

A JSS PS Inclusion Initiative



INCLUVISION

Issue - 4

Empathize Educate Empower

Sept - Dec 2019

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

WORLD GAMES

ABU DHABI 2019



الأولمبياد الخاص

الألعاب العالمية

أبو ظبي 2019



THE BBC BOYS

Meet the New Age Determined Journalists

Never Give up in life



In the run-up to the cover story of our fourth edition, we were anticipating a special story. And guess what, we didn't have to wait for that story, as the story was already in the making at the Special Olympics World Games Abu Dhabi 2019. UAE welcomed more than 7,500 athletes from over 190 nations for Olympics World Games Abu Dhabi 2019 between 14-21 March. We learnt that the Local Organization Committee (LOC) has employed three students named Bilal, Christopher and Brendyn to the World Games Unified Press Office as part of the official media team. Bilal, Christopher and Brendyn sourced and wrote stories about thousands of inspiring people of determination who participated in the Games. Their stories were sent to news outlets across the globe, that's how they received global recognition for their work. We got hold of Bilal Hafeez, the first B of the BBC (fondly popularised as BBC), to get to know their journey of becoming the BBC Boys. Needless to say we learnt a living lesson on how to live your truth and face your fears while interacting with Bilal Hafeez. His quintessential message to us "Never Give-up in Life" beautifully reflects the core idea, "Special Olympics is a testament to the indestructible human spirit" which they so meticulously have communicated to the global audience. We are sure reading the excerpts of this interaction will fill you with the same spirit.

Our second major story covers "Synergy 2019". JSS PS, Dubai took a big leap of faith and ventured into the first ever Inter-school sports event organized for the Students of Determination. The grand annual inclusion event witnessed the participation of about 200 students from 25 schools and Special Needs centres across UAE.

We are privileged to have Mr. David Bartram, OBE from UK, to be added to the exclusive list of our contributing expert authors through this edition. In his article "Leading an effective SEND Strategy in Your School" he makes us reflect on the seven key questions that will be helpful when considering how to lead an effective SEND strategy in a school. Also we are thankful to Mr. Gareth D. Morewood, another eminent expert from UK who has written a piece titled, "Understanding Practitioners' Stress". This article tells us about how framing our understanding from the position of supporting autistic learners, helps ALL learners.

Our regular features have all the usual exciting articles. To mention a few, What's Up section has an article on "Rahhal". An initiative of KHDA, Rahhal encourages schools to customise learning experiences for individual learners. Meaning traveller in Arabic, the message of Rahhal is simple: the world is a classroom, and all learning counts. We also feature "Implementing Inclusive Education: A Guide for Schools". The guide from KHDA focuses on three key areas namely "Leadership for inclusive education"; "Three-level planning for schools" and "Clearer roles for school staff". Musings continues to be mesmerizing as we have got, "Not afraid to fly"; "Live Each Day the Right Way" and "The Gift" to offer you this time.

We do hope that there is something for everyone in the pages to follow. As always we do look forward to your valuable feedback to help us further improve.

EDITORIAL
EDITORIAL
EDITORIAL



 Andaleeb Ishteyaq

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Sept - Dec 2019

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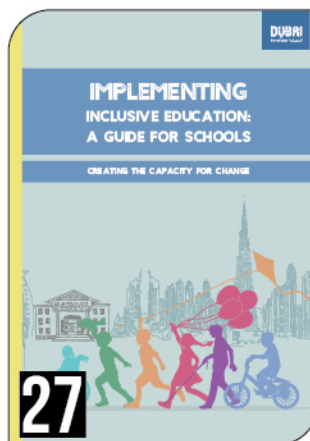
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SPECIAL FEATURES



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Leading an Effective SEND Strategy in Your School

Reflecting on the following seven questions will be helpful when considering how to lead an effective SEND strategy in a school

We have managed to make the leadership of SEND incredibly complicated. It has become an area arguably like no other in education, where too often our headteachers and school leaders lack confidence to drive through change in order to improve outcomes for this significant group of learners.

1. How clear is the vision for learners with SEND at your school and what steps have you taken to ensure that there is a culture of high aspiration amongst your school leaders?

School leadership is regarded as a catalyst for improving learner outcomes and this is clearly recognised in the field of SEND. School leaders play a pivotal role in developing an inclusive culture within a school and the commitment of senior leadership teams in establishing such a culture has been regarded to be as important as the systems, practices and policies that are implemented to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups. Moreover, commitment to and teacher participation in reviewing a school's strategy for SEND is greater when school leadership teams are directly involved in the process.

2. From their different starting points, and considering their individual academic and non-academic needs, how well do learners with SEND achieve at your school?

Outcomes can be defined as the changes we can see being made to an individual, based on

something we have done to create that change, and is not solely related to academic achievement and progress. All children and young people should expect to receive an education that enables them to achieve the best possible educational and wider outcomes, and become confident, able to communicate their own views and ready to make a successful transition into adulthood.

3. Are the individual needs of learners with SEND communicated effectively and to what extent does this ensure teaching strategies are effective?

High quality teaching is the foundation for progress for all learners. It is believed that the difference between poor teaching and highly effective teaching equates to just under half a year's extra progress for most learners. High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEND. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching.

4. How have you and other school leaders created a culture and ethos that welcomes and engages parents and carers of learners with SEND?

Embedding parental involvement is based on extensive but often ignored evidence that greater parental involvement has a dramatic impact on progression, attainment and wider outcomes as well as improved attendance and

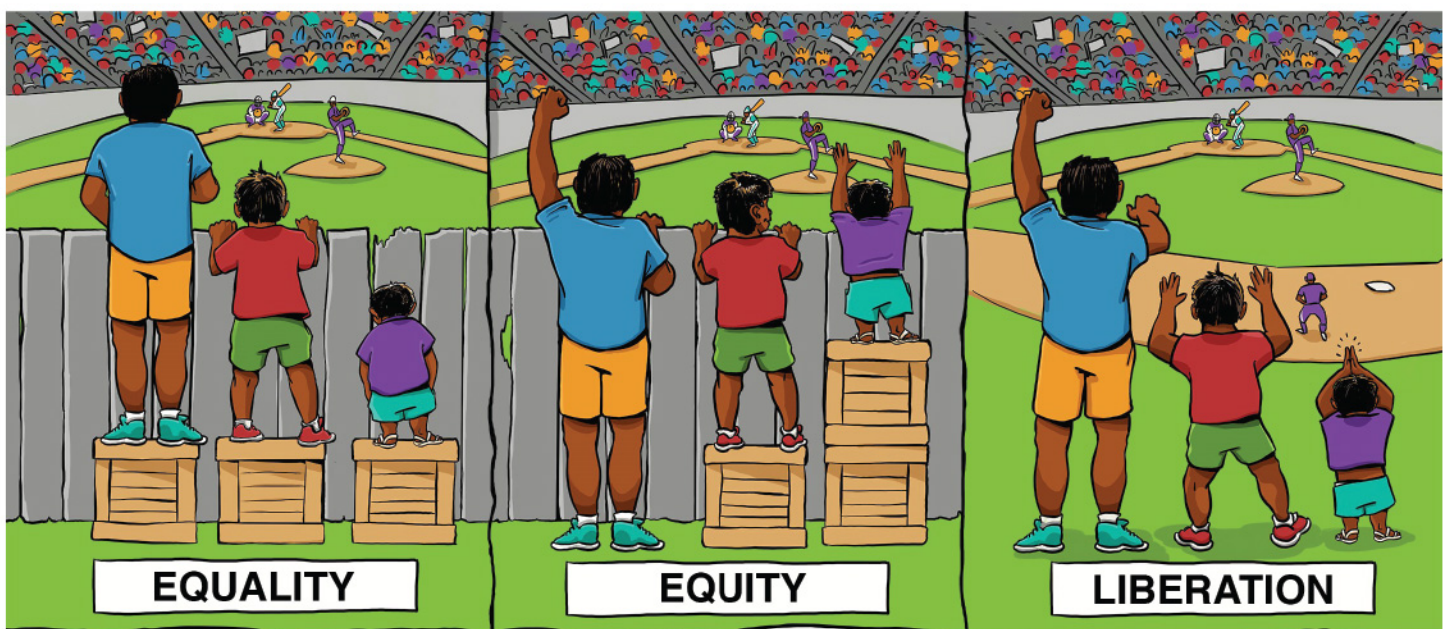
behaviour. This is especially relevant for children and young people with SEND who are already vulnerable learners. High quality parental involvement needs planning and focus. Parental engagement needs to be part of a whole-school approach and there should be clear leadership of parental engagement within the school.

5. In what ways does your school's assessment system lead to teachers being better informed about practice and, in turn, improving outcomes for learners with SEND?

Appropriate intervention cannot be put in place if a learner's needs have not been correctly identified. It is important to take the time to reflect on a school's range of current screening and assessment tools and where necessary to engage with the relevant professionals to ensure precise identification. Schools sometimes use interventions based on their current or historic offer, or based on areas of staff expertise, rather than drilling down into the individual needs of the learner and then personalising the intervention around them.

6. What methods does your school have in place to rigorously evaluate interventions and classroom practice for learners with SEND? What adjustments do you make to provision as a result of this information?

Rigorous monitoring and tracking helps to inform strategic decisions regarding interven-



A JOHN CATT PUBLICATION

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Leading an effective SEND strategy in school

Edited by David Bartram OBE



tions and classroom practice. Systems that support this process, for example the use of a provision map, will help in planning the range of provision across the school and can give a clear link between provision and learner progress. While it is important to use academic data to support the tracking of interventions and wider provision, schools should not ignore other key indicators, such as improved attendance and reduced exclusions or behaviour data.

7. Is there a graduated response to interventions at the school? For example, is whole class, group and individual support balanced appropriately?

Strategic resourcing and strategic thinking are closely linked. As leaders of SEND we should question and challenge assumptions about the links between resources and the needs they are intended to meet. We need to ask what conditions are required to ensure a resource works for the learners that are being targeted and what evidence there is to show that using a resource in a particular way will help to achieve the intended goal.

There remains huge variation in the quality of provision for learners with SEND. Keeping your school's SEND strategy simple and doing a few things really well will often lead to greater success.

About the Author

David was awarded an OBE for Services to Education in the 2016 New Year's Honours list. He has led on SEND in London schools for over 15 years. He is co-author of the SEND Review Guide, a national peer-review framework funded by the Department for Education that has been downloaded by over 4000 schools. He has spoken at a number of SEND conferences including the Academies Show, the TES SEN Show and international conferences in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Germany, India, Poland and South Africa.

He was Director of SEND for the London Leadership Strategy, has been an advisor to the Mayor of London's education team and is a consultant to the British Council. As part of this work he has supported the development of SEND policy in a number of countries including Seychelles, Thailand and Malaysia. He is also the editor of Great Expectations: Leading an Effective SEND Strategy in School. This book features leading educationalists and school leaders with a track record of improving outcomes for children and young people with additional needs discussing and highlighting the significant role that school leaders play in shaping effective practice in SEND.



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Understanding Practitioners' stress

This article tells us about how framing our understanding from the position of supporting autistic learners, helps ALL learners. And that an inclusive approach means that everyone benefits.

During 2019 I have had the exciting opportunity to developing materials and training on emotional regulation, stress and low arousal as part of my work as Educational Advisor for Studio III. Previously in INCLUVISION I have written about emotional regulation in the context of whole school inclusion (Morewood, 2019); and during each session, discussion, conversation there seems to have one common denominator: if we don't think about our own stress first, we have very limited outcomes available to aspire to. "The vast majority of challenging situations are inadvertently triggered by supporters, and we are often unaware that we can trigger situations" (McDonnell, 2010).

Behaviours of concern and the importance of stress

Stress, anxiety and trauma are proposed as potential significant factors regarding behaviours of concern for young people, particularly for autistic young people (Lipsky, 2011; Bradley and Caldwell, 2013, McCreadie and McDermott, 2014). While we often see the term anxiety used widely in the autism literature (Attwood, 2007) stress is used much less, but the construct is much broader and focuses more on transactional processes. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) description of a transactional model of stress emphasises interaction between an individual and

his/her environment. Stress occurs when the demands of stressors outweigh coping responses and there is a clear interaction between environmental and physiological events. Implicit in this model is the cognitive appraisal of threat as some individuals will have difficulties in regulating their emotional responses and therefore communicating them (Frith, 2003). An individual's coping responses are important in our understanding of stress, as it is almost impossible in the modern world to be 'stress free'; and, perhaps most importantly, it is almost impossible for schools to be 'stress free' for learners with additional needs and disabilities.

It is important to recognize that it is our coping responses that determine how we adapt to stress. Many autistic pupils have few 'coping tools'. Some restricted or repetitive behaviours may have very real and vital coping functions. For example, a person may engage in stereotyped movements which help them to regulate their arousal (McDonnell and Gayson, 2014).

We need to consider carefully therefore, our own perspectives on such behaviour. Interventions that attempt to reduce certain types of restricted, repetitive or stereotyped behaviour because we perceive them as 'abnormal', may be taking away one of a person's coping mechanisms without providing them with an effective alternative. We

wouldn't remove a wheelchair from a student, yet we often deny young people their own coping mechanisms through unintended consequences of wider systems and policies.

This isn't just a school challenge

The sources of stress on families are varied and multiple. These include having to relate and interact with statutory and support agencies, deal with economic pressures, maintain the welfare of siblings, manage concerning behaviours presented by their child, ensure the safety for their child, as well as the day-to-day complexities of ordinary life (McCubbin et al., 1982). In addition to these, additional unique pressures related to the nature of the disability itself (Hastings et al., 2005) are also important to consider. In their study of mothers of children with disability, Curran et al. (2001) estimated that following the birth of the child, 67% of mothers are unable to maintain paid employment, placing additional economic pressures on the family and potentially leading to mothers feeling more isolated. Therefore, joint working and co-production (schools and families working positively together) is not only very powerful but essential in ensuring positive outcomes for young people and their families.

So, what can we do?

I think it is always important to offer some practical and realistic things that can be done. As highlighted previously, before we consider the specific needs, stress and arousal of our pupils, we must first think of ourselves. So, what can we do? Good arousal reduction strategies focus on our own arousal as well as our pupils; some key aspects of arousal regulation include:

- Mindfulness
- Increased cardiac exercise
- Achieving and encouraging flow states ('tune in' and 'tune out')
- Increasing empathy





Mindfulness

As staff and parents/carers increase their own mindfulness, they may become more responsive to each moment of their interactions with the individuals they are working with (Singh et al, 2010). This is arguing that interactions between parents/carers and staff may alter after training; and an important first step is recognition of this as a real issue. Singh et al (2006) investigated mindfulness training for staff and its impact on aggressive behaviours of staff. Behavioural training was used as a comparison and they found staff interventions for aggression reduced after training and that this had a greater impact after mindfulness training.

Increased Cardiac Exercise

Cardiac exercise is an important area to focus on when considering engagement. Exercise can serve a de-arousing function (McDonnell et al, 2015). There is a growing body of literature that suggests links between cardiac exercise (Kohl & Cook, 2013) and stress. We do not fully understand the complex mechanisms that lead to these results (Donnelly et al, 2016); however, the evidence suggests that mathematics and reading are the academic topics that are most influenced by physical activity. A recent RCT on children has identified an effect on cognitive control and working memory tasks (Moreau, Kirk & Waldie, 2018) and cardiac exercise has a stabilising effect on cortisol mechanisms. Exercise can have powerful effects on learning and evidence suggests that the hour after exercise is an optimum time for learning.

Three key questions?

1. How much cardiac exercise do you undertake in average week?
2. How much cardiac exercise do your pupils undertake in the average week?
3. How much short-term exercise is in your daily curriculum/family routine?

Achieving and Encouraging Flow States

Achieving a sense of flow is an important component of wellbeing and good stress management. Flow experiences require complete immersion in an activity, whether playing a musical instrument, completing a complex technical task, or reading a book (Nakamura and Csikszent-

ntmihalyi 2009). Athletes can often refer to such states as 'being in the zone'. Flow can also happen within social interactions, for example: when one is talking to a good friend or playing with a young child and according to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), a flow state can also be achieved when the skills and resources available to an individual are fully engaged in managing an activity.

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Increasing Empathy

Strategies for promoting empathy involve trying to 'walk a mile in the persons shoes'; understanding the chaos a person experiences; and a focus on trauma and stress. Often people can understand empathy but are relatively poor at expressing feelings as opposed to blanket responses assuming that the concept of empathy isn't accessible. It is also important to understand that empathy is different from sympathy. Milton (2012) referred to a double empathy problem where parents/carers also struggle to empathise with people they are working. Encouraging empathy is a key positive component; recognition that 'he has feelings like me' is a vital concept.

Three Good Things

A useful task to undertake is thinking of three good things in life. Participants are asked to write down three things that went well each day and their causes every night for one week. In addition, they are asked to provide a causal explanation for each good thing. I saw this for the first time on twitter; the fabulousDr Pooky Knightsmith (@PookyH) regularly tweets her 'three good things' – maybe the first point in supporting our own stress should be doing this? How much of a following can we gather? For there is one thing of which I am certain; finding positives and recognising them is a core element of understanding our own stress.

Recommended reading

Professor Andy McDonnell's new book - *The Reflective Journey: A Practitioner's Guide to the Low Arousal Approach* is out now. [https://www.studio3.org/product-page/McDonnell, A. A. \(2019\) The Reflective Journey: a practitioner's guide to the low arousal approach. Studio III. UK](https://www.studio3.org/product-page/McDonnell, A. A. (2019) The Reflective Journey: a practitioner's guide to the low arousal approach. Studio III. UK)

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Applied Psychology at Amity University Dubai

The Department of Psychology at Amity University Dubai was created in September 2016 with a group of 14 enthusiastic students. The University's Department of Psychology is now home to 100 students from over 12 nationalities, covering a range of theoretical and practical learnings that also include community outreach activities, guest lectures and dynamic internship opportunities. From clinical psychology, organisational behaviour and counselling to cognitive and applied psychological research, students get the holistic exposure they need through the qualified and experienced faculty at Amity University Dubai.

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Together We Learn Better

Victoria McKeown, Head of Inclusion, Regent International School, argues that inclusive schools benefit all children

What is inclusion?

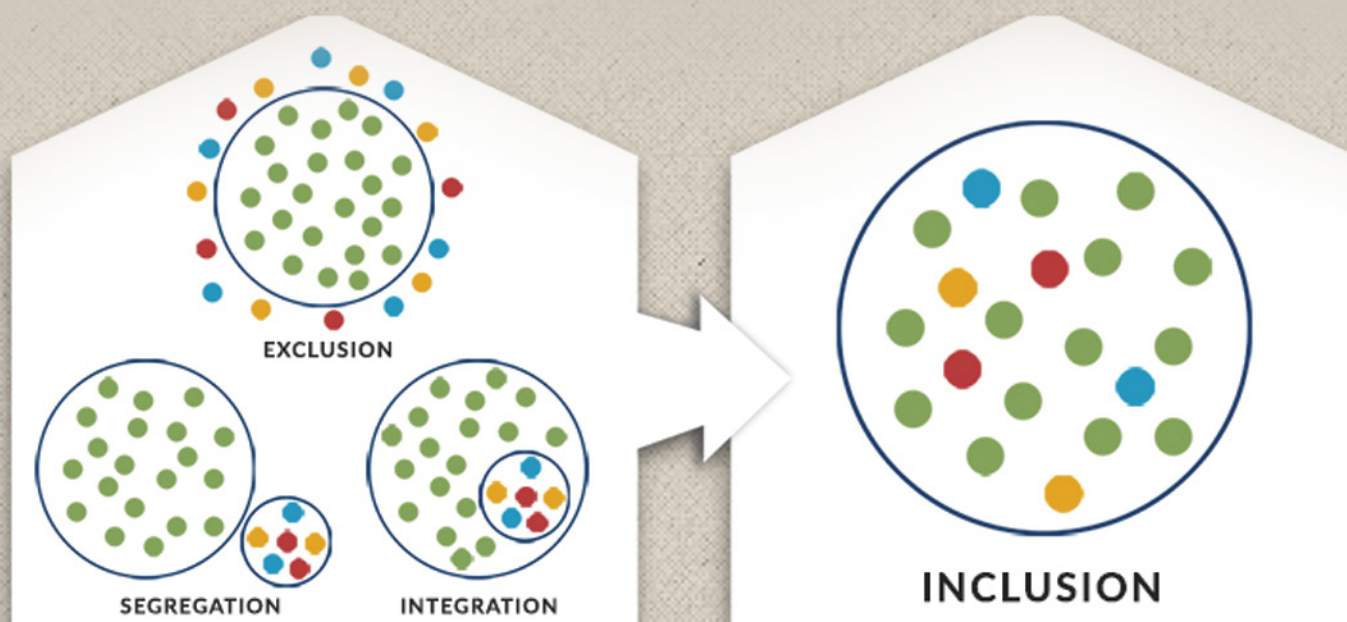
Simply put inclusion is defined as the state of being included or being made a part of something. However, when we talk about inclusion in educational terms it's not just a case of the child being included in the physical classroom. Real inclusion means that all people have the right to be respected and appreciated as valuable members of their communities – in this case the school community. This extends beyond the classroom and formal lessons. It's about everyone being given the opportunity to achieve their full potential by being provided with the opportunities and experiences that allow them to do so. This should extend to participating in sports events, musical performances and most importantly social inclusion.

In a school context social inclusion means that the child feels like they 'belong', that they have friends and adults at school who make them feel welcome and secure and safe. Social inclusion seeks to engage everyone and to ensure that they have meaning and purpose in their interactions. Inclusion is not only about meeting the needs of those who learn differently but also those who have specific health needs or behave or feel differently. Some children are shy, some are confident, some may enjoy maths, others might be bookworms. In order to make the school a happy and comfortable place for all it's important to take such preferences into account and provide for them. This could include getting creative and thinking outside of the box by offering a choice of seating the option for movement breaks during a writing lesson, quiet work spaces or mindfulness rooms. Inclusion is not about treating everyone equally or everyone being present in a physical space, in this instance the classroom; it's about valuing our differences and creating

an environment where taking risks is encouraged. While mainstream schools are not always the best place for every individual there are many new ways to accommodate those with different needs. It may require that the school and teachers change the way they do things but this should only be seen as a positive – to continually evolve and improve should be a goal of all schools. Over the last few years I have found an increasing readiness among teachers to want to be part of this inclusion, who see diversity as opportunity for them to grow as a teacher and want to share the benefits with their students.

What are the benefits of inclusion?

When children have the opportunity to learn and live around others who are different from themselves they develop tolerance. One of my favourite sayings is 'we don't learn from people the same as us' – a very simple example is that I won't learn another language if I don't talk with people from other countries. In the UAE I believe we understand and appreciate this in terms of nationalities and cultures but maybe less so when it comes to understanding those with physical or psychological differences. For schools to be genuinely inclusive, supportive, and thereby effective, all children should have their strengths fostered and encouraged, and their weaknesses supported. At Regent International School this is recognized as one of the fundamental offerings of our school. RIS has been working with Geelong Grammar School and the Institute of Positive Education to develop a curriculum that both embeds and explicitly teaches children to develop an awareness and understanding of the 24 character strengths identified by the VIA Institute on Character.



As humans, we are all a varying mix of strengths and weaknesses. By introducing Positive Education at RIS three years ago we have given all staff and students a 'language' to reflect and better understand themselves. We have found that even very young children have become able to recognize traits such as curiosity, bravery and teamwork. They are able to talk in meaningful ways about what it means to be truly kind and treat others with respect. Having diversity among our student population allows them to practise such traits and see the benefits for themselves.

In my current role I get to witness the benefits of inclusion across our school on a daily basis and it never ceases to amaze me how empathetic children can be towards each other. We have children who go above and beyond to support their classmates and are considerate towards others in a way many adults have forgotten.

In addition, inclusion doesn't stay in the classroom – it extends to every aspect of school life such as participation in after school activities, being a member of a sporting team or taking part in musical performances. It's easy to assume that these sorts of activities may not be accessible to certain students, however often when given the opportunity they surprise us with their abilities. Care must be taken not to make assumptions and to assume that an individual cannot achieve and participate, instead you should look to find ways to allow them to do so even if it means challenging the status quo.

As children who have been exposed to diversity get older, not only will it enable them to appreciate the world we live in but also it will help them to value themselves. In a

world that is changing at an unprecedented rate it is often talked about how these 'soft skills' will be the most valued skills in the work place of the future. I've had the pleasure of having taught in number of schools across the UAE and the Middle East, working with a variety of age levels and curriculums. One thing that has been true in all of them is that by welcoming children of all abilities into my classroom there have always been positive outcomes. Meeting the needs of all students can be a challenge for a teacher but the rewards and benefits make it worthwhile.

How to put inclusion into practice:

As teachers we all know how easy it is to attend a training course or read a text on improving our approach to teaching but applying what we know in the everyday classroom environment can be difficult. In any aspect of school life, the teachers are the key. To have effective inclusion teachers need to embrace it as a philosophy and it needs to become

truly embedded in all that they do. Teachers who are used to working in a selective environment should consciously adapt their approach when working with children with a wider range of diverse abilities than needs. Success needs to be considered as not an absolute measure against a target but whether or not a child has progressed as an individual. What can they do now that they couldn't do before? Individual progress rather than achievement against a benchmark needs to become the focus.

To offer a strong inclusive education doesn't mean that the individual child who may have complex needs should always be in the same classroom as everyone else. It's really important to understand that when we talk about inclusion it's a mindset and an approach rather than physical inclusion in a space. In RIS we have 3 times weekly ASDAN

life skills group lessons for a small number of students with complex needs. These take place in a different classroom but are very much focused on inclusion. They aim to equip these students with skills and an understanding of the world that allows them to experience it in a more inclusive way.

These children and others will also sometimes be taught away from their physical classrooms 1-to-1 or in small groups. Teachers are left to decide themselves when it may be beneficial for a child to receive support outside of the classroom – this may be due to the needs of the child at that specific time or the material that's being taught. When possible it's ideal to have a student with additional needs in the same classroom as



their classmates however what's more important is that the teacher and fellow students have an inclusive mindset towards them. Regardless of who may be teaching the child at any moment the class teacher still takes responsibility for their learning and wellbeing. We extend our inclusion to children who are receiving additional support from professionals such as Occupational Therapists or Speech and Language Therapists. We work closely with a number of external professionals who deliver therapy sessions, in dedicated spaces in the school environment – when appropriate this may even be in the classroom. This allows for collaboration in the form of regular communication and even allows for teachers to observe the sessions so the regular practise of skills can be extended throughout the week.

For those children with less complex needs much support can be given in the regular classroom setting. If you are in a school system that is

based on the National Curriculum of England and Wales, you will often here reference to 'Quality First Teaching' (QFT). This is about what should be on offer for all children: the effective inclusion of all pupils in high-quality everyday personalised teaching. Such teaching will, for example, be based on clear objectives that are shared with the children and returned to at the end of the lesson; carefully explain new vocabulary; use lively, interactive teaching styles and make maximum use of visual and kinesthetic as well as auditory and verbal learning. Approaches like these are the best way to reduce, from the start, the number of children who need extra support with their learning or behaviour. A 2008 UK Ministry of Education government guide to develop personalised learning summarises QFT key characteristics as:

- Highly focused lesson design with smart objectives
- High demands of pupil involvement and engagement with their learning
- High levels of interaction for all pupils
- Appropriate use of teacher questioning, modelling and explaining
- An emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for pupils to talk both individually and in groups
- An expectation that pupils will accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently
- Regular use of encouragement and authentic praise to engage and motivate pupils.

While planning, teachers should consider the abilities and needs of the children first rather than designing an activity and fitting it to the child. For example, if a child has been diagnosed with Dyspraxia then a teacher should be mindful to ensure that there isn't a heavy handwriting component to the activity and provide alternative ways for a student to demonstrate their knowledge and learning. For the other children in the class working on the same activity it would only develop a broader range of skills for them also to present their learning in non-written form.

How language is used in the classroom is also a determinant of inclusiveness. Use of language that differentiates based on ability level should never be used. Care should be taken not to make comparisons with other students but it may be necessary for a teacher to explicitly discuss differences to help overcome fear of the unfamiliar. Every human on this planet is unique, however we have more in common than we have different. An inclusive classroom allows this to be lived rather than observed. It allows children to experience first-hand how to develop a deep empathy and understanding towards those that are different from us. It helps teach tolerance and acceptance towards others from an early age. In order to help classmates understand sometimes teachers need to take a little time to explain differences to those who aren't familiar. This may take a variety of forms from answering specific questions to maybe a 'class talk' on what autism is, what to expect and how to support a classmate. Sometimes siblings and other family members like to be involved. As a child with differences gets older it is also important to explain to the child themselves that they may experience things differently and find certain tasks or social situations challenging and to provide them with supporting strategies. In order to facilitate inclusiveness children need to feel a strong relationship with their teachers and the way to do this is to encourage communication. Teachers should strive to create a classroom environment which is 'communication friendly'. This is achieved by making communication as easy, effective and enjoyable as possible by giving opportunities for pupils to listen, participate and understand.



Aim to do this by:

- Having clear and consistent routines and expectations, supported visually
- Using age appropriate visual support or strategies, particularly to reinforce understanding and new vocabulary
- Creating an asking friendly classroom where it is expected and OK to ask questions or seek clarification
- Reducing noise levels and managing auditory distractions
- Building in extra thinking time for all pupils to process questions or instructions
- Ensuring all adults in the room know their role in supporting communication to the class and individuals.

This relationship is not limited to the children and as a school we make every effort to develop strong relationships with families as well. We're very aware that when it comes to raising a child with additional needs the demands can be significant and the reliable information scare. We meet regularly with families and talk openly and honestly with them to find the best ways to support their needs. We offer termly parent engagement weeks where parents can come in and observe the additional support their children receive. We hold parent workshops on a variety on inclusive topics and 'Connect over Coffee' mornings to provide an informal supportive environment to discuss questions and concerns. From a practical perspective an inclusive friendly school and classroom provides a better learning environment for all – students and teachers. There is no downside to inclusion and accommodations made for children who specifically need them will only deliver benefits for all children's learning. Acceptance, understanding, respect, and equality in every aspect of education are the only ways to move towards true inclusion in education.



Victoria McKeown
Head of Inclusion
Regent International School, Dubai

At the core of each child's educational development lies the foundation-block of reading and writing. Students who face problems with their literacy and development, can suffer longer term impacts that persist throughout their academic career and beyond.

Pallavi Mallick, Head of Inclusion, Next Generation School, Dubai recommends, and has been using, Text Help Read & Write Software since she has been working in Dubai to help these pupils with a wide range of everyday literacy challenges. Software has been overseen by Pallavi Mallick, an experienced SENCO and trainer. She also did a case study in her previous organization in one of the prestigious schools in Dubai. Pallavi specialises in the design of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to ensure that the full potential of every student is realized and strongly believes in removing barriers.

Helps your whole school

It is cross curricular, and will support all the subjects you expect including the MFL department with tools to help oral skills and build MFL vocabulary. Specific areas of the school improvement plan will also be supported alongside the wider literacy strategy. It is going to help improve reading, writing, comprehension, literacy and fluency for all. The 'highlighter' tools will help pupils create and organize notes and support revision and exam preparation. It supports your inclusion policies and statutory requirements by delivering accessibility for digital document creation and reading. For EAL pupils there is a translation facility to help support and encourage bi-lingual and multilingual use and a set of tools to build and develop vocabulary. For SEND pupils, such as those with Dyslexia, the software offers very specific support like text to speech and prediction while typing. Staff will be enabled to create resources including word banks, worksheets and provide alternative resources such as audio files for studying on the go. There is also an exam mode to equip those pupils with specific needs with an approved exam reader rather than using human readers - proven to be cost effective and also of huge help in building exam confidence in pupils.

Inspiring teachers and pupils

Pallavi details how Read Write has quickly found favor with students and staff alike: "The software's reading aloud feature is really popular with many students who have dyslexia – and it can even read PDF files too. A lot of our teachers also love Read Write's vocabulary feature. It is great for suggesting a richer

TEXT HELP:

A Tool for Reading and Writing

Pallavi Mallick, Head of Inclusion, Next Generation School, Dubai tells us about the benefits of Text Help Read & Write Software to help students of determination with a wide range of everyday literacy challenges.



choice of words for students to use in their written work", Comments one teacher. Read & Write helps us instill confidence in children to attempt regular tasks involving reading or writing that they would otherwise find challenging, confirms the Learning Support teacher. "It has helped me to help my son with his reading and writing. He loves work on the computer - that way he's having fun and learning at the same time. When he forms a sentence, the software reads it for him, and he is able to understand if he has used the correct words.", Says the parent of a student.

Recommendations

The benefits of Read&Write are most marked where implementation and usage form part of a structured and focused approach to technology integration. This best practice approach includes:

- Aligning the technology to both school and individual priorities
- Sharing the vision and purpose for technology with all staff
- Ensuring that technology platform is accessible on a regular basis
- Setting expectations for teacher & pupil outcomes to help provide approaches to lesson planning

- Training staff and pupils in the context of use as well as the skills required to use technology
- Support staff and students technically and from a teaching and learning perspective throughout the implementation
- Create regular opportunities to use any technology where teacher or pupil may find it supportive
- Allow pupils the scope to personalise their learning by self-selecting tools and how they use them to benefit their learning
- Aligning the technology to both school and individual priorities
- Sharing the vision and purpose for technology with all staff

References:

- What Kids Are Reading: The Book-Reading habits of pupils in British and Irish Schools", 2018
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Pallavi Mallick
Head of Inclusion
Next Generation School, Dubai



Why Inclusive Education Matters?

Prof. Eman Gaad, Dean, Faculty of Education, British University in Dubai, argues that inclusive education and a good early intervention programme can save money for any given society in the long run

The government of the UAE has made every effort to comply with the ratification, as the UAE has a history of complying with all United Nations conventions and resolutions; despite the country's relatively young age. The country also has a good record of investing in its people. In particular, the UAE responded to article 33 of the UNCRPD that instructed all parties to establish a national framework to support the implementation of the convention and spared no effort to action it. In the article, each country is obliged to establish two mechanisms, one to coordinate between its different governmental organizations, and another to monitor the implementation of its national legislation. The law 29/2006 was the national legislation that was amended in response to advocates and NGOs to substitute the term 'people with special needs' to 'people with disabilities' in order to ensure provisions and services for any of the categories of disability, as decision makers struggled with identifying special needs due to the wide range of abilities/disabilities that might fall under such term. Therefore, Law 14/2009 was issued to alter the terminology to people with disabilities. Across the country, local authorities battled to action the law, and initiatives such as "My Community" in Dubai to make Dubai a disability-friendly city were popular (Dubai Executive Council, 2017). The term people of determination (POD) or the determined ones was yet another breakthrough in 2017 when the Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum initiated the term to highlight their abilities, and not their disabilities, when dealing or serving people with disabilities. Officially, all documentation was changed to adopt the new term and was enforced in official documents across the country (Government.ae, 2017).

Inclusive Education benefits everyone in school not just those with disabilities. It is argued that it has massively positive societal impact and the

positives are not just restricted to learners who are vulnerable either. For instance, learners who are typically developed get a chance to interact with those who might be different from them at different level, leading to a greater understanding of how humans react, interact and sense-make differently. On the other side of the coin, those individuals with disabilities will get a chance to interact with others, helping them achieve more sensory stimulation, and adapt to new behaviours and environments. Society is made up of different people with different abilities and the school is simply a true representation of society, and inclusive education achieves this representation.

Inclusion and cost of inclusive education has been a controversial issue though. Those in favour of segregating learners of determination argue that educating one person among the others who share the same needs and challenges may be a cheaper option; however, research shows that investing in good quality early intervention can indeed be cost-effective and also on a social level supports the harmony and the cohesion of society. There is a famous equation that states that every dollar invested in an intervention saves 7 dollars spent on future rehabilitation and support from the community. Therefore society needs to understand that inclusive education and a good early intervention programme can save money for any given society in the long run. Finally, we wish to see more countries around the region to follow the UAE's example of supporting people of determination by investing in them for a more cohesive and tolerant society.



Prof. Eman Gaad
Dean, Faculty of Education
British University in Dubai

THE BBC BOYS

Bilal Hafeez, Christopher Swaminathan and Brendyn Monsorate, (BBC) are the UAE's first batch of Students of Determination who have been trained in the field of Media to become "Special Correspondents" who were the exclusive reporters at the Special Olympics World Games, Abu Dhabi 2019. We had a chance to meet one of the trios Mr. Bilal Hafeez. Here is the excerpt of our interaction with him.

Tell us briefly about yourself.

I am Bilal Hafeez, S/O Mr. Rehman Hafeez. I am 35 years old, and I was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. I am highly enthusiastic and versatile, as I always look forward to master new things or venture into new fields. I studied at the Al Noor Training Centre till Grade 10th from 1996 to 2008. I am currently working in Abela and Co. as a Graphic Designer. I am writing a biography about my life and the challenges I face, and am about to put a full-stop to the last chapter, meaning to overcome all the challenges. -My biggest ambition in life is to motivate and inspire the youth, which includes school, university and college students. Moreover I also wish to motivate the middle aged people and the elderly to never give up in life. -My dream is to obtain a Dubai driving license.

Who are your role models?

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed and Crown Prince Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

What was the turning point in your life?

Meeting Dr. Amit Kakkar, my media coach, in Dec 2017. He has encouraged me since then, and changed my outlook towards life in a big way. He taught me how to conduct research in media and how to verify facts and figures while writing an article. I was able to conduct a lot of interviews using his tips and training provided.

What are the different hurdles you had to face in the beginning?

The biggest hurdle was - Acceptance by society that I am as normal as anyone else. It was just not happening at one point of time. Times changed and slowly people started to recognize my skills. I started working as a Graphic Designer in one of the famous and well known Catering companies in Dubai named Abela & Co. and now I am also a Journalist.





Tell us about your association with Al Noor.

From 1996 to 2008 I studied at the Al Noor training centre for people with disabilities. I studied till Grade 10th, i.e., ‘Matriculation’, and wrote my Board Exams from an Indian Board known as the ‘National Institute of Open Schooling’ which is equivalent to O-levels. My class teachers at the school recognized my creative writing skills as well as my ability to write well and express myself in words since I couldn’t speak very clearly. At the same time my creative skills were appreciated throughout my school life at Al Noor.

How did “BBC” come into existence?

Well, in Dec 2017 I was at once called at Al Noor training centre to meet someone from the Media industry. The gentleman, Dr. Amit Kakkar, introduced himself and asked me a few questions. Two of my Al Noor mates – Brendyn Monsorate and Christopher Swaminathan were also present along with me. Dr. Kakkar told us that he wanted to train us for the Media industry and make us ‘Special Journalists’. Some how there was an instant connect with him and my parents gave their consent to undergo the training. Our Media training started from January 2018 and somewhere in the middle of 2018, Dr. Kakkar coined the term BBC as a gesture to motivate us using our initials and predicted that one day the three of us will be known as BBC OF MIDDLE EAST. Since then a lot of media houses, who had interviewed us, have used the term BBC for us.

Tell us your experience at the World Special Olympics. How did you get this opportunity? What were the challenges you had to face as a media person covering a Special Olympics, and how did you do this over the whole course of the event?

It was all because of the efforts of my coach Dr. Amit Kakkar. He wanted to build a portfolio of the BBC boys and had organized interviews with VIP’s like Sir Tim Clark, Her Excellency Mariam Bint Mohammed Saeed Hareb Al Mehairi, Colm Mcloughlin, Ravi Shastri etc. He wrote to the Special Olympics committee about us and sought permission to have us as Special Reporters to cover the games. The permission was instantly granted and the committee

members including Dr. Jennie Potts met us. We were made a part of their Unified Press department and given a task to file 2 stories per day for 14 days. While Brendyn and Christopher went out on the field to interview the participants/players, I was preparing questions for them and doing research on the participants. They used to come back with sound bites and I used to then transcribe the whole thing and file the stories to the Unified press department. Dr. Kakkar supervised the whole activity for us. We were able to give Exclusive scoops to the Global



Media. I would say with extreme care taken at the event by our mentor, we did not realise when those exhilarating 14 days got over. The thrill to meet people of determination from across the globe intermingled with

our hard work, did not allow me to even think of anything else but work. We had gone there to cover the special Olympic World Games, but for many media outlets we ourselves became news.

THE MAN BEHIND **BBC BOYS**

Dr. Amit Kakkar is a Dubai based Specialist in Media & Communications. For nearly 18 years he has worked for renowned Media houses like The Times of India, Khaleej Times. Currently he is a Lecturer of Media studies at Amity University, Dubai

Bilal Hafeez, Christopher Swaminathan and Brendyn Monsorate got the chance of a lifetime when they were identified to undergo the special training given by Dr. Amit. He took up the task to transform these students into "Media Correspondents".

He identified the areas of specialization in the Media for each one of them and trained them to add up to their skills so that they are able to create a space for themselves in various media organizations in UAE, become independent and earn a respectable living for themselves.

"This is a path breaking opportunity for these children. We knew of job placements across industries such as banks, corporate offices, government offices, hotels, schools, factories, retail outlets, cinemas etc., but never in Media. I certainly look forward to seeing my child in a bigger Media role now", says Rehman Hafeez, father of Bilal Hafeez.

The Trio were given the term B.B.C of Middle East using their initials by Dr. Kakkar in 2018 in the middle of their training which was picked up by various media houses later while telling story of these new age Special Journalists to the society. By now they have to their credit - Two weeks of reporting at Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi. The BBC boys were part of Special Olympic Committee's unified press department and filed two stories per day which were picked by global media. They have also interviewed people like Sir Tim Clark, president of Emirates Airlines; Her Excellency Mariam Bint Mohammed Saeed Hareb, UAE Minister for Food Securities and Mr. Ravi Shastri, Coach, Indian Cricket Team to name a few.

The Journey:

He always used to wonder what would happen when these special children cross the age of 25 years. He contacted Al Noor Training Centre and shared

his idea of training some children in Media. Thereafter three children, namely: Bilal, Christopher and Brendyn were introduced to him followed by a meeting with their parents. The training started and they started meeting every Friday Morning at his CMC GLOBAL office in Deira, Dubai.

Dr. Amit Says, "Christopher is a genius when it comes to electronics, Bilal is writing his own biography and is left with the last two chapters and Brendyn wants to meet a lot of celebrities and dignitaries and talk to them about their lives. So all this has come from within themselves. There may be many such children who dream to go to space or climb mountains. Believe me these children are no less when it comes to doing something on their own and achieving their goals. After meeting all three of my students, I was sure I will accomplish my task well in time. Their learning power is great even without them making any notes. So all my training is a practical training in media for them in which they have shown a lot of interest. I personally see no difference between them and any other student."

The Message:

Kindly come forward with the knowledge you have and try to train students of determination. There has to be a contribution from others in the society besides the hard work that their parents put in. Do not look at these special children as different people or disabled or handicapped. They are more determined than anyone of us. You just have to reach out to them. Al Noor Training Centre can be contacted if you feel you have some qualities and expertise which you would want to pass on to the special children. I also urge Media Organizations to step forward and help us achieve our goal by offering a space in their companies for these children who are very creative and extremely hardworking.





براندن مهمت و شغوف جداً بالفنون و مشاهير السينما و الفن

What keeps you going in spite of all the odds?

My great ALLAH / GOD whom I trust. I believe in my prayers and the almighty ALLAH has been very kind to give me strength to overcome all odds in my life. There has been dull moments too when sadness seeped into me, but then it was my prayers that kept me going ahead.

Do you have any regrets along this long arduous journey?

I have some unfulfilled wishes like I want to drive after acquiring a Dubai driving license, but it is up to the RTA authorities to recognize my driving skills and ability. It was my wish to go to U.K. to study at the Solent University located in London and wanted to do B.Sc. (Hons.) in web design and development field but my father refused to pay the fees and support me financially to study for four years, just because I am a victim of Cerebral Palsy. In my father's view it is pointless to spend the money on me and he thinks that it would be a fruitless investment owing to my condition.

How do you define success?

Never give up in life, regardless of how challenging it gets, just keep going, fail, get up, keep going, fail again, get up again and try your level best to reach your goal and attain success. Do not give up on anything in life no matter what the circumstance is.

What has been the most amazing learning experience for you as a crusader of Determined Ones?

I had been quietly penning down my book all these years, since October 2009, until I came to a point where I had to make a choice of accepting the challenge of getting trained as a Media person or leave the opportunity. I was quite excited because this opportunity opened doors for me and I started telling the World about my book (my biography). I won't call myself a crusader of determined ones, but all I can say is that the determined ones must grab every opportunity that come to them. You never know what's in store for you. When I look back, I was just an ordinary person. Today I am being written about in newspapers, I relish seeing my bylines in print media, radio stations talk about me, the internet has my stories in it, and it has all happened only because I said 'Yes' to an opportunity.

What is it that you would wish to achieve now?

Becoming an author is my dream. After completing my biography, I would want some publisher to help me take my message worldwide; the message to never give up, the message to keep fighting till the last moment of life. Moreover I would like to work on my other books subsequently.

Tell us a bit more about your book. When is it going to be released?

My book is all about myself. My struggles and efforts to educate myself, despite the fact that I can't write using a pencil or pen owing to stiffness and involuntary movements in both my hands due to cerebral palsy. However, I never gave up and typed instead all through my school life. I have seen how some part of the society, especially in Pakistan, treats people of determination, which is painful. My biography is a complete dosage of inspiration and motivation for people from all walks of lives and to all age groups. I have written about how people can overcome challenges and achieve their goals and dreams by not giving up. Regarding the release of my book, I am currently composing the last chapter titled "Special Thanks", which will put a full stop to the manuscript. Thereafter I need a publisher who understands what I have written in my book and can help me get it published worldwide.

What would be your message to the community of Determined Ones', including the parents?

Never give up in life. Life is short. Accept yourself and have fun in life. Enjoy every moment of life as it comes to you. For parents, I would say your determined children are a blessing to you. They are more knowledgeable in the world than anyone else and never compare them with anyone.



Andaleeb Ishteyaq
Inclusion Champion and Head
Inclusion and Pastoral Care
JSS Private School, Al Safa, Dubai



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SYNERGY 2019

“A Heart for the Students of Determination”

JSS Private School, Dubai, organized a day wide event SYNERGY, celebrating the spirit of the Determined Ones' by hosting the first ever Inter-School Sports Event for the Students of Determination of UAE.

Yes, the Students of Determination had reminded us again about this on their great day of achievement. It is the time of the year when JSS Private School, celebrates the spirit of the Students of Determination through their annual inclusion initiative SYNERGY. In its constant endeavor to celebrate diversity and create awareness and appreciation for Students of Determination, Inclusion and Pastoral Care Department of JSS Private School has undertaken the comprehensive program SYNERGY with an aim of concrete contribution towards Dubai's futuristic vision of a Fully Inclusive city by 2020.

The theme for the fifth edition of Synergy 2019 was “A Heart for the Students of Determination” wherein on 14th February 2019, the school hosted the first ever Inter-School Sports Event for the Students of Determination, giving Dubai's Students of Determination a hand, head, heart and most importantly a hope to be considered equally determined to play and compete in various sporting events. The annual inclusion event witnessed 200 students from 25 schools and Special Needs centers across Dubai, participating in the sports, logo and art competitions. The event was graced by Mr. Abdulrahman Nassir, CEO, Business Support, KHDA, Dubai as the Chief Guest. He was particularly appreciative of the fact that students of Determination were given equal opportunity and value to compete with each other. Some of the other distinguished guests present at the event were Ms. Safia Bari, Director,

SNF; Renowned Psychologist Dr. Alka Kalra; the Accessibility Champion Ms. Shobhika Kalra, the girl who has helped build over 1000 ramps across UAE and Dr. Sonakshi Ruhela, Happiness and Inclusion Ambassador, Amity University, Dubai; Dr. D. P. Shiv Kumar- CEO JSS Institutions; Mrs. Chitra Sharma, Principal JSS Private School; Mr. Ashok Pallaya SAO JSS Private School; Mr. Govind Rao Naik, SFO JSS Private School; Mrs. Bindhu Rajiv Headmistress JSS Private School were the other dignitaries present at the occasion and blessed the day.

The highlight of the day was to see the perseverance of the students of Determination on the sports field of JSS Private School. The people on board witnessed amazing and unique aptitudes of the students of Determination from different schools and centers of Dubai and Sharjah in the Determined Ones Sports Event. It was an eye opener to see these great kids enthrall the viewers with their exceptional skills. Students participated in Athletics, Football (penalty challenge), Basketball – (3 a side) and Tug-of-war. Some of the performances were just breathtaking making you wonder at the sheer genius of their talents at these sports.

Another event that occurred simultaneously was “On the spot Art competition.” Here the Students of Determination including Gifted and Talented students were given the opportunity to explore the depth of their talent through the creative channel of art. The theme for the competition was “Year of Tolerance”. This was also a spectacular event where students of

Determination put forth their stunning performances and incredible ideas. Inayaa Fatima and Abel Benjamin from DPS, Sharjah were the winners under the category 1-5; and Aman Muhammed from The Indian Academy, Dubai became the winner under the category 6-12. Mrs. Veena Devgiri and Mrs. Arpita Mallik were the judges for the Art Competitions where they looked for the creativity and originality of the depicted theme. Quality of the artistic composition and overall presentation of the design also took its place under the criteria of judgment. Another unique initiative organized at the event was the Determined Ones Logo Competition. The main aim of the competition was for individual students to design a logo which best illustrated the essence of being a Determined



One so that the logo would become a symbol of the voice for all the Determined Ones. Last but definitely not the least there was an Inclusion wall for everyone to pen their thoughts on about their experiences. This was the culmination of the event where one could see the reflection of feelings and thoughts from all the stakeholders across Dubai about conducting this unique event on such a large scale. The notes were really inspiring and appreciative, especially the one from Mr. Abdulrahman Nassir, the Chief Guest who wrote, "We love you all". This in essence sums up the great efforts being carried out by JSS Private School towards inclusion in Dubai.



Andaleeb Ishteyaq
Inclusion Champion and Head
Inclusion and Pastoral Care
JSS Private School, Al Safa, Dubai





A Parent's Journey

No role brings greater joy than being a parent. Being the mother of a 4 year old boy, who has been diagnosed with speech delay and ASD a couple of months ago, I couldn't agree more. My son, with all his delays and disorders, still continues to be the source of my greatest joys. It all started when Ashish* was all but two years old, and had not uttered a single word; instead, he babbled like an eight month old. Being a mother; I sensed something that was not quite right with my boy. My husband, on the other hand was more positive, and calmed my fears by saying that boys usually achieved such milestones much later in life, and even quoted examples from his family saying that a few of his cousins spoke much after they had turned four. As the days passed into years, my concerns grew stronger and my gut instinct warned me that something was definitely not right. I convinced my husband for the need to have my son visit a doctor, and discuss our concerns with him.

When we had made the decision of seeing a doctor, I was more open to discussing my concerns with a parent whose son was in the same nursery as mine. We shall be grateful to her forever for recommending Dr. Rupali to us. We are forever indebted to Dr. Rupali that within the first two sessions that she had conducted with him, we noticed much improvement. He had started out with single words, such as calling out to us and his grandparents. He no longer babbled. His speech improved with every session, and now he uses sentences.

I shall be honest about the journey for us so far, which has been difficult, challenging and frustrating; but it has been different for my son; he has been improving with each passing day, and has been showing us that all our efforts are bearing fruit. Even though my son has achieved his milestones much later than most children his age, we are happy to know that he is moving forward. We haven't signed him up for any race in life, so we're happy to allow him to grow and learn at his own pace.

We are proud of our son for the progress he has made, and of the progress that we too have made as parents in this journey together as a family.

A proud parent of a Student of Determination

*Names have been changed to ensure the anonymity of the student.



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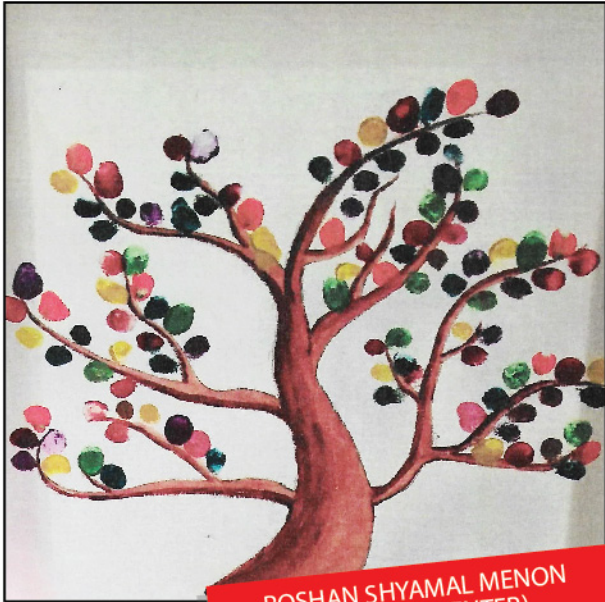
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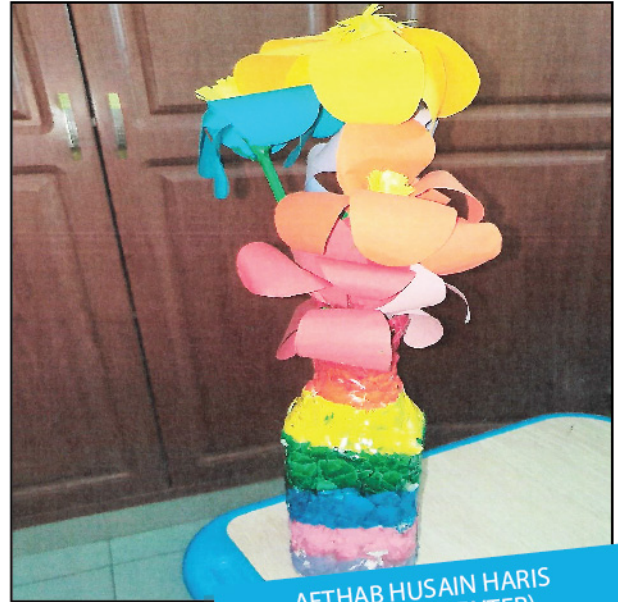
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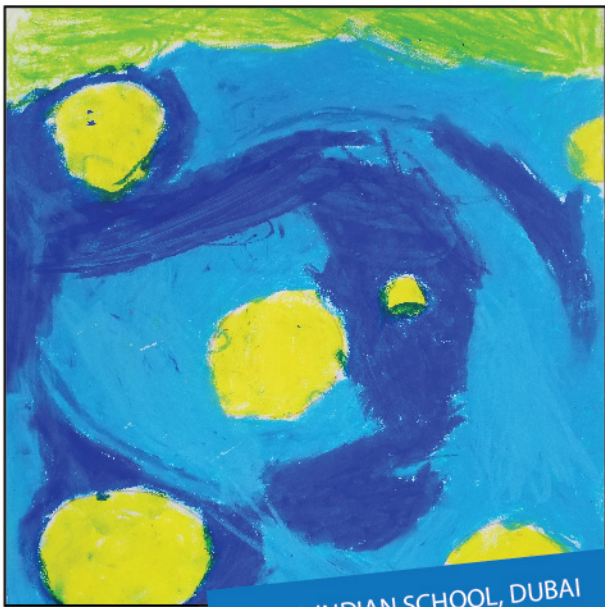
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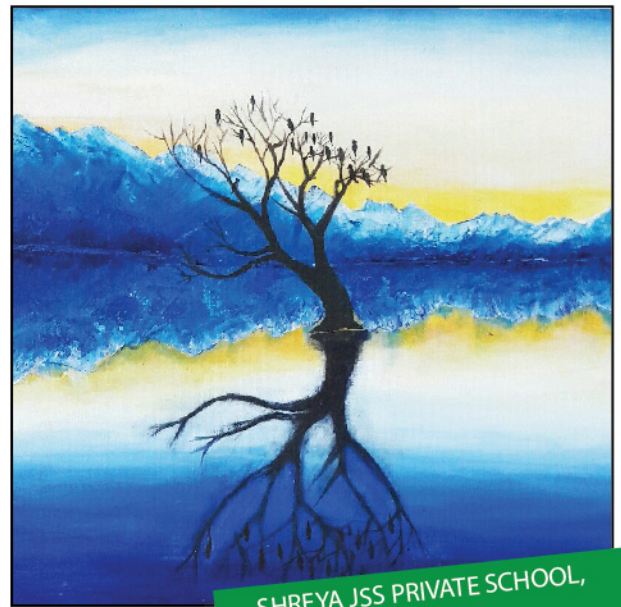
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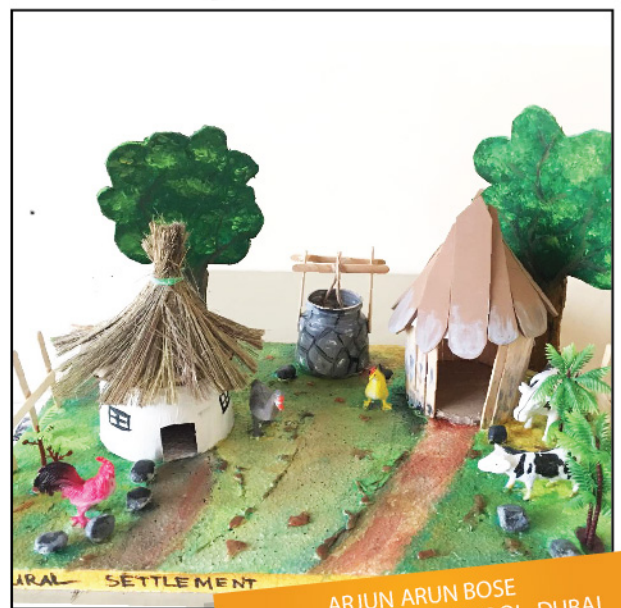
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Sujith

The Special Olympian



With a determined mind, anything can be achieved. Sujith evidently portrayed this beautiful message by winning a bronze medal in the Roller-Skating Competition at the Special Olympics. Focus on the ability, and not the disability; was the motto we followed with Sujith from the very moment he was diagnosed with autism. We had taken notice of his extraordinary potential in sports from the moment he was little. We encouraged his participation in various sports such as cricket, baseball, skating, football, horse riding and basketball. We zeroed in on skating since Sujith displayed extraordinary balance for his age and condition. Besides, the chosen sport also proved to be a platform for him to concentrate on the improvement of his individual skills, as skating is not a team game.

Out of the numerous impressive feats that he can perform with his skates on, the one that won him accolades and a medal from the Indian Consulate, is his skill of skipping while sporting his skates. We have always encouraged him to take part in as many competitions that have taken place. Participating in the Special Olympics was indeed a big deal for Sujith and for us, but what people often fail to see are the many hurdles that led to this accomplishment. We were informed by the organizers of the Special Olympics that there would be four weeks of training prior to the competition. Two weeks in Al Ain and two weeks in Abu Dhabi. The athletes would be sharing rooms with other athletes, and no parents were allowed to stay with the participant. Sujith being our only child, has always had our complete attention; hence, he is always accompanied by either me or his father wherever he goes. Moreover, Sujith is non-verbal, which means, he cannot communicate; hence, leaving him alone wasn't a viable option for us.

Adding to that were the hardships of Sujith's adolescent years. Sujith, as an 18-year-old, has mood swings hardwired into his mind. He especially cannot stand loud noises like those of a baby crying. Somehow, I got permission to stay with Sujith for 2 days, assuring the organizers that we would teach him to stay with the coach and the other athletes. The respect, acceptance, inclusion and integration that Sujith received in those two days of my



stay with him during the trip was phenomenal and helped ease our worries and difficulties. Once in Al Ain, we had a few, small issues to deal with, like the new place and new food and people, but we eventually overcame that. Moreover, Sujith is closer to his father and was probably missing him a lot during our stay at the hotel. That too added to our little troubles as there were times when pacifying him with mere words of seeing his father soon would not suffice.

The chance and honor to be able to participate in the Special Olympics was a huge privilege in itself. Sujith had never participated in a momentous competition like this ever before, and it would be his first time competing in a race on an international level. So we didn't want little struggles like these to come in his way of training. The one hour of training in the morning and in the evening did not seem sufficient for Sujith. So, we turned our room into a training place. Masking tapes covered the room floor and determination filled the air. We taught him to stand behind the line, we downloaded the gun shot sound for him to understand when to start. We kept water bottles as poles and arranged the furniture to resemble the track. We watched videos of skating, but most importantly we made sure that he was always happy, contented and secure.

He was also picking up tips and tricks from the other athletes. It was overwhelming to watch how the other athletes understood Sujith's difficulties and helped him out. I was stunned at the efforts taken by Sujith to mingle and learn. Hard work always pays off. Sujith proved this statement in the arena. He amazed everyone with the way he handled himself. Truly astonishing. And to top it all, he brought home a bronze medal. He represented, and he made everyone proud. There are honestly no words to describe his impeccable victory.

The Special Olympics was a huge event. With 7000 athletes from 192 countries, 20000 volunteers, it was like walking into a whole new world. It was marvelous. We were glad to be a part of the event. From the news article in Gulf News to the big FM interview, Sujith became a celebrity overnight. People from different nations recognized and congratulated him. We do not know what the future holds for Sujith, but we would definitely like to see him continue to improve and master his skating skills and prepare himself for any competition that life may give him an opportunity to be part of. We just want our readers to know that we have become stronger because of Sujith. Now, we proudly tell everyone, that Sujith, our son, is an Olympian.



Keerthana M. Shenoy
A Proud Home Maker



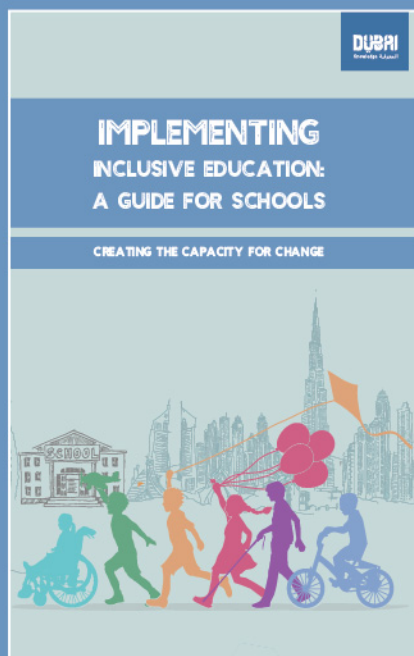
Implementing Inclusive Education: A Guide for Schools

Dubai schools to be 'fully inclusive' by 2020; KHDA announces guide for inclusive education in schools

Schools in Dubai will now have more reasons to be 'fully-inclusive' with the launch of a guide by Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) aimed at further enhancing inclusive education.

All private schools in Dubai will now have to ensure the formation of an inclusion support team to support the principal in achieving a vision of inclusive education in practice. Inclusion support teams will include inclusion champion, the leader of provision for students of determination and representation from both support teachers and learning support assistants. The measures are being introduced as part of Dubai's move to become a fully-inclusive city by 2020 and part of a new guide aimed at creating a system-wide change and helping build an inclusive system of education. Schools are encouraged to move away from medical model of assessing any special needs and instead being asked to create life-defining experiences for students of determination and their families.

Fatma Belrehif, CEO of Dubai School Inspection Bureau at KHDA said, "We are aware of the challenges and opportunities in our journey towards building a fully-inclusive education system. The launch of this new guide for schools is a reflection of our commitment to scale-up efforts and enable schools to create a welcoming environment for everyone. This will only be possible when the entire school community values diversity and believes in creating engaging, relevant and meaningful experiences for students of determination." The guide covers new procedures for admission, assessment, identification, intervention, systematic support and resourcing for schools. Fatma added, "Our conversations with schools are now centred on how we can make progress in overcoming barriers to educational access, participation and engagement. We want to enable schools to have a better understanding and more effective implementation of the standards



set out in Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework."

Leadership for inclusive education

Further enhancing the role of school principals and governing boards, the guide outlines the importance of strong leadership. School principals are expected to work with school inclusion teams:

- Effectively communicate a vision of inclusion, ensuring the engagement of the entire school community
- Develop and implement a comprehensive and strategic inclusive education improvement plan
- Ensure staff are able to use inclusive education practices
- Monitor and review progress of strategic plans

Three-level planning for schools

Identifying a common need to support inclusive education, the guide outlines a three-level plan for school leaders.

- Level 1: High quality teaching where teachers accommodate individual differences in ability, learning style and behaviour, through effectively differentiated classroom practice. Other teaching

strategies that can be used include frequent informal and formal assessment, and different types of grouping.

- Level 2: Personal support and/or curriculum modification to enable a student to engage with and participate in, appropriately challenging learning experiences and achieve within age-related expectations.
- Level 3: Individualised programmes to accelerate progress or enable students to achieve their potential. This provision is likely to include the use of specialist approaches, intervention or support services.

Clearer roles for school staff

- New roles will be added to all private schools across Dubai to ensure better support for students of determination. These include:
 - Inclusion champion: A knowledgeable educator and a skilled practitioner who supports the development of inclusive attitudes and approaches
 - Leader of provision for students of determination: Plays a crucial role in supporting classroom teachers to identify and develop specific approaches in the classroom so that every student is empowered to succeed.
 - Support teacher: Applies inclusive approaches within their teaching practices. They should spend no less than 60 per cent of their time engaged in activities that directly influence the inclusive competence of classroom teachers.
 - Learning support assistant (LSA): Replaces the former 'shadow teacher'. LSAs should be trained in using different approaches to lower barriers to learning, and to facilitate student engagement and participation within relevant and meaningful learning opportunities.

 Excerpts from KHDA Press Release

RAHHAL

Meaning traveller in Arabic, the message of Rahhal is simple: the world is a classroom, and all learning counts

Students in Dubai's Indian High School will now have more time to pursue out-of-school learning activities as part of the Knowledge and Human Development Authority's (KHDA) Rahhal programme. An initiative of KHDA under the 10X initiative, Rahhal encourages schools to customise learning experiences for individual learners, and extend learning beyond the classroom. Around 1200 students from the senior section at IHS are set to benefit from the flexible learning programme at Indian High School. Under the programme called "3.5+1.5=6", students will attend structured school with a set timetable for three and a half days, followed by one and a half days off-campus learning to pursue activities that they would normally have to accommodate during the weekend, such as athletic coaching, exam prep for university enrolment, internships, and other extracurricular options. By adding time for these activities during the school week, students regain their two-day weekend to spend time with family and relax, instead of spending a day on training, thus explaining the 3.5+1.5=6 concept. The off-campus days will be monitored by the school, and attendance in other institutes will be reviewed to ensure productive use of the day.

Dr Abdulla Al Karam, Director General and Chairman of the Board of KHDA added: "This will be the biggest cohort of students from a single school to enrol in the Rahhal programme and we commend the Indian High School for taking Rahhal mainstream with their pioneering approach to senior school. This flexible, customised approach to schooling will help students prepare for the future, and develop essential skills such as time management, prioritising learning needs, and independence. "The cornerstone of Rahhal is that it allows schools the freedom to develop innovative solutions and disrupt the norm. We encourage more schools to change the way they approach education, and we hope to see more parents challenge their children's schools to recognise and support the needs of learners in new ways." Khalfan Belhoul, CEO of Dubai Future Foundation added: "Our aim at Dubai Future Foundation is to reflect the ambition of the UAE leadership to test new ideas. Entities like KHDA, and schools like Indian High School are

aligned with our mandate to test new concepts and set an example for the world. "I've seen the first version of Rahhal being commended and appreciated by parents and students of Indian High School. It makes us at Dubai Future Foundation extremely proud to see the programme succeed, and the students and parents and staff have the full support of the Dubai Future Foundation to make 3.5+1.5=6 a success."



Dr Ashok Kumar, CEO of Indian High School said: "By recognising learning beyond the classroom in the first phase, we saw how our students in the pilot programme benefited over the last six months. By introducing 3.5+1.5=6, we are giving students in Grades 11 and 12 the opportunity to pursue their passions and design their own learning experience based on individual needs. We are honoured to collaborate with KHDA on this revolutionary project and scale up Rahhal to inspire other schools." Indian High School was the first private school in Dubai to pilot a programme under Rahhal with three students. The new Junior College wing will launch at the beginning of the new academic year in April 2019. Every month, Rahhal open days are facilitated at KHDA to discuss ideas and facilitate information sharing with parents and students. Schools and families can register for the open day by visiting <http://sgiz.mobi/s3/KHDA-10X> Meaning traveller in Arabic, the message of Rahhal is simple: the world is a classroom, and all learning counts. By providing a supportive regulatory environment, Rahhal creates learning opportunities for everyone in society.

Excerpts from KHDA Press Release

10X دبي

DUBAI
المعرفة Knowledge

Rahhal

A tailored system which allows students to have more learning opportunities anywhere and anytime empowering today's generations with future skills



The world as essentially one giant classroom where all learning counts



An education system which caters more effectively for the learners' individual needs and circumstances



Increases the attractiveness of Dubai as a place to settle and work



Allows students to acquire not just academic skills, but also life skills



Dubai is seen as a regional leader in revolutionizing learning



JSS Private School, Dubai

A Day With Students of Determination

Dr Seuss once said "Why fit in when you were born to stand out?". Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. According to the Center for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated 1 in 59 children in the United States today. The month of April is considered to be the month of Autism. Autism Day is celebrated on the 2nd of April. On Friday 12/4/19, our school organised an event in association with Prerana Group to support and spread awareness. More than 40 students from our school volunteered, all being from 11th and 12th. We were given a few instructions by Prerana Group's representatives Neeti and Mohan. We lined up and registered ourselves and were assigned partners, or as we called ourselves "buddies". The event started with lectures from the dignitaries. Our headmistress and our supervisor spoke along with one representative of Prerana Group. One of the representatives spoke about some of the common signs an autistic child has. Sujith Shenoy is an autistic child who participated in the Olympics and won a bronze medal in skating. His mother was present and shared her view on the journey she had experienced alongside her son. There was a dance performance by a group of mothers who themselves have Determined children. An autistic child sang a mashup of 3 songs. Her voice was very melodious. She enjoyed singing and dancing while we enjoyed listening. Another autistic child sang a song that conveyed the message of never losing hope. Few children from our school sang as well. Then a group called the Super Special Moms performed a dance routine portraying the different images of a mother. The Super Special Moms



are a group of mothers that help each other and those who have autistic children. Soon the formal part of the event got over. The auditorium was transformed into a game room with 4 stations. One station was playing "London Statue". Another station was conducting a game of "Passing the Parcel". The 3rd station played a game that involved shooting paper balls into a cup. While this was going on, a game of "Housie" was being played by the parents. All the students interacted with each other's buddies and got to know each other. The event was also coming to an end. We clicked a few pictures for memories and that concluded the event. All the students had fun and enjoyed the program and we hope to organize many such programs and opportunities to meet Students of

SNF Development Center

Eye Within

Closing your eyes to open up your heart ...



The Annual Eye Within event at SNF Development center on 17th of Oct was a sensitization workshop conducted for corporates and individuals. The workshop saw a huge participation and an overwhelming and emotional response from the participants post their experience. The workshop included daily living activities that participants were asked to do blind folded and those 30 minutes of their life changed their perception towards individuals with visual impairment. The event coincided with World Sight Day which just passed on the 10th of Oct (celebrated on 2nd Thu of Oct every year). We had about 40 participants from various professional backgrounds such as corporates, teachers and special educators. Every individual was touched and shared their experience of being stressed, anxious and fearful when they had to do simple tasks blind folded.



Compiled By
Dr. Reshma Tauheed
Ashly Maria Abraham

Coaching for Wellbeing: An introduction for School Leaders

About : Aimed at Primary and Secondary School Leaders, Pastoral Leaders, Heads of Year, Heads of HR, Heads of PSHE and anyone with responsibility for School Wellbeing.

Venue: Dubai British school Jumeirah Park, Dubai **Date :** January 13-14, 2020

Mental Health First Aider Support Session

About : Aims at offering support to Certified Mental Health First Aiders

Venue: LightHouse Arabia, Dubai **Date :** January 07, 2020

Early Intervention Physical Development

About : Aimed at Primary Teachers, EYFS and KS1, Support Staff, Managers, Aspiring Team Leaders, PE Subject Leaders and Play specialists.

Venue: Sunmarke School, Dubai **Date :** January 22, 2020

Depression Management A 6-Week Therapy Group For Adults

About : Aims at learning about depression, its physiology and symptoms, and dispel myths about depression, also to learn Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)-based skills to manage symptoms of depression.

Venue: LightHouse Arabia, Dubai **Date :** January 22, 2020

Teen-to-Teen Mental Health First Aid (13-15 Years Old)

About : A teen mental health first-aider learns how to identify& respond to early warning signs that another teen is becoming unwell, someone who is currently struggling with their mental health, mental health crises. It is open to teenagers aged 13 to 15 years old.

Venue: LightHouse Arabia, Dubai **Date :** February 15, 2020

Teen-to-Teen Mental Health First Aid (13-15 Years Old)

About : Aimed at this course is aimed at those interested in enriching their communication skills with techniques and approaches derived from the discipline of counselling. It is appropriate for school staff in Primary and Secondary schools who have frequent 1-2-1 interactions with children such as teachers, pastoral leads and teaching assistants. Where possible, practice sessions will be split by primary and secondary so that approaches and skills are age appropriate.

Venue: Nord Anglia School, Dubai **Date :** February 02, 2020

Compiled By
 Ashly Maria Abraham

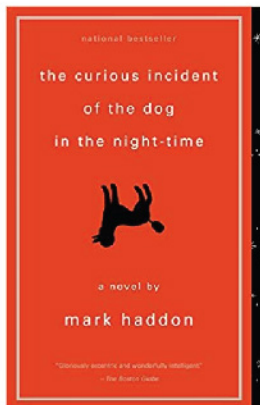


CPD

ROUND UP

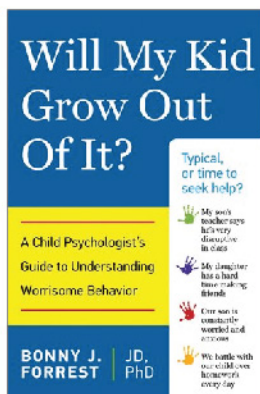
Lets's Read

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time



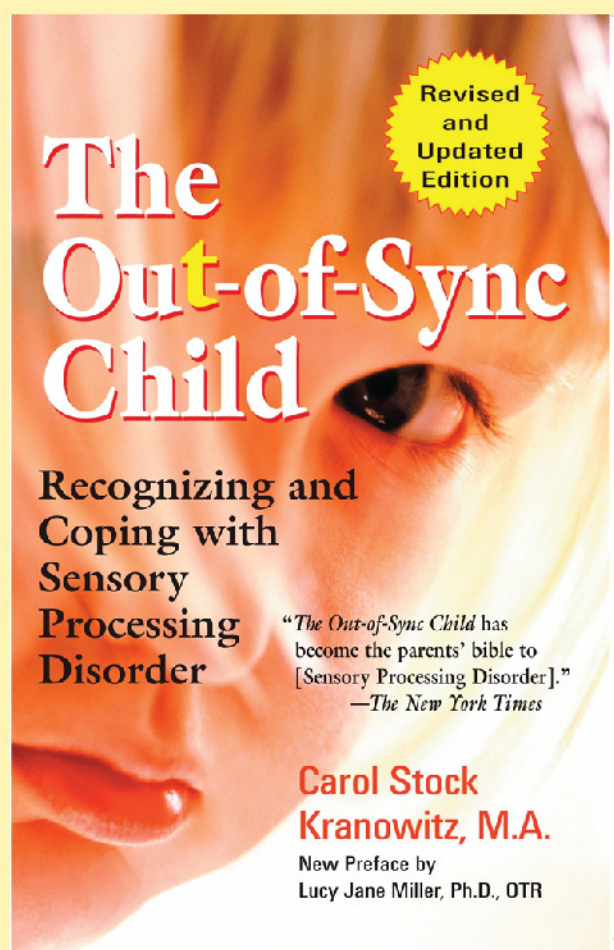
A murder mystery of sorts—one told by an autistic fifteen-year-old. Christopher is mathematically gifted and socially hopeless, raised in a working-class home by parents who can barely cope with their child's quirks. He takes everything that he sees (or is told) at face value, and is unable to sort out the strange behavior of his elders and peers. Late one night, Christopher comes across his neighbor's poodle,

impaled on a garden fork. When the owner finds him cradling her dead dog in his arms, she has him arrested. After spending a night in jail, Christopher resolves to discover just who has murdered the dog. He is encouraged by Siobhan, a social worker at his school, to write a book about his investigations, and the result—quirkily illustrated, with each chapter given its own prime number, is the Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.



Dr. Forrest gives plenty of advice to when it comes to the question of whether or not your child will grow out of certain disorders. She provides lists of questions parents should ask when seeking professional help and discusses different studies and “cures” regarding different ailments. Her book also presents a helpful bibliography with links to scientific journal articles, books

and websites. However, the author strongly believes that screening a child always helps since screening either allows for early to access to the resources a child could need or simply provides reassurance to the anxious parent. Forrest stresses the importance of screening by writing, “Although one in seven children has some form of developmental disability, fewer than half the pediatricians in the country screen children for these disorders.”

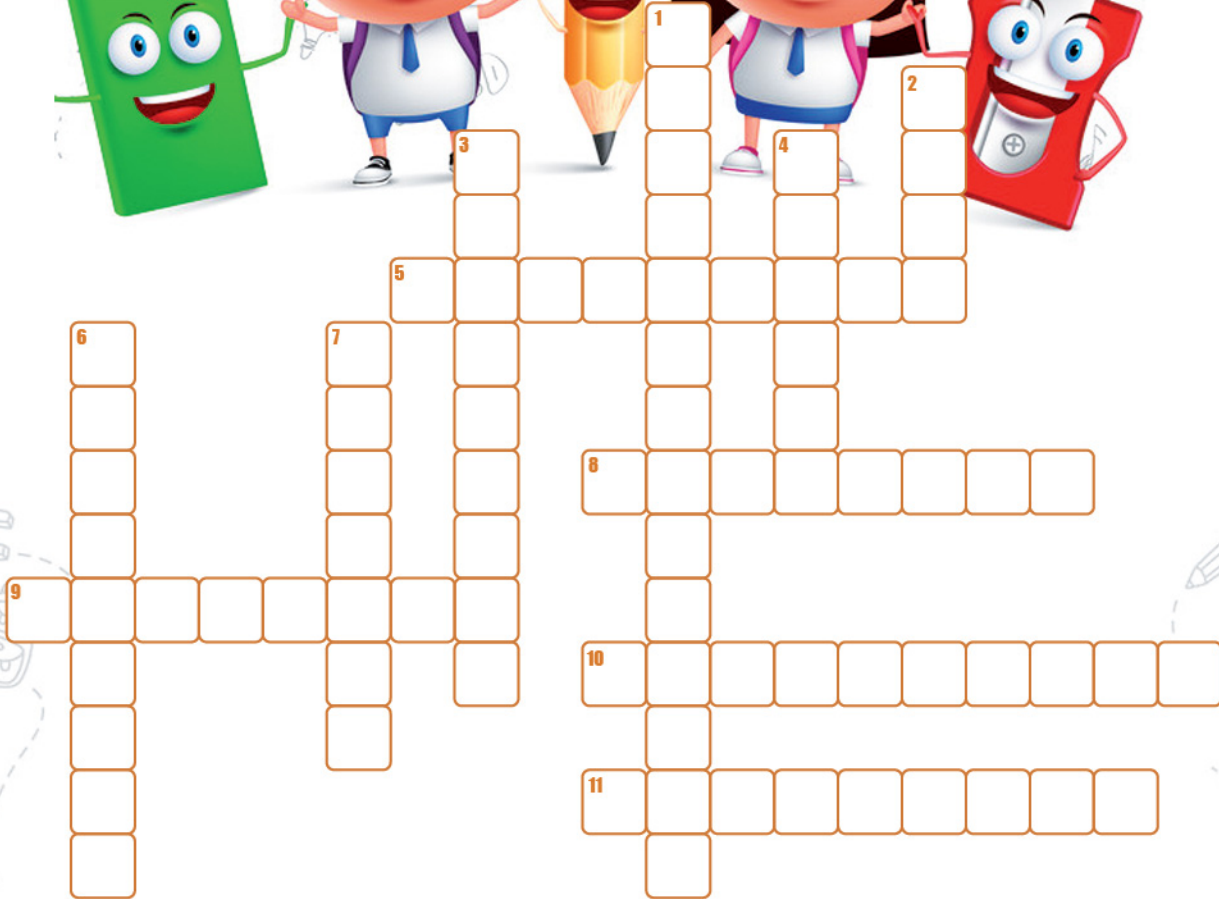
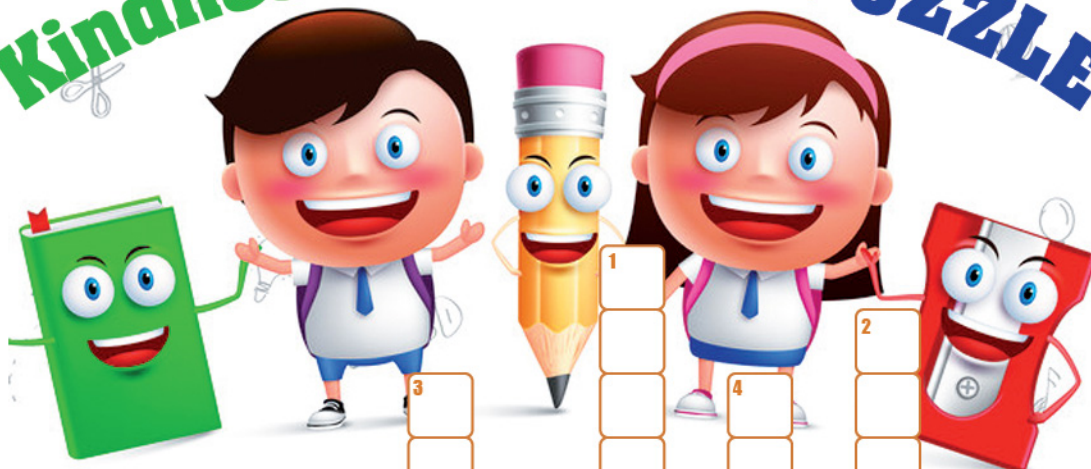


Sensory processing disorder was one that was often overlooked until recently and is now often read as new definition to an old problem. In her book, Kranowitz strongly urges for early intervention and pushes parents to make themselves aware of their children's sensory processing issues from the beginning. She also provides helpful awareness pointers such as recognizing that insurance doesn't always cover the cost of therapy, mainly because the disorder is not included in the latest issue of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Kranowitz also provides useful images and also checklists and questionnaires throughout her book to simplify concepts and present a more comprehensive understanding of her ideas. She writes how sensory processing disorders should be thought of like indigestion- just like an antacid soothes, children need occupational therapy to smooth their neural pathways. The concepts in her book are also helpful for children with other needs besides sensory issues. Chapter 8 is especially helpful as it talks about building a relationship between your child and their therapist.

Compiled By
Andaleeb Ishteyaq

SENDutainment

Kindness crossword PUZZLE



ACROSS

- 5 A Setting where a variety of physical, social, and cultural traits coexist
- 8 An act of gentleness and thoughtfulness toward another person
- 9 Abuse and mistreatment by someone who holds more power or strength
- 10 An idea a person may have about another person or group that is often untrue
- 11 Sympathy for and/or acceptance of the feelings or habits of others

DOWN

- 1 Unfairly treating a person or group of people who are different from another person or group of people.
- 2 To form a connection with a person or with an idea in ways that support that person or idea.
- 3 A right, freedom, or special benefit given to some people and not to others
- 4 Someone who has a strong liking for another person
- 6 Something taken in as part of a whole unit
- 7 To annoy or make fun of someone



Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. James 1:17

“**S**amuel”, the Hebrew word for “asked of God.” From a biblical perspective, Samuel was a blessing from God and as he grew up, he developed more and more as a child of God. He changed all our lives and I guess God used him to make us our family, who we are ever since he was diagnosed with autism. It was a bit hard at the start, a very short while and then as a family we started seeing the bright side of it, yet being young, I didn't realise the seriousness back then. I evolved slowly to understand the depth of who he really is and when I did realize the things that were happening, it struck my heart and changed my life.

Even though he could not express what he felt or wanted in the normal human ways, his communication grew stronger, he expressed his feelings through art and craft. Over time he developed his skills in wire art and clay modelling and gradually went from live to digital design.

He was more observant than me as he looked around, grasping all the information that he could from the surrounding and that was clearly visible when he learned photo-shop and illustrator on his own but then he left that and went a bit old school and started creating artworks in paint, making presentations in power-point and typing in MS word. From wire-works to clay modeling to digital art, he never looked for perfection or smoothness but in every bent and in every stroke, he made sure his thoughts and his feelings were communicated most authentically and honestly.

Being born into a family of artists, it was no wonder where the inspiration came from but his foray into every field seemed to lead

in to excellence. The most amusing was his taste in music. The first time he touched a piano, he played a song rather than just messing around with the keys. It felt like the music notes were pre-installed in his system. His skills were extra ordinary. If he heard a song just once, he would go into his room and play the intro trying to sing along while running his fingers through the keys.

From the time he was able to frame a proper sentence, he learned some Biblical verses by heart and used to repeat them during our daily prayer. We taught him how to pray and to ask God for his grace. He is a regular with his night prayers. He truly has the grace of God and he is our grace from God.

Looking into my life, I would say that my life has changed a lot and to be precise it was moulded in different scenarios. There were times when I couldn't accept the things that revolved around it and created a chaos. But now I find meaning in every happiness that he brings to me.

“For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”

2 Timothy 1:6



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B.Des (2nd Year)
National Institute of Fashion Technology,
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NOT AFRAID *to Fly*



Nisha Tandon
Entrepreneur
Managing Partner
Talentsurf, India

Unafrail and dauntless
Every step I take I am bound to win
I am unstoppable
A lot of courage I muster within

Each flight I take, it soars me high
Touching the cotton fluffs in the limitless sky
A sense of freedom I endure every moment
If I fail I don't hesitate to give it another try

I brave every storm
My wings may flutter but they do not break
I do not give up so easily on life
Even if everything at that instance is at stake

No dream is unrealistic and beyond my reach
No rainbow in the sky that I cannot feel
Nothing seems impossible if I set my heart upon it
Courage and faith from within me I often steal

Many hurdles I have overcome at every step
Many a times I have fallen and been left broken
I rise and aim to achieve a bit more
A lot of desires within me remain unspoken

I feel liberated I am my own sweet song
Free spirited and a dreamer by heart
A carefree laughter adorns my being at all times
Something unparalleled that sets me apart

I do not permit angst to ever perturb me
As a lot of hope I have within
I have opened the windows to my yearning soul
And allowed the sunshine to leisurely sneak in




Live Each Day The Right Way

Find an optimistic way
To start your new day.
Read an inspiring quote...

Attempt to learn it by rote.
It will replay in your mind,
And get you past the daily grind.
Cook a scrumptious meal
Put in all of your zeal!
Add lots of sugar and spice...
Do everything to make it nice
Each bite will taste just right,
Giving you complete delight!
Sing a melodious song
Do a jig as you sing along...
It will for sure alter your mood
And leave you feeling very good.
You'll naturally feel very gay,
Unwanted thoughts will stay at bay.
Involve yourself in a creative jaunt...
Never give in to any fear or daunt,
Put all your focus and grit in
You can be sure to score a win!
Inject enthusiasm into each day
You'll stay charged up everyday!



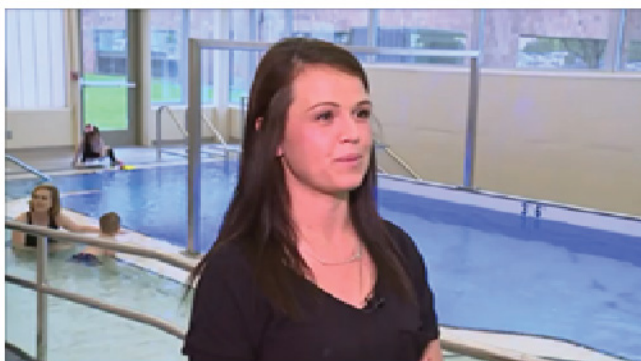
 **Anjana Sunil Kumar Nair**
A proud home maker and
a freelance writer



TECHILUSION

Technology continually brings forth advancements in the field of SEND education, and below is a roundup of the latest exciting happenings

B.E. Smith Family Centre



Advent Health Shawnee Mission is opening a \$24 million family centre, called the B.E. Smith Family Centre. Inside the classroom, children with Down's Syndrome are provided with state-of-the-art infrastructure including a unique harness system, which essentially enables the children to have a wider range of mobility, similar to that of their non-specially abled counterparts. It allows them to experience higher levels of control and coordination. The center includes a multi-sensory environment, two aquatic pools as well as music therapy rooms, among other facilities, and these spaces are built to accommodate the requirements of children under six years of age.

Whitney Dinkel, a mother of a child with Spina Bifida, says that her son would have greatly benefitted from the facilities provided by the center, as the harness system would have helped him to stand upright and hold his body weight.

(Source: Fox4KC.com)



AMAneoBTi

The World's First Mouse Adapter for iPad or iPhone

The leading supplier for assistive technology, Inclusive Technology, just released the AMAneoBTi, which is an adapter that allows people to use a mouse with an iPhone or an iPad. Until now, individuals with severe physical disabilities were only able to use switch control to use iPad or iPhone, however, the AMAneoBTi has vowed to make iOS devices accessible to all.

In order to use this device, all that is required is to plug in the mouse to any iOS device of choice, and a touch pointer appears, and does not require any additional installation of apps. Users with physical disabilities can also benefit from features such as instant access to Apple's AssistiveTouch Menu, as well as an anti-tremor function that allows the cursor to function smoothly. Battery life lasts for up to 20 hours as well. The world of inclusive technology has witnessed a rapid expansion in terms of new inventions and developments, particularly in the field of special needs. Individuals with special needs are able to overcome several academic, emotional, motivational, cognitive and metacognitive barriers due to the assistance provided by these inventions. Stay tuned for more exciting updates!



Compiled By

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Determination Center

- * Intervention programme with IEPs
- * Language & Communication Skills
- * Social Pragmatic Skills
- * Independent Living Skills
- * Fine & Gross Motors Skills
- * Speech Therapy
- * Occupational Therapy
- * ABA Therapy
- * Physiotherapy
- * Creative Arts Therapy
- * Brain Gym
- * Dance & Music
- * Vocational Training
- * Interactive Social Skill Building
- * Outdoor activities

Day session (8 am - 1 pm) & Afternoon session (1 pm - 4 pm)

CONTACT

Muhaisnah 3, Dubai, UAE

Phone : +971 50 295 4715

www.merintdeterminationcenter.com



A Guide to Therapists in UAE

SchoolsCompared.com has created a comprehensive list of centres in the U.A.E that provide a variety of types of mental health specialists using various methodologies. This is to assist parents in finding a resource that is befitting the specific needs of their child or family (in no particular order). It is always necessary to thoroughly check credentials prior to booking an appointment. It is also recommended to contact the centres for assistance and queries as not all of their comprehensive specialisations may be listed here.

Camali Clinic – for Child & Adult Mental Health

Based in JLT, Dubai Healthcare city and Abu Dhabi, Camali Clinic uses a holistic approach to mental health employing multi-disciplinary frameworks for anyone aged 2 and above. The Camali Clinic’s international team consists of psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, registered nurses and clinical dieticians. Once a referral has been made the choice of appropriate professional to use will be made after the initial assessment. For children and adolescents the therapists are specifically chosen for their empathy and understanding and work closely with the patient to achieve a meaningful and clear care plan.

Contact :

Tel : Dubai Healthcare City, +971 (0) 4 276 6064, +971 (0) 58 297 6331
Tel : Jumeirah Lake Towers (JLT), +971 (0) 4 276 6064, +971 (0) 58 297 6331
Tel : Abu Dhabi – Camali at Healthplus, +971 (0) 2 666 0363, +971 (0) 58 297 6331
Email : info@camaliclinic.com **Web:** www.camaliclinic.com

KidsFIRST Medical Centre

With centres located in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, KidsFIRST was founded in 2006 with the vision of creating a child focused inclusive centre designed with the requirements of children with special needs at its core. The large, multi- disciplinary team of international paediatric health care professionals work with infants and children to support their academic, physical and emotional development. KidsFIRST has the motto of ‘help for kids and answers for parents’ and is known to have close collaborations with schools in the U.A.E.

Contact :

Dubai : Tel: 04 348 (KIDS) 5437
Email : info@kidsFIRSTmc.com **Web :** www.kidsfirstmc.com

Abu Dhabi : Tel: 02 555 1437
Email : info@kidsFIRSTmc.com
Web : www.kidsfirstmc.com

The Lighthouse Arabia Centre For Wellbeing

An institute with a strong reputation for effecting positive change, Lighthouse Arabia, brings together an international team of licensed psychologists and psychiatrists offering a range of treatments and is also home to the Raymee Grief Centre, which provides free grief support services to anyone living in the UAE. The Lighthouse vision is to be a guiding light in transformational journeys towards health and wellbeing. With an ethos founded in empathy and approachability, there is a step-by-step guide on the Lighthouse website regarding the initial appointment process to ensure that the person seeking help receives it at all times throughout the process.

Contact :

Appointments can be requested online.
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Mobile : (0) 50 279 2826 WhatsApp or SMS messages are accepted and will be responded to.
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