grade/class. Schools shall provide locally available, low cost or free software. Existing resources (e.g. NCERT text books in Braille, Large Print Books etc.) will be shared by all types of schools.

#### **5. NEED BASED EDUCATION MODELS FOR CWSN CHILDREN AND SETUP:**

In order to provide need based services for Children with Disabilities, following models of education can be adopted depending upon the type and degree of disability:-

##### **5.1 Early Intervention:**

Early intervention helps in rehabilitation and inclusion of children with disabilities. Children with disabilities upto the age group of 6 years are being handled both by Aanganwadi workers and teachers of primary classes, as strengthening of Aanganwadi Centres and pre-primary classes is the need of the hour. In addition to this, Aanganwadi Workers and teachers of Pre-primary classes will be trained by the Education Department in collaboration with the Health Department for early identification (till the age of 06 years) of CWSNs and for providing qualitative inclusive education.

**5.2 Inclusive Education:** The concept of inclusion is about changes in the school environment to address and identify the needs of students with disabilities and groom them accordingly. These include:

- (i) Changes/ adaptations in the curriculum.
- (ii) Changes in teaching and learning methodology and inculcation of peer group interaction techniques with CWSNs.
- (iii) It also involves application of appropriate assessment methods, multi-level instructional approaches and increased attention to diverse student needs. .

##### **5.3 Integrated School Setup (for children who cannot be mainstreamed):**

To help children with disabilities cope with their mental age and chronological age in their learning process, need based support services shall be provided by Chandigarh Administration. At least one inclusive model school with integrated classroom having a trained special educator, therapists, barrier free access, training on skill development etc will be provided in each cluster by the Education Department.

##### **5.4 School Readiness Centres for children who can be mainstreamed:**

School Readiness Centres will provide assistance to such Children with Disabilities who have never been enrolled at an early age or are dropouts and can be mainstreamed in inclusive setup. These centres shall take following steps for mainstreaming of Children with Disabilities:-

- (i) School Readiness Training will be provided within the premises of Regular Govt School or in the Special Schools in close proximity of regular schools.
- (ii) The School will provide support to Children with Disabilities with the help of existing Special Educator of the school
- (iii) For this purpose, School authorities will provide all types of facilities for inclusive set-up.

### **5.5 Home-Based Education for CWSN:**

Any child with severe degrees of disabilities, who cannot commute to school or cope with the school curriculum, is to be covered under Home-Based Education by Education Department. Such children (HBE) will be admitted to an integrated school set-up. Special educators giving HBE to children with disabilities should, right from the beginning, bring a child to a neighbourhood school at least once a month. HBE should not be confined only to home; efforts should be made to bring the child to the school as often as possible.

Chandigarh Red Cross Society will be associated for providing logistics and other support for welfare of children with disabilities especially under the 'Kalam Express' project.

### **5.6 Special Schools:**

Special schools presently working under Govt. Medical College and Hospital, Sector-32, Chandigarh, Social Welfare Department and NGO's, cater to single disability each. In order to provide comprehensive support to children with disabilities, special schools will collaborate with Department of Education with respect to educational, manpower and other resources.

The special schools shall be required to perform the following duties:-

- (i) Conducting training and capacity building programmes for different stakeholders dealing with Children with disabilities.
- (ii) Setting up of school readiness centres.
- (iii) Rendering assistance in running the school readiness programmes.
- (iv) Development of Teaching Learning Material for CWSN.
- (v) Resource support in carrying out examination and evaluation reforms.
- (vi) Steps shall be taken for enabling the Children with Disabilities of these schools to participate in co-curricular activities with any regular school for at-least one event whenever feasible.
- (vii) The special schools shall also develop more avenues for vocational education of CWSN for developing vocational skills, subject to availability of finances/resources.

## **6. MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:-**

### **6.1 Core Resource Group**

A Core Resource Group of experts from among the educationist, medical experts from different areas of disabilities and educational administrators shall be constituted by the Education Department which shall frame guidelines for identification of disabilities covered under RPwD Act, 2016 for further circulation to all the stake holders.

- (i) It shall frame guidelines for extending concessions to children with disability as the current evaluation concessions of CBSE do not cover the needs of many disabilities mentioned in the RPwD Act 2016.
- (ii) Core group shall compile the information related to education of children with disabilities and upload it on the website of Education Department.
- (iii) It shall frame the guidelines for curriculum adaptations for CWSN in inclusive class and training of school teaches on curriculum adaptations.

## **6.2 Trained Special Educators:-**

As per CBSE guidelines, services of at least one trained Special Educators per school are required to be made available through State Funds/Samagra Shiksha grant in case of Government schools and school funds in Private Schools. Chandigarh Administration will take up the issue during the next PAB (Project Approval Board of MHRD, GOI) of Samagra Shiksha for provision of funds for the next academic year. However, in case the posts of Special Educators are sanctioned by MHRD, GOI then the provision of funds will be made in the U.T. Budget. These educators shall take care of CWSNs who need extra attention to be mainstreamed in the neighbouring regular school from the school readiness centre.

## **6.3 School Counselors:-**

Children with disabilities normally manifest various behavioral problems associated with disabilities. These behavioral issues of Children with disabilities will be addressed by school Counselors deputed in inclusive schools in consultation with special educator, class teacher and parents.

## **6.4 Training Programmes:**

- (i) School staff and peer groups shall be trained and sensitized towards the needs of Children with Disabilities enrolled in the school to create/facilitate a congenial environment for them.
- (ii) Currently, special teachers/educators, having been trained in one single disability, are ill equipped in handling differing disabilities of Special Children. To do away with this limitation, Rehabilitation Council of India may be requested to launch integrated B.A, B.Ed (Inclusive Education). The ongoing teacher training institutes would be required to follow on the same lines.
- (iii) SCERT shall strengthen its faculty by inclusion of RCI qualified lecturers/Assistant Professors. The institute should include one paper on Inclusive Education in D.El.Ed. courses, Panjab University shall also be requested to include paper of Inclusive Education in general B.Ed. courses.
- (iv) Special Education training institutes like GRIID shall initiate training of general education teachers on Inclusive Education Module and also act as Study Centre for RCI approved courses on Inclusive Education through distance mode.
- (v) General teachers shall seek guidance from Special Educators to modify and adapt to various aspects of the curriculum. This collaborative approach/ combined effort will facilitate mainstreaming of the CWSN in schools without harming the intellectual caliber of regular children.
- (vi) Parents training programmes shall be conducted in every school to equip/empower parents in handling children with disabilities in a better manner.
- (vii) A Peer-Sensitization Programme shall be conducted in all schools for regular children to learn to consider the CWSN as an equal, and to help him/her in their classroom and school.

## **7. ADMISSION POLICY IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS :**

- i. Free Education to Children with Disabilities till the child attains the age of 18 years.
- ii. Provision of admission without any discrimination in Inclusive Neighborhood School of choice till she/he attains the age of 18 years.
- iii. 5% reservation in Class XI and XII for Children with Benchmark Disabilities as per the provisions of RTE Act, 2009 under Chapter -06 Claus 32 of RPwD Act, 2016.

## **8. INITIATIVES FOR CREATING OTHER FACILITIES:**

### **8.1 Transport and Escort Allowance:-**

Children with special needs, admitted to all types of schools and registered under UDISE, shall be provided with transportation and escort allowance ( also the children with disabilities covered under Home Based Education) through funds to be allocated by Govt of India and Chandigarh Administration.

### **8.2 Scholarships:-**

Existing schemes of scholarships to Children with Disabilities shall be widely publicized by Education and Social Welfare Department for the benefit of maximum number of such children.

### **8.3 Skill Training:-**

Under Skill India Project, there shall be collaboration between Technical Education Department and Special Schools/ Institutes for providing training in specific skills/vocations to Children with Disabilities enrolled at Secondary/Sr. secondary level.

### **8.4 Vocational Training Courses :-**

- (i) CBSE may be requested to introduce skill based vocational Courses for children with intellectual disabilities (class 6<sup>th</sup> onwards). These courses, based on practical approach ( more weightage to practical than theory), will prove to be more learner friendly in comparison to the present vocational curriculum which is substantially theoretical.
- (ii) CSR funds may be utilized to vocationally rehabilitate Children with Disabilities. In addition, NGO's/Special Institutes may be roped in to provide job oriented Vocational Training. In case of non-availability of CSR funds, the vocational training shall be imparted through schools.

### **8.5 Sports Facilities:-**

- (i) Existing Sports Faculty may be trained with the help of Special Olympics Bharat through coach training camps. Their services may be utilized to impart training to Children with Disabilities.
- (ii) Department of Sports shall organize the state level competitions in the form of Paralympics for all children with disabilities.

### **8.6 Therapy Camps:-**

Education Department, in consultation with Department of Health, shall prepare a roster to provide therapists/ organize therapy camps for children with disabilities enrolled in inclusive setup.

### **8.7 Awards:-**

To give an impetus to Inclusive Education, awards may be instituted by the Chandigarh Administration for schools imparting best Inclusive Education services to a good/maximum number of children with disabilities.

### **8.8 School Building and Campus:-**

All school buildings/ campuses & other facilities may be made accessible to all disabled friendly children, keeping in view structural/ architectural feasibilities.

## **9. MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE POLICY:**

For effective implementation of this policy, following steps may also be undertaken:

(1) Education Department shall act as Nodal Department for implementation of this policy.

For this purpose a Special Cell shall be established which shall be headed by Deputy Director School Education. The provision of funds will be made in annual budget of the Department.

(2) Every Department and Institution associated with the implementation of this policy shall nominate a Senior Officer as Nodal Officer.

(3) A State Level Committee may be constituted for monitoring the implementation of policy, The composition of which may be as follows:

(i)	Deputy Director School Education	- Chairperson
(ii)	District Education Officer	- Member Secretary
(iii)	Mission Coordinator, Samagra Shiksha	- Member
(iv)	Finance and Planning Officer, Finance Dept.	- Member
(v)	Deputy Controller (F&A), Education Dept.	-Member
(vi)	District Sport Officer	- Member
(vii)	Nodal Officer of Health Department	- Member
(viii)	Nodal Officer of Social Welfare Department	- Member
(ix)	Nodal Officer of GRIID, Chd.	- Member
(x)	Two Principals from Govt. Schools*	- Members
(xi)	Two Principals from Private Schools*	- Members
(xii)	Assistant Project Coordinator (IE)	- Member
(xiii)	Two Independent Experts*	- Members
(xiv)	Two Special Educators*	- Members

\* To be nominated by Director School Education.

In case of grievance or complaint against any school, State Level Committee shall enquire into the matter and send its recommendations to Director School Education who will issue directions as considered appropriate and necessary for redressal of grievances to institutions and/or the authorities managing them. The decision taken by Director School Education shall be final.

(4) The Chairperson of State Level Committee will be appointed as Grievance Redressal officer as per requirement of Section 19 of RPwD Act.



## **10. MISCELLANEOUS:**

### **10.1 Difficulty and Inconsistency:**

In case there is any difficulty qua the interpretation of the clauses of this policy, then the provisions of RTE Act 2009 and RPwD Act 2016, so far as they are not inconsistent shall prevail.

### **10.2 Review / Amendment of Policy:**

The provisions of the policy may be reviewed/amended whenever required or at any time to bring them inconsonance with provisions of RTE Act or RPwD Act.