

Barriers and supports to participation in inclusive environments

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The Complexity of Disability

- 2008 UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons

“disability results from an interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”

- Disability as a fluid, dynamic experience. It changes with time and place.
- Disability as the impact of an impairment
The importance of understanding that impact from the young person's perspective and recognize the contextual and cultural nature of this
- Simple categories don't work



The absolute worst part of school is walking down the corridors and the unwanted attention I get from other kids. I feel trapped with their eyes on me



a short-film that I wrote to make people aware of what it is like to live with a disability. I want people to learn from my life experiences

And Inclusion ?

- Miller and Katz (2002) define it as: “.. a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best.”



Project Rationale



- Social and environmental barriers can constitute a major problem for many disabled children.
- Removing such obstacles is a major priority.
- To do this we need to find out who are the disabled children in our schools ..
- .. and we need to collect data from parents and children about things that help/hinder learning, and promote/prevent their full participation.

What did we do ?



- Parent Survey (1300)- if child had an impairment or health condition, what was the impact, what support was helpful for child
- Lesson Observations (42)- of “surprise” children
- Asked Children (c1200)
- 71 primary, 29 secondary and 24 special schools

Q6 How does your child's health condition or impairment affect your child in their daily life?

Blank

- a) No difficulty. Medication/aids/equipment allow my child to take a full part in home, community and school activities
- b) Occasionally it interferes with everyday activities but only in a minor way- there is an impact but it is trivial or small
- c) There are particular times and situations when activities are regularly stopped or limited because of the difficulty
- d) It frequently affects a number of daily activities
- e) The impact is felt on almost all activities every day

- **Impairment** is an uncertain predictor of impact
- [only] 44% of children with a diagnosis experienced a significant impact in their daily life.

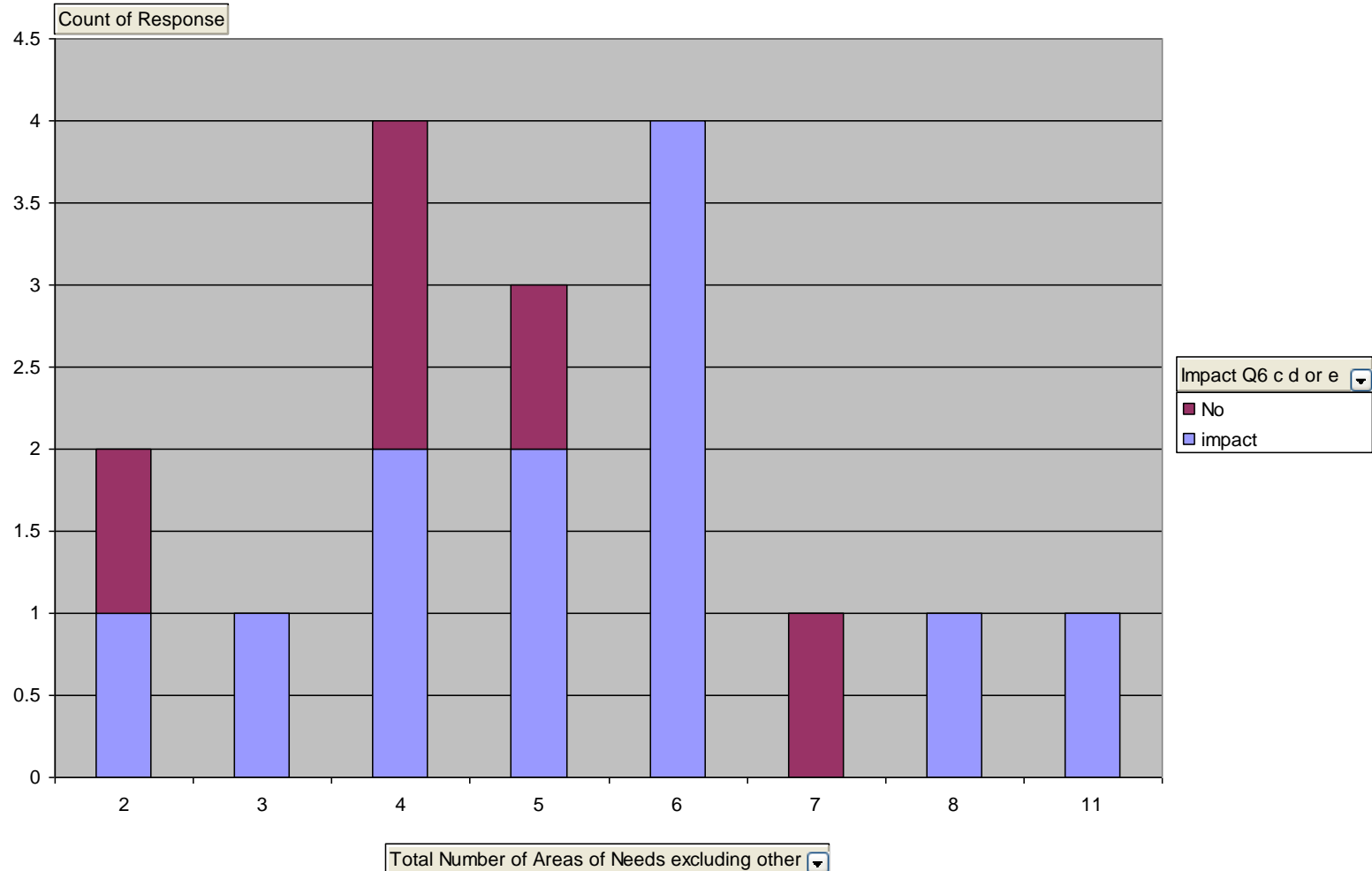
- UK data



Diagnosis, Need and Impact

Children with Down syndrome N=17

Down syndrome ds ▾



What parents said was helpful ?

- 1 in 3 parents in primary & special schools stated that small group, 1:1 or a teaching assistant was most important support for their child
- *Simplify things to help him understand.*
- *things repeated several times*
- *to catch up with his class mates*
- *lot of praise/support*
- *encouragement to complete work that he feels is too easy or uninteresting to him.*
- *calm discussion*



Parents & Support



- 1 in 5 parents commented on the attitudes, understanding of staff
- *P.E. teacher showing understanding of problem*
 - *asthma*
 - *Understanding that school absence is sometimes unavoidable*
- *C needs reassurance. He does not trust many people, he needs to respect you first.*
- *Just that she'd be happier at school if she was not stigmatized as a 'dunce'*
- *D needs support from teachers & friends. She suffers from anxiety and worries about my health*

Lesson observations

- schools are generally aware of difficulties that give rise to “problems” with participation in class.
- parental questionnaire surfaced experienced difficulties that remain invisible to the school and were unreported and may cause attendance difficulties
- also revealed cases where there was no difficulty experienced outside the school.

How schools use the parent data

- - To inform plans for targeting or monitoring support for children
 - To contact parents to follow-up issues they had mentioned
 - To help identify childrens' difficulties
 - To liaise with other professionals about health problems
 - To inform possible staff training/development events

Benefits identified by schools

- Provides opportunities for parents to voice their views/concerns about their child's difficulties
- Provides more detailed information
- Reminder that 'accidents or traumas' needs to be included in the school's records
- Highlights the needs of childrens who have recently been admitted
- Helps staff reflect on views/definitions of disability



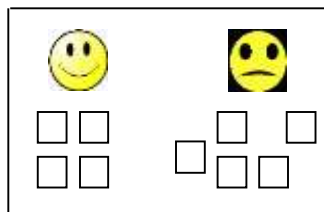
What do the children say ?

- 6 activities to access children's views
- Developed with teachers to find out what worked.
- Guidance given to schools on choice of tool to suit context, age, pupil groupings, staffing, communication needs



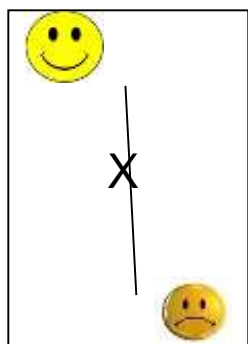
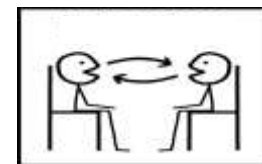
Six Tools

More flexible.....More structured



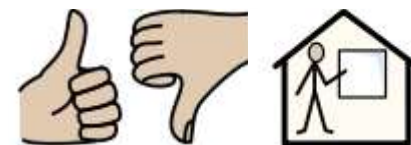
Talking Mats

Pupil Interviews



Point2point

Symbol questionnaire



Focus Group



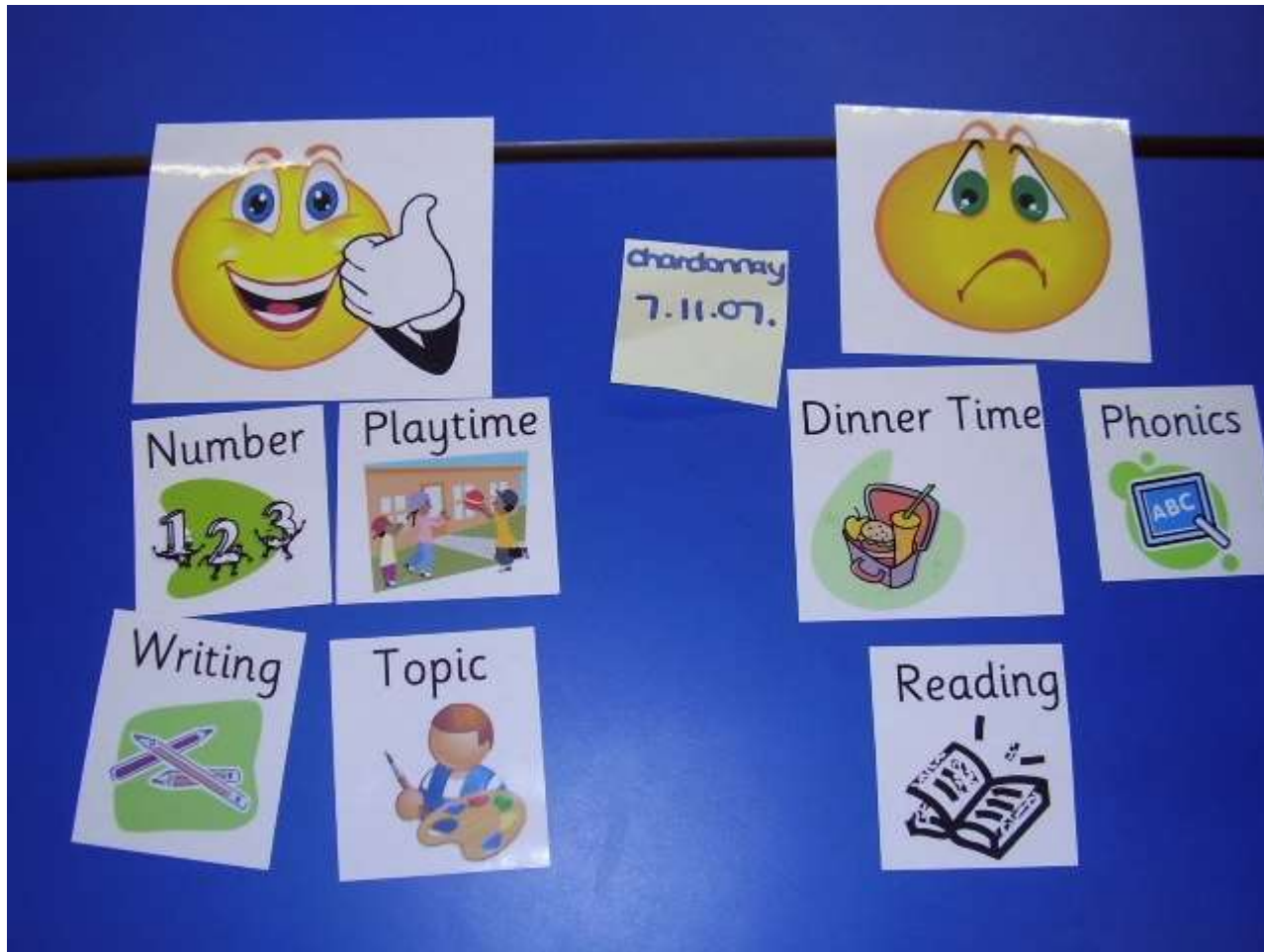
Online questionnaire

Guidance



- Universal approach- *all* children
- Introduction is important- no right answers
- Show you value difference -that everyone has things they find tricky...
- Use supportive devices- visual, tangible as well as around communication
- Give space for open responses- not just yes, no questions

Talking Mats



Talking Mats - responses

- Organisation - uncomfortable - e.g. assemblies too hot, too crowded, and too long (especially for children in wheelchairs)
- Play time - fear of getting knocked over by bigger children or a preference for staying inside by choice instead of being sent there after having misbehaved outside.
- Places - canteen (noisy) school toilets, “doors that bang”, corridors (too busy)

From: Online Pupil Questionnaire

1. How do you generally feel at different times and in different places?



1. During lessons



2. During break



Can you tell me a bit more?



What helps at different times?

What makes things more difficult?

Online questionnaire : What Disabled (and Non-disabled) Children in Primary schools find difficult. N=180 (Non-Disabled N= 597)

*Alekhina & Kostina (2014) 6-7 year olds “Good and Bad things about school”

Do you find it difficult ...	Yes some or all of the time	Moscow*
To get on with your classmates	41% (30%)	65%
To learn in class?	53% (35%)	72%
To get on with teachers and/or other people who work in the school?	32% (19%)	32%
To join in with school activities?	46% (27%)	
And what about life outside school? Do you find it difficult to do the things you want to do?	42% (25%)	

Online Questionnaire: Disabled Children's Views of Supports

*Alekhina & Kostina (2014) 10-11 year olds "Good and Bad things about school"

What helps at different times and places	Primary N=132
Friends	34% 48%*
School Staff	24% 9%*
Peers	8%
Family	5% 20%*

Alekina & Kostina 2014

“It is notable that 71% of children who study in the first form say that friendship is one of the most positive aspects of school life no matter what attitude they had towards school itself and lessons. However, only 5% of parents think that friendship is really important for their children.”



Identifying barriers

- Younger children identified objects and strategies that were difficult for them
Teachers shouting at me (yr 4)
Less time on the
- Emerging friendships
My best classmate Elana has gone off with Nancy and I don't have many
- Response question
the meanness of my classmates/the loneliness/my friends to not pick on me/ better relationships with my friends. (yr 4)

Identifying supports

- Young
strate
- Reco
fami
- Older
but als
peers

Sitting next to our
friends/working with someone I
like/my friends help me (yr 8)

nd

ies,

nd

Pilot data from the North Caucasus*

*

undertaken with Natalia Borozinets the Dean of the Faculty of Education (North-Caucasus Federal University)

What makes school difficult ?	Votes
Toilets on 2 nd floor only/ moving about the school	7
Having food brought here rather than going to the canteen	7
High steps	6
[not having]Longer breaks	4
[wanting to]Go back home earlier	4
Tired writing for a long time	4
Not being able to read and write - wanting a special computer	2
To write	2
To read	1
To write in a nice way	1
More opportunities to communicate with friends and girls	1
Get rid of exams (too many suicides because of them)	0

Implications for Inclusion

- Parent and child views have an important role to play in understanding the impact of a health condition/impairment/difficulty
- They contribute key perspectives on daily life and on the barriers and supports to inclusion
- Inclusion concerns participation and relationships are central to a positive experience

Implications for teaching

- Addressing aspects of interaction are central in developing inclusive practices
- Management of passage in crowded spaces reduces the likelihood of poor interactions, pushing, teasing, and name calling.
- Seating arrangements: sitting close enough to friends to support a sense of belonging or as one pupil wrote “*If people could sit near enough to friends to be comfortable but not so close that they would be distracted*”.
- These are really the *starting points* for considering change.

DON'T look and stare!
Smile and be aware!



'I say that everyone is unique so therefore different in their own way. I am differently-abled. I am NOT disabled,'

<https://vimeo.com/112501787>



Thank-you for listening!
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