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# GUIDELINES FOR CHILD CARE CENTRE PROVIDING CARE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Artwork by Christina, 5 years old



Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports

**GUIDELINES FOR CHILD CARE CENTRES PROVIDING CARE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (OTHER THAN CENTRES WITH INTEGRATED CHILD CARE PROGRAMME)**

**1. OBJECTIVE**

1.1 To maximise the potential of children with special needs in an inclusive learning environment.

**2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (PRESCHOOLERS)**

2.1 The children should be of age 18 months to 6 yrs 11 months.

2.2 These children must be assessed to be within the mild to moderate range in the *Medical Classification of Children with Development Disabilities* by a medical practitioner.

**3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (FOR CHILDREN ABOVE 6 YRS 11 MONTHS)**

3.1 For children who are above 6 yrs 11 months, special admission into the child care programme must be sought. This will be considered on a case by case basis and age eligibility will be capped at 8 years 11 months old. Children above 9 years old can be enrolled into the Before/After School Care programme if there is provision of such services.

3.2 The children must be assessed to be within the mild to moderate range in the *Medical Classification of Children with Development Disabilities* by a medical practitioner.

3.3 All applications must be accompanied by a letter of deferment for primary school education from the Ministry of Education.

3.4 All applications should preferably be accompanied with a copy of a complete and updated child's health booklet.

#### **4. PHILOSOPHY**

4.1 The centre's handbook must have a clear, written philosophy which includes:-

- i) Clear written statement of centre's policies, aims, values and beliefs on inclusion for children with special needs
- ii) Learning goals for children's development, care and education
- iii) Commitment to staff professional and personal development and training (e.g. send staff for enrichment courses, workshops)
- iv) Emphasis on parent-centre partnership

4.2 The centre must have Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on children's behaviour management.

#### **5. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

5.1 Learning environment must be suitable, organised and periodically checked to ensure it accommodates the needs of the children.

5.2 Additional facilities such as appropriate handrails, stair guides, ramps and counselling rooms may be required with other safety measures depending on the needs of the children.

5.3 Children in the counselling rooms must be accompanied by a staff at all times. There must be quiet areas and space created for the children's use when necessary.

## **6. INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN**

6.1 The child care centre should develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each child in consultation with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and all staff involved in taking care of the child. Some areas of the IEPs can include:

- i) Measurements of child's learning – frequency / intensity of learning, type of environment must be taken into account when measuring the child's learning abilities
- ii) Description of job for each staff to be in charge of various learning areas to aid the child's learning.
- iii) Clear instructions on the usage of resources to help the children
- iv) Time frame for evaluation

6.2 Parents are to meet with the centre to discuss child's progress at least once in every 6 months. For good practice, centres may choose to meet more often if necessary.

6.3 The child care centre would implement an agreement to obtain the parents' commitment as well as to adequately inform parents on this plan. The agreement should state the responsibilities of the parents and the centre.

6.4 The children may continue to attend other early intervention or therapeutic programmes at the hospital or other Voluntary Welfare Organisations(VWOs), if necessary.

6.5 The child care centre should have periodic review of the plan with a view to improve service delivery, efficiency and cost effectiveness. The child care centre should refer the child with special needs to the appropriate professional agency, VWO and hospital for further intervention and therapy when required.

## **7. CAPACITY OF THE CENTRE**

7.1 The child care centre can only provide 15% of its capacity for children with special needs at any time, regardless of type of care. Centres that wish to allocate more places for children with special needs will need to seek the Ministry's approval; stating the reason for doing so and furnishing all relevant documents.

7.2 For new centres in their first year of operation, the centres must possess at least 1 staff trained in a course on children with special needs. During the initial 12-month licence, the number of children with special needs enrolled will be based on the number of staff trained in special needs.

## **8. STAFF QUALIFICATION**

8.1 Staff managing the Programme must be trained in a course on children with special needs and preferably have experience in teaching children with special needs. Centres may refer to Annex for some agencies conducting courses for staff working with children with special needs or visit [www.disability.org.sg](http://www.disability.org.sg) for courses relevant to the centre's staff training needs.

8.2 Centre can also engage speech therapists, child psychologists etc, to provide therapy sessions for the children with special needs.

## **9. STAFF WORKING WITH MAINSTREAM CHILDREN**

9.1 Staff working with mainstream children should be ready to work with staff managing children with special needs to make necessary planning, teaching and management strategies. All staff must also be ready and willing to engage children with special needs, if need be.

9.2 Staff must exercise flexible arrangement and necessary adjustments for behaviour coping strategies and alternative support programmes when working with children with special needs.

## **10. STAFF-CHILD RATIO**

10.1 The staff-child ratio for children with special needs is to be 1: 3 during programme hours. The ratios for other times of the day remain similar as that for mainstream children.

## **11. SPACE NORM**

11.1 The space norm for children with special needs remains similar as that for mainstream children i.e. 3 sq metres per child.

11.2 A dedicated area is required in each centre for early intervention programme purposes, when necessary.

## **12. FEES**

12.1 The monthly fees for the programme must be clearly indicated in the centre's handbook.

12.2 Needy and low-income families may apply for the Centre-Based Financial Assistance Scheme for Childcare (CFAC).

The Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) regulates and licenses child care centres in Singapore through the Child Care Centres Act (Cap 37A) and the Child Care Regulations (Cap 37A, Sec 19). Child Care Centres offering care services for children with special needs are similarly bound by the Act and Regulations. The guidelines mentioned herein serve as an additional guide for centres offering care services for children with special needs.

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Family Care Branch  
Family Services Division  
Ministry of Community Development,  
Youth and Sports  
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Annex

**AGENCIES CONDUCTING SPECIAL NEEDS COURSES**

<b>NAMES OF TRAINING AGENCIES</b>	<b>CONTACT NO</b>	<b>WEBSITE ADDRESS</b>
Social Service Training Institute	6210 6688	<a href="http://www.ssti.org.sg">www.ssti.org.sg</a>
Rainbow Centre	6475 2072	<a href="http://www.rainbowcentre.org.sg">www.rainbowcentre.org.sg</a>
Ngee Ann Polytechnic	64606353 / 64608319	<a href="http://www.np.edu.sg">www.np.edu.sg</a>