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Workbook:
Tools to Support Caregivers of Children with Disabilities

To be used with guideline documents on providing targeted support to caregivers of children with disabilities

April 2022

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Contents

This document is part of a set of resources to support caregivers of children with disabilities, which includes guides for caregivers, teachers and schools, a workbook containing tools to support the activities, a directory of resources and a directory of associations and organizations.
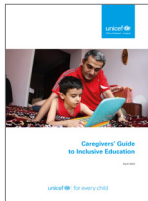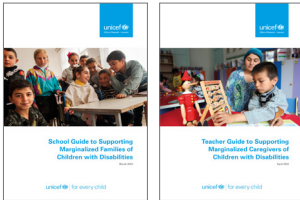
The **guides for schools, teachers and caregivers of children with disabilities** are the first documents of these series. These guides are intended to support caregivers to understand their rights, identify their needs and challenges, and find ways to come up with solutions.

This **Workbook** contains tools that can help you think more about and work on the questions raised in the guide. Completing the activities in this workbook will help you identify the specific challenges you face as well as being to identify solutions to address them. The tools work best when they are used in collaboration between caregivers, teachers and other school staff.
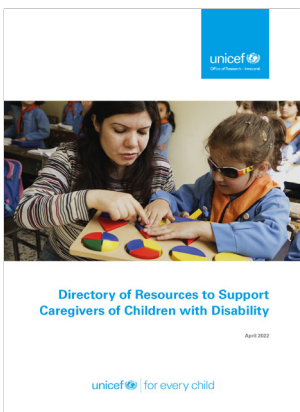
The **Directory of Resources** has helpful materials, information and links. It is a useful first place for caregivers to look for solutions to challenges they have identified. All the resources are free, although you may help caregivers print the materials.

The summary table on page 4 tells you what challenge, need and age group each resource is best suited for.
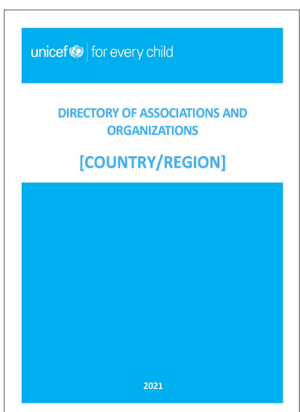
The **Directory of Associations and Organizations** has a list of local associations and organizations that exist to connect and support parents and caregivers of children with disabilities. Some of them may be a good source for more information, ideas for solutions and ways to connect with others.

TOOL 1: SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT ON INCLUSION

School self-assessment is a process where school communities reflect on their practice and identify areas for action. It can play an important part in school improvement. School communities consist of school staff, parents, community representatives and – where appropriate – older students.

One common tool for school self-assessment is the Index for Inclusion, which has been adapted and used in many countries in Europe and Asia. The Index for Inclusion is an instrument that supports schools to develop as inclusive schools and inclusive teachers.

School communities can collect information in the following 17 categories, using the guiding questions provided. Based on the gaps identified, school communities can develop an action plan for the school.

Source: https://www.savethechildren.it/sites/default/files/files/uploads/pubblicazioni/inclusive-education-what-why-and-how.pdf

1. **All students feel welcome in the school.**

   ☐ Does the school have a policy to enroll / include all children, including students from diverse groups?

   ☐ Do teachers welcome all parents and their children when they come to the school?

   ☐ Do all teachers feel ownership of the school?

   ☐ Do students feel ownership of their classroom?

   ☐ Does the school celebrate local cultures and communities in signs, displays and events?

   ☐ Do all children equally exercise their rights e.g. do children with disabilities or disadvantaged groups of children participate in all school activities?

2. **All students support each other in their learning.**

   ☐ Do teachers actively support and encourage good relationships between students?

   ☐ Do teachers encourage students to help each other?

   ☐ Do students willingly share their knowledge and skills?

   ☐ Do group activities allow students to divide up tasks and share what they have learnt?

   ☐ When other students in the class are troubled do students help them to calm down?

   ☐ Do students share the responsibility for helping to overcome the difficulties experienced by some students in lessons?

   ☐ Are students involved in assessing each other's learning?

   ☐ Are students involved in helping each other to set educational goals?

3. All students are well supported by school staff.

☐ Do teachers try to make lessons easy to understand?

☐ Do teachers plan appropriately to support all children?

☐ Do teaching materials reflect the backgrounds, experience and interests of all students?

☐ Do teachers provide accessible materials or translations for students who do not speak language of instruction?

☐ Do teachers actively teach students in a variety of groups during the lesson?

☐ Do teachers support disadvantaged groups of children e.g. is there detailed planning to ensure disabled children are making good progress in their learning?

4. Teachers and parents cooperate well.

☐ Do teachers regularly communicate with parents?

☐ Do teachers invite parents for consultation in order to help or solve problems related to children's learning?

☐ Do parents feel that there is good communication with school staff?

☐ Do parents feel well informed about school policies and practices?

☐ Do staff value the knowledge that parents have about their children?

☐ Do staff encourage the involvement of all parents in their children's learning?

5. All students are treated equally as valued members of the school.

☐ Do teachers pay equal attention to all students?

☐ Do teachers give opportunities for students to select activities based on their ability?

☐ Is a variety of backgrounds and home languages seen to make a positive contribution to school life?

☐ Are higher and lower attaining students valued equally?

☐ Are the achievements of all students given equal support and prominence?

☐ Do disadvantaged groups of children receive equal treatment e.g. children from poor families are given the same opportunity to join after school activities which require a financial contribution?

6. All students feel that their opinions and views are valued.

☐ Do teachers give the opportunity for students to give their comments?

☐ Do teachers listen and respond to student comments and questions?

☐ Do students feel that teachers listen to them?

☐ Do students feel that teachers respond to their comments?

☐ Do teachers provide opportunities for disadvantaged groups of children to share their opinions?

☐ Do disadvantaged groups of children feel that teachers listen to their opinions?

7. All students can access learning in all lessons.

□ Do teachers prepare lessons and lesson plans that are appropriate for the learning of all children?

□ Is teaching planned to support learning rather than to deliver the curriculum?

□ Is there an attempt to view teaching and support from the point of view of all students?

□ Do lessons pay attention to the emotional as well as the intellectual aspects of learning?

□ Do students feel that they are actively engaged in most lesson activities?

□ Are children with special needs encouraged to develop their talents? e.g. some children with special needs may be talented in producing handicrafts.

8. All students can access all parts of the school building.

□ Do teachers arrange seating in classroom appropriate to all students?

□ Is seating organized according to individual needs and age of students? E.g. is the furniture the correct size for the age group? Do children with physical disabilities have adapted chairs and tables where necessary?

□ Do students have access to all parts of school building that they need access to e.g. classroom, toilet, play area?

□ Are the needs of students with partial sight or partial hearing as well as physical impairments considered in making the buildings accessible?

□ Does the school have separate toilets for girls, boys and teachers / adults?

□ Does the school monitor accessibility of the buildings and facilities for teachers and students?

9. All students attend school every day.

□ Do teachers keep a daily record of student attendance?

□ Do teachers try to find out the reasons for student absence?

□ Do teachers have good relationship with all students?

□ Do teachers create an attractive school environment?

□ Do teachers communicate well with students' parents?

□ Do teachers monitor the attendance of children who may be at risk of poor attendance? e.g. children who have been bullied, children who are struggling to achieve in school.

10. All students enjoy lessons.

□ Do students enjoy lessons?

□ Do lessons convey a sense of excitement in learning?

□ Do teachers use a variety of teaching techniques and activities?

□ Do teachers use a variety of teaching materials in their teaching?

□ Do teachers try to make classrooms attractive, and a good learning environment?

□ Do parents feel that their children enjoy school?

11. All students are engaged in all lesson activities.

- ☐ Do teachers clearly explain how to do activities?
- ☐ Do teachers support all students in classroom activities?
- ☐ Do students feel that they are actively engaged in most lesson activities?
- ☐ Do teachers encourage all students to become actively involved in activities?
- ☐ Do teachers organize activities according to children's individual needs? E.g. children are asked to complete tasks that are within their abilities.
- ☐ Do teachers evaluate their lessons to ensure that all students are participating?

12. All students achieve their learning in all subjects according to their individual ability.

- ☐ Do teachers plan the lesson appropriately based on the different students' ability?
- ☐ Do teachers include details in their lesson planning of how they will support the learning of children who are learning more slowly than others in certain subjects?
- ☐ Do teachers use a variety of materials in teaching and learning activities?
- ☐ Do all students feel that they are making progress in school?
- ☐ Do teachers regularly follow up and assess students learning outcomes?
- ☐ Are teachers able to make judgements about the amount of progress individual students are making in different subject areas?

13. All students learn together.

- ☐ Do teachers organize learning activities for all students to be able to fully participate?
- ☐ Do teachers encourage all students to support each other?
- ☐ Do all children show respect for each other?
- ☐ Do all students willingly share their knowledge and skills with each other?
- ☐ Do students enjoy the social aspects of school life?
- ☐ Are students involved in assessing each other's learning?

14. All students have access to health services as necessary and appropriately.

- ☐ Do teachers give advice to all students on the 3 areas of cleanliness?
- ☐ Do teachers regularly organize sports activities?
- ☐ Do teachers collaborate with health staff to check students' health?
- ☐ Do teachers collaborate with parents to support the development of students' health?
- ☐ Do students have a positive attitude to health?
- ☐ Do students know the causes of common diseases?
- ☐ Do students know how to protect themselves from common diseases?
- ☐ Do teachers give children opportunities to ask health-related questions? E.g. are there opportunities for discussions about health and cleanliness?

15. **The school ensures that all students are admitted to the school.**

☐ Does the school try to find out if all the vulnerable children are in school?

☐ Does the school encourage the parents to send their children to school?

☐ Does the school provide the necessary support to vulnerable groups of children so that they are able to enter school?

☐ Do teachers pay particular attention to vulnerable children to ensure they are learning?

☐ Does the school monitor and follow up students' attendance?

☐ Does the school encourage and reward children who come to school regularly, particularly those from disadvantaged groups? E.g. the school gives special certificates to children with 100% attendance.

16. **All vulnerable children are successful in their learning.**

☐ Does the school have a policy on the annual and final grade examination with a specific expectation for vulnerable groups of children?

☐ Has the school developed a plan for supporting vulnerable children in order to help them complete their study?

☐ Do teachers adjust the teaching objectives, using appropriate teaching methods, to ensure vulnerable children are successful in lessons?

☐ Do teachers encourage children's classmates to help vulnerable children?

☐ Does the school monitor the teaching for disadvantaged groups?

☐ Does the school monitor the achievement of children from disadvantaged groups?

☐ Do teachers encourage all children, but particularly those from disadvantaged groups, to use the school library?

☐ Do teachers plan opportunities for more able or experienced students to support the learning of children with special needs or less experienced learners?

17. **School creates an environment which supports all students' learning.**

☐ Does the school try to develop the facilities for students to access all parts of the school?

☐ Do teachers arrange appropriate seats for vulnerable children in the classroom?

☐ Does the school create a good school environment (does school have trees, flowers, gardening, clean school yard, school compound, etc.)?

☐ Does the school have adequate toilets for children (boys and girls) and teachers?

☐ Does the school have a library and allow children to borrow books?

☐ Do teachers decorate the classroom to attract children and motivate them to learn? e.g. do they display children's work and learning resources attractively?

☐ Is there enough classroom furniture for all children to sit and work comfortably?

TOOL 2: TEACHER SELF-ASSESSMENT ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The following questions can be used by teachers to self-assess their current position when it comes to inclusive education and identify areas where they need further support. Teachers should then work with the school leadership or appropriate focal person to discuss how they can meet these needs.

Information on children with disabilities an their caregivers

1. **Are you aware of any disabilities or special education needs that children enrolled in your classes have?**

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

2. **Do you have enough information on the types of disabilities and barriers these children and their caregivers are facing as a result?**

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

3. **Do you know the specific needs of these children that need to be met if they are to benefit from your classes and be included in the learning process?**

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

4. **Do you know the families of these children?**

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

5. **If yes to Q4: Do you communicate with caregivers of children with disabilities to update them on the learning of their child and provide personalized feedback?**

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

Skills and capacity for inclusive pedagogy

6. **Do you have adequate knowledge of/in the following?**

   6.1. Using varied learning activities to engage a diverse range of learners

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

6.2. Meeting the needs of learners with behavioural difficulties

☐ Yes

☐ No

6.3. Meeting the needs of learners who are blind or have low vision

☐ Yes

☐ No

6.4. Meeting the needs of learners who are deaf or hard of hearing

☐ Yes

☐ No

6.5. Meeting the needs of learners with learning disabilities

☐ Yes

☐ No

6.6. Meeting the needs of learners with physical disabilities

☐ Yes

☐ No

6.7. Assessing, testing or evaluating the learning of children with disabilities

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. Have you had any training in disability-inclusive education?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7.1. (If yes to Q7) In your view, has your training in disability-inclusive education provided you with adequate knowledge and skill to confidently teach the following? (Yes, Not sure, No)

	Yes	Not sure	No
a. Students with emotional and behaviour disorder			
b. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing			
c. Students with vision problems (blind or low vision)			
d. Students with mobility challenges (physical disability)			
e. Students with learning disabilities			
f. Students with autism			
g. Students with multiple disabilities			

8. **As a teacher, which of the following difficulties/challenges do you face when delivering disability-inclusive education successfully in your classroom? (Select all that apply)**

☐ I don't get any special recognition for delivering disability-inclusive education in my classroom.

☐ The class size is too large for me to deliver disability-inclusive education in my classroom.

☐ Teaching/learning materials are insufficient for teaching.

☐ Appropriate teaching/learning materials are not available.

☐ The school does not provide the necessary support for my work.

☐ The community does not support sending children with disabilities to school.

☐ The school does not have a welcoming environment for disability-inclusive education.

☐ The school infrastructure is not accessible for children with disabilities.

☐ I need more training to teach children with disabilities.

9. **Which of the following would help you to deliver disability-inclusive education successfully in your class/school? (Select all that apply)**

☐ Teacher incentives

☐ Smaller class size

☐ Adequate teaching/learning materials

☐ Availability of appropriate teaching/learning materials

☐ Support from school authorities

☐ Community engagement

☐ Disability-friendly environment

☐ Accessibility for children with disabilities

☐ More exposure to disability-inclusive education practice

☐ In-service training on how to teach children with disabilities

TOOL 3: CAREGIVER SELF-ASSESSMENT ON LEARNING INVOLVEMENT

This questionnaire asks caregivers about involvement in their child's schooling. Caregivers can use it as a self-assessment tool and identify what behaviours they want to improve on. Schools or teachers may want to ask caregivers to complete this, so they understand what caregivers are already doing at home and whether they need support.

1. **How difficult is it for you to make contact with your child's teacher?**

   ☐ Very easy   ☐ Easy   ☐ Neither easy nor difficult   ☐ Hard   ☐ Very hard

2. **In general, how often do you go to parent/teacher meetings or open houses at school?**

   ☐ Never   ☐ A few times per year   ☐ About once a month   ☐ About once per week   ☐ Every day

3. **In general, how often do you have contact with your child's teacher?**

   ☐ Never   ☐ A few times per year   ☐ About once a month   ☐ About once per week   ☐ Every day

4. **In general, how often do you help your child with learning activities (reading together or discussing a story together, working together on a puzzle, etc.)?**

   ☐ Never   ☐ A few times per year   ☐ About once a month   ☐ About once per week   ☐ Every day

5. **Over the last 2 school days, how many total hours did you spend with your child talking, playing or doing some activities (reading together, etc.)?**

   ☐ None at all   ☐ Less than 30 minutes   ☐ 30 minutes – 2 hours   ☐ 2–3 hours   ☐ 3 or more hours

6. **How important is it to you that your child does well in school?**

   ☐ Not at all important   ☐ Somewhat important   ☐ Moderately important   ☐ Very important   ☐ Extremely important

7. **How important is it to you that your child reads or looks at books?**

   ☐ Not at all important   ☐ Somewhat important   ☐ Moderately important   ☐ Very important   ☐ Extremely important

8. **How important is it for you to [from 'Not at all important' to 'Extremely important']:**

- Keep close track of whether your child is behaving appropriately at school?

- Keep close track of how your child is doing at school?

- Read with your child?

- Provide a regular time and place for you to play with your child?

- Talk with teachers about your child's progress?

9. **How much do you agree or disagree with the following [from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree']:**

- My child's school is doing a good job.

- Teachers don't tell me how my child is doing until it's too late.

- School personnel make me feel inadequate or unwelcome as a caregiver.

- How well my child does at school is not my responsibility.

- I shouldn't need to help teachers teach my child how to read and write.

10. **Think back over the last month. How true are each of the following statements?**

	Never true	Sometimes true	True about half the time	Often true	Always true
a. I really enjoyed being with my child.					
b. My child and I have got along very well.					
c. I got irritated with my child.					
d. The time I have spent with my child has been very stressful.					
e. I didn't know how to relate to my child on his/ her level.					

TOOL 4: IDENTIFYING NEEDS, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Use this table to write down the challenges caregivers face in meeting their child's learning needs and a solution that can be tried to address the challenge. A set of guiding questions and examples of barriers relating to capabilities, motivations and opportunities is given below the table.

Schools, teachers and others can support caregivers to complete this table using the guiding questions and examples of barriers relating to capabilities, opportunities, and motivations to identify challenges. Then use the need-challenge-solution map and the Directory of Resources or Directory of Associations and Organizations to identify possible solutions.

It may help to try addressing one need, challenge and solution first. Then you can move on to others.

Template: Needs, Challenges and Solutions

Need	Challenge	Solution

Examples of Barriers, with guiding questions

Here are some guiding questions and examples of barriers. These barriers and questions were adapted from the Behavioural Insights Team's Barrier Identification Tool, with examples adapted from David Mitchell's 2008 book What Really Works in Special and Inclusive Education: Using evidence-based teaching strategies, pp. 69–70.

Capabilities

Capabilities refers to your physical or psychological ability to perform certain behaviours. Think about what you need to do to support your child's inclusive learning needs, and ask yourself the following questions about your abilities:

- ☐ **Cognitive skills:** Do I understand what I need to do? Do I know how to do it? For example, you may not have information on what inclusive schools look like, how to manage challenging behaviours, how to use assistive technologies to support your child's learning or how to access specialist services.

- ☐ **Interpersonal skills:** Do I know how to talk to people, advocate or negotiate for what I need? For example, you may find it difficult to speak with teachers, specialists or other people and ask for support for your child, or you may worry that they won't listen to you.

- ☐ **Awareness:** Do I know the options available to me? For example, you may not know where you can get specialist support services for your child, so you don't use these services, or that you can work with your child's teacher to adapt their instruction, so you don't talk to the teacher about this.

- ☐ **Evaluating options and making decisions:** Can I evaluate the different options available and make the right decisions? For example, it may be hard to tell which option or decision would be the right one for you and your child, or it may seem like there are too many similar options available to choose from.

- ☐ **Attention span:** Will what I need to do capture and hold my attention? For example, the available information on inclusive learning support may be too long or complex for you to focus on and understand.

- ☐ **Memory:** Will I remember to do what I need to do? For example, there may be too many things you already have to do for your child, so it becomes hard to remember to ask about what they are learning in school, or how their teacher is supporting them.

- ☐ **Physical ability:** Do I have the physical ability to do it? For example, you can't call your child's school because you find it hard to hear on the phone, or you can't go the school to meet with your child's teacher because of an injury.

Opportunities

This refers to anything in your environment that may encourage or discourage a behaviour. Think about what you need to do to support your child's inclusive learning needs, and ask yourself the following questions about your environment:

- ☐ **Opportunities in the environment:** Are there opportunities in my environment to do it? Does my environment make what I need to do difficult or impossible? For example, my local school does not offer additional support or reach out to marginalized children and families, or there are no organizations or groups that support caregivers of children with disabilities around me.

- ☐ **Resources and time:** Do I have the resources and the time to do what I need to do? For example, consulting a specialist or getting an assistive tool to support your child's learning is expensive, or you don't have time at home to help your child with their schoolwork.

- ☐ **Prompts in the environment:** Does my environment encourage or discourage me to do what I need to do? For example, you may find it difficult to focus on supporting your child's inclusive learning needs because their siblings get jealous, or you don't attend parent–teacher meetings because they are scheduled when you need to work.

- ☐ **Role models:** What role models in my environment will encourage me to do it? For example, you may not know anyone else who has a child with disability, so you don't have other parents or caregivers to learn from.

- ☐ **Social and cultural norms:** Is it the norm in my community to do it? Will others think badly of me if I do it? For example, your family members may think that children with disabilities should attend special school, so you worry they will disapprove of your effort to have your child attend an inclusive local school.

Motivations

Motivations are internal thoughts or automatic processes that motivate or prevent a behaviour. Think about what you need to do to support your child's inclusive learning needs, and ask yourself the following questions about your motivations:

- ☐ **Identity:** Is what I need to do in line with how I see myself? For example, you may think that someone with your background or schooling level should not ask questions or make suggestions to your child's teacher.

- ☐ **Beliefs about consequences:** Will my behavior lead to a positive or negative outcome? Is this outcome likely to happen? What impact will it have? For example, you may not want to try a new way to support your child's learning or communication because you don't think it would make a difference.

- ☐ **Emotions:** How do I feel when I do it? How do I feel about doing it? For example, thinking about your child's inclusive learning needs may lead to feelings of shock, denial, disbelief, anger, guilt, depression or shame at different times.

- ☐ **Goals:** Do I have a clear goal or target? Is the goal a priority for me? For example, other priorities like supporting your child's immediate health needs may seem more important than inclusive schooling right now.

- ☐ **Beliefs in abilities:** Do I believe I can do it? For example, you may not think you have the skills or will be able to help your child with their learning needs right now.

- ☐ **Habits:** Is the behaviour a habit? For example, you may already drop off or pick up your child from school every day, but you are not used to speaking with your child's teacher or other parents during this time.

- ☐ **Accountability:** Who will hold me accountable? For example, no one else in your family or at your child's school is checking whether your child understands what they are learning at school, so you also do not think to ask.

- ☐ **Automatic responses:** Do I do it without realizing? Is it an automated response that happens outside of my conscious awareness? For example, you and your child go past a fast food restaurant on the way home from school so you often eat from there, or your younger child's learning is harder to see than for your older child so you don't help them as much.

Example of completed need, challenge, solution table

The examples below may help in thinking about how a need, challenge and solution can be linked.

Need	Challenge	Solution
e.g. My child needs a lot of time to transition between activities	e.g. I don't know how to help this transition > Capability	e.g. Tool > using a visual schedule can help prepare your child for what will happen during the day. I will try this at home and may suggest it to my child's teacher as well
e.g. My child needs extra help understanding some parts of the school curriculum	e.g. my child's teacher does not have an individual learning plan for my child and I don't know how to ask for one > Capability	e.g. Tool > give information on my child's interests and needs to the teacher, for example using the 'my child's learning background' and 'special interest map' tools. Suggest the sample 'individual education plan'. If the teacher does not want to change, speak to the principal and other parents.
e.g. My child needs me to help with schoolwork	e.g. I don't have time to help with schoolwork, and often forget > Capability/ Opportunities	e.g. Tool > use a tracking system to set target on how many times a week I will help with schoolwork, set reminders and note when I do this
e.g. My child needs a lot of extra attention from me	e.g. I often feel frustrated when trying to help	e.g. Wellbeing > pause to use breathing and calming techniques when I feel frustrated, learn other skills from the 'caring for your wellbeing' resources and think about who I can ask for help when I need a break
e.g. My child needs to feel safe at the local school among other students	e.g. I don't know how to ask my child's friends to always treat my child in a helpful manner > Opportunities	e.g. Support > speak to my child's teacher to ask for their help and discuss specific difficulties my child has faced, prepare notes on what I can say to other parents and caregivers and look for opportunities to speak with them
e.g. My child is minimally verbal and needs support to communicate with teachers and other students	e.g. I don't know how to communicate with my child, or how to help them communicate with others	e.g. Tool > using an assistive or augmentative communication tool, like a core board on paper or mobile communication application

TOOL 5: SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN

Student demographic information			
Student name		Parent / Guardian name	
Age		Parent / Guardian phone number	
Primary language		Parent / Guardian address	

Student learning information	
Student Goal for Semester	
Key Strengths	
Key Challenges	
Under-Achieved Competencies	
Successful Strategies to Address Learning Challenges	
Other Comments	

This is an example of how a teacher can use information from caregivers to create an Individual Education Plan. Teachers may have a different format that they use. If they don't already have one, this sample can be a starting point.

Note: there are many different formats for individual education plans – this is one example. Teachers use the template to keep track of useful information about their student's learning challenges and strengths. They update it quarterly and communicate findings with the child's parent/caregiver so that effective practices can be used consistently in both the school and home environment. At the end of the year, they share the completed Information Sheet with the student's future teacher(s).

TOOL 6: CHILD'S LEARNING BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRES

This is an example of how schools or teachers can collect information from caregivers on their children's learning background, strengths, goals and challenges (Key Background Information Questionnaire) and also any special interests (Special Interests Questionnaire). Teachers can then use this information to create a profile of the child and develop an individual learning plan.

Adapted from Lynda Davey's work on Special Interest Map.

Key background information questionnaire

1. My child's strengths within social communication include:

a.

b.

c.

2. My child's motivators include:

a.

b.

c.

3. My child's favourite books, TV and toys include:

Books	TV shows	Toys
a.	a.	a.
b.	b.	b.
c.	c.	c.

4. Please list any areas of social communication that you are working towards at home.

a.

b.

c.

5. Please list any behaviours that you find challenging at home.

a.

b.

c.

6. Please list any areas in general that you are working towards at home.

a.

b.

c.

7. Please list any of your child's dislikes or sensory difficulties.

a.

b.

c.

8. Please list any of your child's sensory comforts.

a.

b.

c.

9. How long is your child's attention span when they are engaged in an activity they enjoy?

10. How long is your child's attention span when they are engaged in their special interest?

11. Please list your top three priority areas for your child?

a.

b.

c.

12. Please use the following space to give any extra details not mentioned above.

Special interests questionnaire

	Special interest
Describe in detail what elements your child likes about their SI and how they like to engage with it?	

	Special interest
Technology Explain what elements of technology your child likes. Explain how they like to use technology. If gaming, please explain which games they like. If they like to watch video clips, explain what they like to watch.	
Social Explain what elements of your child's SI they talk about, socially engage with, role play with. Explain how they engage with it.	
Information 1. Explain what your child watches, describes, shares facts about, or researches facts on (give us as much detail as possible). 2. Explain how they absorb and like to share this information.	
Exploratory 1. Explain what elements of your child's SI they use to create or build, and state what they like to build or create. 2. Explain how they build and create, and what systems, methods they like to use.	
Systemizing 1. Explain what your child likes to categorize or order (in relation to the stated SI). 2. How do they prefer to categorize/order? What processes do they use?	
Physical (gross motor) 1. What elements of your child's SI do they use in a physical manner? 2. How do they demonstrate their enjoyment in this area?	
Sensory In what elements of their SI do they find sensory relief? touch/ smell/ sound/ taste/ suck/cover/ feel How do they demonstrate their behaviours?	
Physical (gross motor) What elements of your child's SI do they nurture, keep safe, feel connected with? How do they demonstrate this?	

Tick all that are applicable

- ☐ My child likes to find out how things work
- ☐ My child likes to sort and categorize items
- ☐ My child likes to build models, bake cakes, or sew, etc.
- ☐ My child likes to find out facts
- ☐ My child likes creative arts and fiction including cinema, theatre, writing
- ☐ My child likes sciences
- ☐ My child likes animals
- ☐ My child likes people
- ☐ My child likes plants

TOOL 7: CAREGIVERS' ADVOCACY KIT FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Adapted from National Center for Learning Disabilities' Parent Advocacy Toolkit on 21st Century Learning and Inclusion

These tools will support you to plan and take action to advance inclusive education in your child's classroom, school or local district.

Advocacy plan

Goals: What change would you like to see?

Actions: How can you reach your goals?

A roadmap for action

No two schools or districts are the same, so the ways that you will need to engage with school personnel and policy makers will vary greatly. The people who can influence how inclusive your school is will vary based on the type of school (public, private), size of school or district and the local culture (who traditionally makes decisions).

Below are some common challenges that you may face and steps you can take when advocating for inclusive education at your school.

Your child's teacher or principal does not believe that children with disabilities can participate in mainstream schools, or that they should be in special schools

- Share information about the law on inclusive education and the importance of inclusion for all children.

- If no result, meet with the school principal together with school staff.

- If no result, communicate in writing and follow up by meeting in person with district administrators and school board members. Speak with them about how students' needs are not being met and the need for inclusion.

Your child's teacher believes that children with disabilities should participate in mainstream schools but is not sure how to deliver and support that learning

- Share your knowledge and deep commitment to having inclusive education. Offer to work together to make sure the school can provide the necessary professional development.

- If no result, meet with the school principal and request that grade or subject teachers receive the inclusive education training needed to engage students with disabilities.

- If no result, communicate in writing and follow up by meeting in person with school board members or the district education office. Ask why teachers are not well prepared and receiving support to engage all students in learning.

Your child's school doesn't have the resources to provide accommodations to support students with disabilities

- Meet with the school principal and/or any support staff for inclusive education. Request that available resources be used to ensure that learning goals and objectives are being met for students with disabilities.

- If no result, communicate in writing and follow up by meeting in person with members of the school board or school committee. Request that they issue guidance on supporting students with disabilities.

- If this relates to an accommodation for an out-of-school activity such as extracurricular activities or a field trip, request a meeting with your child, any partner agency or organization, and school personnel. Work together to clarify the goals of the activity and the importance of including all children in that experience.

Contact sheet

Having all your contact information in one place makes it easier to reach out to people you need to speak to. For local decision maker contacts, ask your child's school or district office.

School Decision Makers (Principal, Teacher, Counsellor, School Committee or other staff)

Name	Phone number, email or address

District Decision Makers (Superintendent or Deputy Superintended, School Board Chair, School Board Member, Other District Staff)

Name	Phone number, email or address

Other parents/caregivers (They can be other parents/caregivers of children with or without disabilities)

Name	Phone number, email or address

Challenges and opportunities

There are some questions that you can ask teachers and school or district personnel to understand areas of challenges and opportunities relating to providing an inclusive education for your child.

Teacher preparedness

The strongest predictor of whether students receive an education that prepares them for success is whether educators (teachers, school leaders, other school professionals) feel that they have the skills and resources to support all learners. Your child's educators should have knowledge and training on supporting students with disabilities.

1. Have teachers received training on supporting all learners, including those with disabilities?

2. Is dedicated time built into the school's schedule for educators to work together on understanding and supporting individual students' needs?

Accessibility and accommodations

Thinking and planning about accommodations and accessibility should be a priority for inclusive schools. Schools and districts should explicitly mention how students with disabilities and other subgroups will have access to learning. An example might be whether the school is offering instruction that aligns with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – a framework that ensures that learners have multiple options for how teaching happens, how feedback is provided, and how assessments are conducted. This allows students to engage in learning in different ways.

1. Are the needs of students with disabilities explicitly mentioned in the school's improvement plan?

2. How is Universal Design for Learning being integrated into instruction, support and assessment?

3. Are there additional ways for children to be more fully engaged in learning?

Assessments

Schools might only be using standardized tests to track student progress. While these types of assessments are important, they may not show how an individual child is performing. A variety of measures should be used alongside standardized assessments and tests that look objectively at how students are doing compared to each other. These can include surveys of engagement, data on attendance, performance on projects, etc.

1. What are the different types of assessments used by the school? For what purposes are they being used? How are scores and other data being used?

2. Is the school measuring a full range of skills, including academic competencies like reading and maths, as well as other skills like collaboration, communication, or critical thinking?

3. Do the assessments follow the principles of Universal Design for Learning?

Interventions and Support Systems

Schools and districts must be proactive in planning how to respond when children struggle with learning. The school or district implementing the initiatives inclusively should be able to share how specific skills and learning dispositions are incorporated in their overall intervention systems.

1. What happens If a child is struggling to perform in one of the subjects or skills at school? How would you intervene?

2. How can parents support their children at home with learning?

Family and Community Engagement

Effective schools and districts engage parents and other caregivers in ensuring their vision for learning is inclusive. Schools and districts implementing learning in a way that emphasizes inclusivity have specific individuals or teams of people to communicate with parents of students with disabilities – as well as with parents who have disabilities themselves. And they provide other learning opportunities in an inclusive manner.

1. Are there specific ways that parents can be more helpful?

2. Who are your community partners? Are they able to support learning for all students, including those with disabilities?

Scripts for talking with school and local officials

When talking to school and district officials, it's important to be clear about the issues that matter to you. You want to leave the conversation with answers to your questions and know how to follow up. One way to do that is to start your conversation with a statement, then immediately follow up with a question.

Here are some examples you can use:

Script 1: "I'm worried that my child and other children with disabilities are being overlooked in our school. Is the school prepared to provide targeted interventions and are important skills being included in the goals for all students with disabilities?"

Script 2: "I have a child who receives specialized instruction and support, and I need you to know that test scores alone do not capture who they are and what they are capable of achieving. It is important to me that indicators of school quality and measures of student success go beyond test scores. They should capture how effectively my child is thinking critically, solving complex problems, and communicating and collaborating around their ideas. What indicators does the school currently use, and are these the best measures for rating school success for children like mine?"

You can also write down your own script or notes to prepare for your meetings:

Script 1:

Script 2:

Sample letter to officials

This sample letter offers some language to use or edit when writing to school or local education officials about how inclusive education.

Dear [recipient name],

I am the parent of [a child/children] with [insert type of disability]. I'm writing to find out how I can be more involved in efforts to ensure that my [son/daughter/children] [is/are] well prepared for success in school, participation in the workplace, and meaningful engagement in the community. I want to be sure that the school provides [him/her/them] with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours necessary for success.

I know what I'm referring to here isn't just the work of a single initiative or one teacher at a school. I want to learn how school and district leaders are thinking about inclusive education.

Who can I talk to so I can learn more and support your efforts? I'd like to learn how accommodations and interventions are chosen for students with different learning profiles, how progress is assessed, how decisions about changes in instruction are made, and how parents can play a meaningful supportive role. I hope that you can point me to the right people.

I look forward to hearing from you about how I can be involved in ensuring that my [child/children] and [his/her/their] friends are prepared for their bright future.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

for every child, answers

unicef
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