



WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES



Start with Stability

In therapy we talk about the **90-90-90 rule**. This means that when seated at a desk, we want to ensure the following:

- Feet flat on the floor 90 degrees at ankles
- Knees bent at 90 degrees
- Hips at 90 degrees



CHILDREN WILL BENEFIT
FROM AN ANGLBOARD

IF THE CHAIR IS TOO TALL YOU
CAN USE A FOOTREST

DESK OR TABLE SHOULD BE LEVEL
WITH THE CHILDS ELBOW OR A
LITTLE HIGHER

SEATING AND POSITIONING

Correct seating is essential to prevent the body from deteriorating and to make the child feel comfortable for learning.

Ideally children should sit with feet flat on the floor or a footrest as shown in the picture.

Children with disabilities may need supportive seating. When working the child's brain needs to concentrate on the work and not on keeping their balance! That is one reason why special chairs hold the body securely.

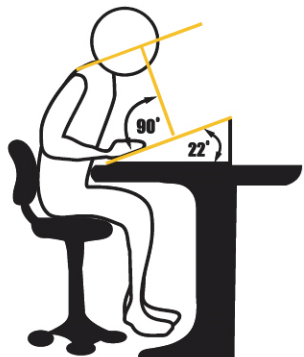
The chairs are sometimes on wheels to allow the child to moved around the class. Some chairs have footrests to keep posture correct. Most chairs have straps to ensure the child is safe.

The chairs can be altered to keep up with the growth of the child and to match with the table height.

Some children have special cushions and or footrests to help with concentration and positioning.

Remember, if a child is sitting on the floor (or on a chair) for whole class sessions looking up can be very tiring.

ANGLEBOARDS—WHY DO CHILDREN NEED THEM ?



It is an effort for some children to stop themselves from leaning too far forward on a flat table. An angleboard can make it easier for the child to position themselves correctly.

It helps the child to see his / her work.

It also helps ensure good posture ... We would all benefit from using one - tell other children this if they ask or let children see you using one.

There are times when using an angleboard may be a hindrance. For example, when doing a practical maths lesson or science activity.

You can use magnetic tape or Velcro on an angle board to stick things to it for the child. It may also be useful to place a piece of

dycem mat on the board to stop books from



Do give an angleboard a try and see how much better you sit !

slipping down.

ANGLEBOARDS - WHY DO CHILDREN NEED THEM ?

EQUIPMENT 1

STANDING FRAME

This is an essential piece of equipment. Could you imagine sitting in a car seat all day ? I am sure you would feel the need to stretch. As well as stretching standing frames have the following benefits ..

- Improves blood flow
- Helps to stretch muscles
- Helps with discomfort and constipation.
- For some children, standing is the best position to be in to manipulate equipment or to help with fine motor skills



GAIT TRAINER / ROLLATOR / WALKERS

This equipment helps children to walk by supporting them. They come in many different shapes and sizes depending on the type of support the child needs.



TRICYCLES

These trikes enable children to do therapy at playtimes and P.E, be independent and to learn about



EQUIPMENT 2



GAITERS

These are usually worn on the arms or legs and are secured with Velcro straps. These are used to help with stretches.

HAND SPLINTS

These are lycra supports to help children when writing for support.



AFO's (Orthoses)

These are hard plastic splints worn on the lower leg which give children support. They are designed to be worn with shoes under clothes.

UPSUITS (Lycra Suit)

These suits give the child support and are worn for periods during the day or in some cases all day. Please be aware they can be difficult to wear in hot weather.



CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

USEFUL IDEAS TO HELP

- Putting dice into a clear plastic pot with a lid so they stay in place for games and maths.
- Using Velcro tape to secure objects to a surface.
- Use blue dycem mat to stop books and paper sliding on the table or angleboard. It can also be used during lunch as a place mat to stop the child's plate from slipping.
- Larger size pencils which are shorter. This is helpful for children who find it difficult to hold usual sized pencils.
- Pencil grips are small plastic / rubber holders which are specially shaped to encourage good pencil grip.
- Special scissors which help children who have problems gripping to be able to cut independently. Also using card instead of paper makes cutting easier. If the child is cutting and sticking having a few pieces of paper towel stops the paper sticking to the table.
- Large button calculators which can also be used by other children.
- NB See Pilla Pickles book for a wealth of information and ideas.



EQUIPMENT SMALL

CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

Think carefully about seating a child near a busy exit. Remember lots of children with special needs are very easily distracted.

Make sure that the child can access the classroom and all the areas such as the book corner without you having to move lots of children or chairs.

Make sure that the child is positioned on a table with other children in their ability or higher.

Plan the placement of equipment to allow the children to be as independent as possible. For example pens, pencils and scissors should be stored on the table for easy access.

If the child uses a laptop it may be helpful where possible to place the child close to a power point should the laptop run out of power during a lesson.

When choosing the place where a child will sit remember the child may not be able to turn and face the board or the teacher easily so it will be important for the child to be seated facing the board.

If the child has a visual problem it is important to take advice from the Visual Advisory teacher so that you can place the child in the best possible position for learning.

PLANNING THE DAY

The child with physical disabilities has a complex and demanding day. It is important to get a balance and to plan the curriculum and use of equipment. You will plan with our inclusion teacher on a weekly basis for our children with more complex needs. If you change part of your timetable it may affect the balance of the child's day. Please be aware of this.

A pictorial timetable (using photos or pictures can be useful in involving the child in sequencing the day. A visual time table is ready for you to use in ...

Computer - RM shared documents - SEN - Pupil timetables - visual time table

Short, varied activities with different ways of recording help the child to keep up with the classwork and fit in physical activities (see differentiation).

If a child is tired or unwell differentiate accordingly. For example, by Friday afternoon a child with Muscular Dystrophy is exhausted and may need to mark texts instead or write or type. You will soon recognise warning signs!

We try to incorporate physio and O.T into the classroom so that children spend as much time in class as possible. We plan for this in our termly shared goals and weekly planning sessions.

Please remember that S.N.As must supervise during P.E and Games or activities that take place outside of the class. Be mindful of this and make sure you don't schedule these activities when the S.N.A is taking lunch break.

DIFFERENTIATION & SUPPORT

We strive in our school to promote independence in all our children including children with special needs. Anyone working with a child with special needs must facilitate that child's independence wherever possible.

Making marks on work is a quick activity and something the child is able to do themselves. This allows the child time to have therapy without missing out on recording evidence of their learning.

Multiple choice eliminates the need to write.

Matching questions and answers by drawing lines. This is great for developing handwriting skills as vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines are what make up handwritten letters.

SATS papers are actually good examples on how to record with minimum physical effort.

For some children a computer is actually their pen and pencil. Clicker is a useful program to use. You are able to take a sentence a child has said and the program presents the sentence in a grid. The child then only has to choose the correct word in order. You can also adapt grids to help with learning. For more advanced pupils the program has an excellent predictive text feature.

In class it is important to give the child time to think and respond. It may help to say “ I will come back to you.” (Make sure you do !)

When scribing for a child make sure that you write exactly what the child has said. (Remember it is not your work !)

Remember the best support is often given from a distance. Some good advice is to ‘ sit on your hands’. In other words let the child do as much as he / she can do.

Change which side you sit on when supporting a child, in consultation with therapists.

RESPECTING THE CHILD WITH DISABILITIES

Remember you are an independence facilitator - not the child's body or brain.

Always speak directly to the child and involve the child. Where possible encourage children within the class to talk to the child and not the helping adult.

Always tell the child what you are going to do asking permission where necessary. Imagine how you would feel if someone suddenly touched you or moved you.

Let the child do what they **CAN** do. Try not to let time constraints pressurise you or the child.

Plan the placement of equipment to enable the child to have maximum independence. Remember the child may not be able to get up and get equipment as other children in the class.

Speak to parents and therapists to understand how one small thing learned will make a huge difference to a child's life. For example, moving in their chair may make changing for PE much easier and quicker for the child. Practice these small things in planned sessions.

Don't forget to allow the child to be naughty (within reason and the Behaviour Policy !) Some children will be within ear and eye shot of an adult at all times for safety but this does not happen with their class mates.

Use some of the books in school which show children with disabilities in a positive light in everyday situations. It may also help for the child to share these books with their class.

WHEELCHAIR 'ETIQUETTE' & SAFETY

Only use an electric wheelchair if you have been trained to do so.

Try and get to the level of a child in a wheelchair when talking because it is comfortable for a wheelchair user than looking up to talk to you.

Always consult with the child before you push the chair and make sure any other children or adults do the same. Remember, an unexpected push would be like someone pushing you without warning.

Unless it has been agreed with the therapists, SNA and SENCO children should not be allowed to push a child in a wheelchair.

If a child is a 'buddy' of a wheelchair user make sure the child stands a safe distance to the side of the chair while moving especially if the child has an electric wheelchair and is in control. Remember children can easily be distracted or startled when driving so it is important to be aware of what the child is doing at all times when moving. When the child is stationary it may be much easier for the 'buddy' to stand in front of the wheelchair user as it might be difficult for the child to look to the side.

Remember to consult the SENCO about trips. She may have to make arrangements with parents to use a manual wheelchair for the day. Consideration also needs to be given for accessibility and / or rough terrain. (see guidance in the school handbook.)

For some children it maybe necessary to say that they cannot use top speed is the same as running and therefore not allowed in school corridors.

Remember, it is appropriate to describe people as wheelchair users, not as people who are wheelchair bound.

For safety do not lay or hang anything on the handles of a wheelchair to prevent the chair from tipping.

CHILDREN WITH VISUAL DIFFICULTIES

Don't present the child with too much on the paper.

Enlarge the text to the optimum size for the child. (find out the ideal size in the child's orange folder)

Highlight important parts so that the pupil can locate them easily. E.g. instructions

For children using Eye gaze please see Mrs Lazarus and the support booklet for help.