In this chapter, we will talk about the range of special needs that may have to be addressed in an inclusive school for enabling students to learn and develop up to their potential. Adopting a more flexible and adaptive system capable of meeting diverse needs of students would result in educational success for all. Nevertheless, the description of learning needs given is not exhaustive. Students may exhibit a wide range of special needs in schools and meeting all these special needs is not the only change the schools require to become inclusive schools. This is only a part of the wider educational reform needs to improve the quality and relevance of learning experiences for all learners.

**Special Needs of Children**

While taking view of the special needs of children our main consideration should be their health, enjoyment, achievement, positive contributions, safety and success. Sometimes, the special...
needs of a few students may be in conflict with the learning process of other students. For example, a child may turn violent, disrupt the class and beat other children. In such a situation, it would be more feasible to provide this child an opportunity of special provisions that can cater to her/his specific needs. Once s/he have developed some control over her/his disrupting behaviour, s/he may join back the mainstream Class if s/he and her/his parents desire to do so.

It is important to safeguard interests of all children so that meeting the needs of one group does not put any other on a disadvantage.

In this chapter the following broad areas of special needs would be addressed:

- Cognition and Learning
- Behavioural and Emotional Development
- Sensory and Physical

**Cognition and Learning**

In India, specific learning difficulties are sometimes referred to as learning disabilities and include all types of learning difficulties children may experience in school. There is no typical profile associated with specific learning difficulties. The range and severity of special needs may vary from one student to another. The associated special needs are not easy to assess in the initial years as they are not visible and may go unnoticed. As the child grows older, a careful teacher, sensitive to the unique needs of different children in the class may be able to assess the level of these difficulties by constant observation in different settings. Most of these children study in regular mainstream schools. The provisions required would depend upon the nature of the special needs.

By and large, students having learning difficulties may have a specific problems in learning to read, write and spell (dyslexia) or in manipulating numbers (dyscalculia) or have poor physical
coordination (dyspraxia). The performance of these children may be below others in these particular areas. Sometimes, these children may exhibit problems in their short-term memory or in organisational skills.

The following table illustrates the some special needs of these students at various stages of schooling.

**Specific Learning Difficulties at Different Levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Learning Difficulties</th>
<th>Different Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties in Pre-primary level—difficulties in spoken language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties in School level—recognising words, poor spellings, comprehension, difficulties in structuring a sentence, reading in a halting manner, forgetting where one is reading, poor handwriting, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties with School level—difficulties in spatially discriminating numbers and copying shapes, recalling maths facts, writing numbers legibly, difficulties in using math vocabulary, solving word problems, maths calculations etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Variations</td>
<td>• Problems with short-term memory and even in long-term memory for tasks requiring semantic processing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Problems in developing strategies for acquiring, storing and processing information (metacognition).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Restlessness, inability to sit still in one place for long periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Difficulties in social interactions and mobility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Difficulties in mobility, coordination, communication and perception.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students having severe learning difficulties may also have sensory impairments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Provisions at the School Level**

Students with specific learning difficulties may require resource support for meeting their individual needs. This support can be provided in their classroom after school hours or if possible, in another small room during school hours. The support can be provided on a one-to-one basis or in a small group.

Some students may require resource support on a timetable basis. That is, in the school timetable such provisions need to be made for these students. In case, the school does not have expertise to take care of the special needs of these students, such expertise, if possible, can be mobilised from other sources like the nearby voluntary organisations. Provisions for meeting special needs of students with specific learning difficulties would include – making accommodations in the curriculum, providing adequate space in the classroom for keeping learning aids etc. In case the school can afford a computer for ICT, it would be beneficial for these students. The need for specialist support would depend upon the nature and severity of needs. The support requirements may also vary according to the different stages of school.

**Early Intervention and Pre-school Years** – Early assessment of needs and interventions would help in minimising the learning problems of children at risk for learning difficulties. Instead of just labelling children, it would be better for the Anganwadi or Balwadi workers or teachers to observe the child carefully and continuously so that any variations in the language pattern, specifically delays in receptive and expressive language, variations in attention patterns, auditory and spatial perception can be assessed and interventions planned with the support of a specialist before major academic difficulties emerge. The curriculum at the pre-school stage can be structured around areas like attending and listening, perception, language development, creative expression, mathematics and physical education.

**Elementary Years** – The specific learning difficulties of most children are easily identifiable at this stage. In an inclusive set up, these children experience the same curriculum as others with modifications and adaptations if necessary. The main focus should be on promoting success by making use of appropriate tasks that can be accomplished by these children. Examples of these accommodations are – providing a study guide for a subject like social studies, giving extra time for tests, taking shorter tests,
learning spellings of different words than their peers. The students may require resource support in language, mathematics and for teaching them learning strategies on weekly basis. The skills of these children can improve significantly with appropriate interventions.

*Secondary School Years* – During these years the emphasis is on learning content and the students facing learning difficulties may fall behind their peers in different subjects. These students can be assisted in developing cognitive strategies for negotiating different content areas. For this, they may need study guides, visual and graphic depiction of content areas for better understanding, mnemonic devices (memory aids) for better remembering of content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To summarise, the provisions required are:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➤ adequate indoor and outdoor space for providing resource support;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ learning aids: talking books, supplementary material, study guides, pictures, graphic depictions for content enrichment, mnemonic devices;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ teacher training in special instructional strategies; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ specialist support-Itinerant or school based Computers for ICT.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Behavioural and Emotional**

Behavioural and Emotional Problems in students are not given their due importance in our classrooms. Any student exhibiting
behavioural problems is considered to be in need of proper discipline. Students may exhibit behavioural problems that can be dealt with appropriate disciplinary practices. On the other hand, you also see students who are having serious behavioural disturbances and emotional problems that interfere with their learning process and social interactions. Consider the following story:

**A girl called Sita**

Sita is a thirteen year old girl studying in Class VIII. She does not like to talk much to anyone, has no friends, never asks questions in the class and stays aloof from everyone. She had managed to remain an invisible child till one day when she was noticed by her teacher climbing the stairs to the roof of her school building. The teacher who saw her going up found it quite an unusual behaviour and some instinct made her hurriedly follow Sita right to the top of the two storied school. She reached up just in time to prevent Sita from jumping from the roof and ending her miserable life. The teacher shaken by the whole episode tried to find out why Sita had decided to take such a drastic step. In her interaction with the teacher and the school principal Sita revealed that she remained emotionally disturbed because of her family circumstances. Her father was an alcoholic and would spend all his earnings in buying alcohol. Her mother who had to feed two more mouths of Sita’s younger brother and sister was having constant fights with her husband over his drinking habit to the extent that many times she would be physically abused in front of the children. The environment of her house and the constant physical and verbal abuse of her mother made her miserable and led her to depression. She gradually started withdrawing from others around her and did not feel like doing anything. The feeling of hopelessness increased to an extent that one fateful day she decided to end her own life.

Childhood is generally considered a carefree time of life. In difficult times when we are feeling tired of responsibilities of daily living, we may, remember our childhood and wish we were young again. Though, every child may face emotional difficulties while growing up at some point of her/his life, the story of Sita clearly illustrates that in some children and adolescents these emotional problems may take a serious turn. If the problems a child is experiencing are seen as fairly severe, and are unresponsive to interventions at school, in the community or at home, an assessment by a competent mental health professional is probably in order.
As mentioned earlier, emotional and behavioural problems may manifest themselves in a number of ways. The child or youth may be destructive, show outbursts of temper, be abusive, obstinate, refuse to follow any directions, may lie, steal or else indulge in alcohol or drug abuse. Alternatively children and youth may also be emotionally disturbed if they are socially withdrawn, anxious, fearful or depressed like Sita. The special needs of these children can be classified in the following way:

**Individualised curricular and academic needs** – Students may benefit from adaptations to the curriculum, alteration in the pace of delivery, improvements to the instructional and organisational ecology, by providing instructional feedback, continually assessing the students’ learning and understanding, and instruction in learning and study skills.

**Social Needs** – Children and youth having emotional and behavioural problems may sometimes exhibit problems in interpersonal behaviours that hamper their successful interaction with others. This may result in difficulties in their being socially accepted by other children. Training them in social skills, pairing them with other students and providing cooperative goals, opportunities for playing games, telling-stories, or singing songs together encourage interaction.

**Management of Behaviour** – Effective strategies to support the development of effective behaviour may be required from time-to-time. If a child throws tantrums and disrupts the class s/he needs to be exposed to opportunities for developing alternative behaviours.

**Counselling Needs** – Some students may require professional support of a counsellor to overcome their behavioural and emotional problems.

**Provisions**

The assessment of the special needs of a child with behavioural and emotional problems is the first step that needs to be taken. For this purpose information can be gathered from multiple sources like family members, neighbours and peers etc.

The school may also engage services of a psychologist or a counsellor. In case the school does not have a counsellor on a regular basis, it may need to mobilise the services of a counsellor from some other institution. Many times services rendered by a social worker are also of great advantage.
The school may also provide opportunities for team work and social interactions in multiple situations. Provisions for this can be inbuilt in the timetable or in the learning strategies children are exposed to. For example, teachers can use group work as one of the learning strategy in the classroom.

*Early Intervention and Pre-school Years* – The students may exhibit behavioural problems at this stage that can be appropriately changed by timely interventions. Some students may exhibit low self-esteem that needs to be developed and there would be others who would benefit from opportunities for safe exploration, language development activities like story-telling, acting or role-playing. Students must be helped to express themselves and socially interact with each other to maintain good mental health. Participating in art, music and dance also has therapeutic effects. Meanwhile academic skills of reading and writing need to be successfully developed.

*Elementary Level* – At this level of education the child may be given full opportunity to take advantage of natural surroundings. There may be need for specialist support and behavioural interventions specially because the other young children in the class would be unable to defend themselves in the face of any aggressive behaviour. Counselling and advocacy of the parents is important and they can be trained to provide resource support. The major provision at this stage is integration of mental health services in school provisions.

*Secondary School Level* – Management of behavioural problems becomes more and more difficult as the child grows older. Therefore, in-service training for teachers is important at this stage for handling complex behavioural and emotional problems. In addition to academic support, providing opportunities for participation in games and other activities helps. If any student disrupts the class the teacher can give an option to the child for either behaving herself/himself and staying in or altogether leaving the class. The power of making a choice would come by providing these options. Also pairing with other student who can support the needs of the student helps at this stage. The main strategy to be used is to solve the problem when it occurs.
Sensory and/or Physical

Special needs of Children with Hearing Impairment

A child has hearing impairment if s/he requires hearing aids, specific adaptations in the environment and/or particular teaching-learning strategies in order to access the concepts and language of the curriculum. The definition of hearing impairment as per the PWD Act, 1995 has already been given in the earlier chapter.

If you happen to visit a regular school especially in a village you may not see any children with hearing impairment studying in that school. That is because a child with hearing impairment, inspite of being as intelligent as any other child, has major problems...
in language acquisition and is unable to understand what is going on in the class if her/his special needs are not adequately addressed.

The special needs of students with hearing impairments may differ for each child, and may depend upon a number of factors like the degree of hearing loss, timely interventions, parental support, specialist support etc. Let us first understand the nature of special needs a child with hearing impairment may experience on a normal school day with the help of the following description:

**A day in the life of Gaurav**

Gaurav wakes his mother Kamla early in the morning by tapping his small hands on her shoulder. It is 6 a.m. and he needs to go to the bathroom. “Come on” he beckons and his mother looks in the eyes of her four year old who is hard of hearing. Gaurav wants his breakfast now and he tries to convey this through gestures. Kamla is still tired from the earlier day as she had a number of guests. She prepares some **Poha** while Gaurav pounds on the table indicating that he is really hungry and devours his food in a flash.

Once satisfied he starts playing. Kamla helps him put his shirt on but he takes care of the rest. When he is ready Kamla drops him to a pre-school nearby. When they reach the pre-school he waves her “bye-bye” and she looks at him in wonder. Earlier he used to cry everyday when she would drop him there. Seeing his willingness she is pleased that he likes his school now. In the school Gaurav sits with other children. He helps his teacher to check the hearing aid and while she is doing it the other children crowd around him and watch them. He then plays with the building blocks and stuffed toys. The teacher then tell them a story and along with it she signs for Gaurav. The signs she uses are the local signs used by Gaurav’s mother to communicate with her son. These signs have also been used by an older boy who is studying in Class 4th of the primary school. After some more group activities, there is recess and everyone eat some snack. Gaurav then interacts with a speech pathologist who comes from a nearby special school. Gaurav is picked up after pre-school by his mother. After coming home he sits in front of the television and watches
the cricket test match. He shouts and claps whenever the Indian batsman hits four or six runs. He enjoys clapping with the audience. Later he goes out to play with the other boys and girls in the neighbourhood.

Kamla then cooks dinner and waits for her husband Krishna to come from work. Krishna returns home by six in the evening and Gaurav rushes into his arms. Krishna picks him on his shoulder and plays for a while and then watches news on television. When dinner is ready Gaurav calls Krishna for dinner. It is then time to sleep and Gaurav is getting ready for bed. “Your numbers” Kamla prompts with her voice and sign language. Gaurav signs one to three and stops at ten. “Good boy” and Kamla claps and puts Gaurav to sleep.

Students with hearing impairments may have special needs in the following areas:

**Communication**

Picture yourself in a situation when you are not able to communicate or share information with your fellow beings because you cannot understand the language s/he speaks. This is the major frustration children and youth with hearing loss face in their daily lives. They may use different approaches or combination of these approaches to communicate with other people. These include oral (speech reading)/aural (remaining residual hearing), sign language and total communication which in addition to the above may include images and informal gestures.

**Social Relations**

Imagine if you were viewing this world more through your eyes than through your ears. Would there be any difference in your behaviour as compared to others?

Certain behavioural differences do occur like a person with hearing loss may have to look closely at the face of the other individual to read her/his lips, tap on the shoulder for drawing attention, use body or hands to communicate. This may sometimes be considered as a rude behaviour by others specially if they are not aware of the special needs of persons with hearing impairments. This is why in mainstream schools children with hearing impairments are usually seen communicating only with one
another and not with their other peers though it will be of great advantage for them to interact with other children too. The National Curriculum Framework-2005 (NCERT), offers sign language as an option for all children with or without hearing loss that would result in better communication amongst children. Opportunities to participate in games and other activities together helps in better socialisation for all children.

**Education**

Children with hearing loss have problems in language acquisition and that results in their becoming under-achievers in subjects like reading. With early interventions they are able to pick up language, read and gain information about their surroundings. Following is the summary of special needs of students with hearing impairments at different stages of schooling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Needs</th>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Provisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Needs</td>
<td><strong>Early and Pre-school level:</strong></td>
<td>Specialist Support: Specialist Support/Sign Language Interpreters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Language Development-tapping into child’s natural language ability</td>
<td>Hearing Aids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Development of residual hearing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Working with families to help them communicate with their children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Primary, Elementary and Secondary Level:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Development of universal and consistent language:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All who communicate to child with hearing impairments using the same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Development of social skills and peer relations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Parent involvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Needs</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Early and Pre-school level:**
- Communication with other children through play activities

**Primary, Elementary and Secondary Level:**
- Developing social skills and peer relations with hearing students
- Facilitating friendships

**Early and Pre-school level:**
- Language Development
- Pre teaching
- Concept Formation

**Primary, Elementary and Secondary Level:**
- Familiarity with concepts, vocabulary they encounter
- Language development
- Curriculum adaptations (develop cognitive skills like problem solving, acquisition of concepts, and give wide range of practical experiences related to cognitive

**Specialist support**
- Signing by other students
- Specialist support and assistive devices
- Developing communication strategies (teaching communication strategies to children without hearing impairments so that they can get into the styles of students with hearing impairments and formulation of clubs, core groups that include both hearing and non-hearing students as members)
- Specialist support teaching-learning materials-pictures, posters etc.
- Teacher training
- Close collaboration with Specialists
- Use of visual aids and teaching learning materials-pictures, posters etc.
- Classroom management—Good quality lighting in the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Classrooms, Appropriate amplification. Good acoustics for speech intelligibility and sound insulation to ensure low background noise.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Overcoming academic challenges and providing successes,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extra-curricular opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**To summarise, hearing impairment in a child necessitates**
- Early intervention
- Development of sign language/total communication
- Specialist support
- Assistive devices
- Teaching learning materials
- Classroom management for good acoustics and lip reading

**Special Needs of Children with Visual Impairments**

Any child can have problems in seeing and may require spectacles to improve her/his vision. Sometimes, you may have seen people who are not able to see at all. You may also notice that in some of them, one or both eyes may not appear to have a normal appearance. In simple words, visual impairment has been defined as the diminishment of the ability to see (Nielsen, 2002). The terms partially sighted, legally blind, low vision, and totally blind are commonly used to describe visual impairments. The National Programme for Control of Blindness in India has given a simple definition of blindness describing it as the inability of a person to

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count fingers from a distance of 6 meters or 20 feet. The PWD Act, 1995 divides the inability to see under two categories—Blindness and Low Vision—that have already been defined in the last chapter.

The population of students with visual impairments is very heterogeneous. They may differ from each other on a number of factors like visual functioning, socio-economic status, parents’ support, cultural background, age of onset of visual impairment, their cognitive abilities and the variety of experiences they have been exposed to. Some of them may even have more than one disability. However, one important characteristic common among all is the limited ability to learn incidentally from the environment. For example, a young child who can see properly is exposed to the alphabets incidentally before he starts to read. These letters appear on boxes, on toys, on newspapers delivered everyday at home or on street signs at various places. Such incidental opportunities need to be created for children who have problems in seeing.

There are other characteristics common to children with visual impairments. These are:

*Limitation in the range and variety of experiences* – Since the child with visual impairment cannot perceive objects in the environment beyond her/his grasp including those that are too large, too small or are moving. Because of this early concept development is particularly influenced.

*Limitation in the Ability to Get Around* – Restriction in movement due to limited spontaneous ability to move may influence a child’s early motor development and early explorations of the world. This limited ability to move may result in reducing the opportunities for intellectual and social development of the child.

The following table illustrates the unique needs of children with visual impairments at different stages of schooling along with the provisions required. Although there is no clear cut demarcation between developments from one stage and another because of the diverse population of students with visual impairments, these children benefit from developing skills in three major areas—skills that are learned incidentally by students who can see properly, skills that help in gaining access to academic curriculum, and skills specific to students with visual impairments like learning Braille, orientation and mobility. As you see in the Table given on page 36, some of these skills may overlap in areas like learning Braille is important for communication and also for academics. Also, the same provision may sometimes be required at different stages like an orientation and mobility instructor may be required at all stages of school.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Needs</th>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Provisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Orientation and Mobility | Early and Pre-school Years:  
- Acquisition of body image and spatial concepts  
- Ability to develop appropriate posture, balance, strength and movement  
- Use of cane  
Elementary School Years:  
- Increasing knowledge of Environment  
Secondary School Years:  
- Mastering difficult travel situations (kachcha roads, buses, uneven terrain etc.) | Orientation and Mobility instructors, assistive devices like canes, visual contrasts, tactile trails and cues for finding path etc. |
| Communication Skills | Early and Pre-school Years:  
- Reading and Writing Braille  
Primary/Elementary School Years:  
- Social skills–learning to face the person speaking to, appropriate postures, eliminating mannerisms | Orientation and mobility instructors and assistive devices  
Visual contrasts, tactile trails and cues for finding path etc |
| Sensory Motor Skills | Early and Pre-school Years:  
- Spatial and Orientation Skills: developing other senses like sense of smell, touch, hearing, taste and kinesthetic awareness, language, visual training etc. | Specialist support  
Specialist support, Braille slates and Stylus, Braille paper etc.  
Specialist support and required assistive devices like models, toys etc. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Living Skills</th>
<th>Early and Pre-school Years:</th>
<th>Elementary/Secondary School Years:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene including toilet training, eating food without spilling, maintaining proper posture in school, tying shoelaces, buttoning shirts, wearing clothes, identifying money, identifying clothes, knowing time, drinking hot and cold liquids etc.</td>
<td>Special Educator, Special assistive and adaptive devices like talking clocks, alarm clocks, tape recorders, games and puzzles, rattles bells, audible ball etc.</td>
<td>Specialist support, kitchen equipment and personal devices etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of language and reading skills</td>
<td>Learning devices like talking books, geometric shapes and solids, puzzles, toys, building blocks, models, real objects and three dimensional learning aids</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Skills</td>
<td>Early and Pre-school Years:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of language and reading skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching arithmetic orally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching of shapes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Physical Fitness and Recreation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Elementary School Years:</strong></th>
<th>• Development of Concepts (touch, talk, residual vision, concrete experiences)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary School Years:</strong></td>
<td>• Instructional support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reinforcing concepts presented in the class – tactual experience with real objects, transforming all material used in the class like map, graph into large print, Braille or tactile display, books in large print, Braille and talking books.

Learning aids – Arithmetic and braille writing slate, taylor Arithmetic frame abacus, primary mathematics kit, Spur wheel, tape recorders, computers, geography devices, science devices etc.

### Vocational Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Physical Fitness and Recreation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Secondary School Years:</strong> Student needs support in various subjects specially maths and science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early and Pre-School Year:</strong></td>
<td>Games, sports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Subject teacher support specially in maths and science. Learning aids according to the subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Primary/Elementary/Secondary School Years:</strong></th>
<th>Games–chess, playing cards, squabble etc. Sports–cricket, football, swimming, athletics, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elementary Level:</strong></td>
<td>• Development of career awareness skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary School Years:</strong></td>
<td>• Intense career exploration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adaptive sports devices like audible ball.

Resource support to sports teacher.

Adaptive sports devices adaptive play grounds.

Specialist support.
When there is a student with visual impairment in the class, the teacher needs to make assessment of her/his special needs in order to create favourable situations so that s/he is able to participate in all the learning experiences to the best of her/his ability. Normally, a number of students may be able to cope up with the mainstream education without any resource provision. Others may require resource support depending on their age and range of needs.

To summarise, the provisions required are:
- specialist support for developing various skills;
- assistive devices;
- classroom organisation;
- adaptive playgrounds;
- teaching learning materials; and
- colour contrasts.

**Special Needs of Students with Locomotor Disability**

There are a number of medical conditions associated with Locomotor disability which may affect the mobility of the child. These include cerebral palsy, spina bifida, hydrocephalus and muscular dystrophy. A few of these learners may be mobile but have significant fine-motor difficulties. Some of them may also have sensory impairments, neurological problems or learning difficulties. Others may require augmentative or alternative communication aids. In the sense, students having locomotor problems exhibit a wide range of special needs. Many are able to access the curriculum without any additional educational provision because even if they have a disability they do not have a special educational need. For others the impact on their
education may be severe. The definition of locomotor disability in the PWD Act is given in the earlier chapter. These children may have special needs in areas like education, mobility, communication, seating, personal care and daily living. The special needs can be addressed by different interventions at different levels of schooling.

**Early Intervention and Pre-school Years**

The child may be having problems with mobility and may require special physical care. It is also possible that her/his speech may not be clear or s/he is not able to speak at all. Instead of excluding her/him from class activities or treating her/him as invisible, it would be better to use alternative communication modes and take specialist help to improve her/him mobility skills. Her/his fellow students can also be involved in providing the required support. The specialist can assist both the teachers and parents to adapt various things like toys, crayons, to use varied mobility devices, and to supplement natural acquired speech, and in augmentative and alternative modes of communication.

**Elementary School Years**

The necessary provisions would vary with the nature and severity of the special needs. The physical environment for these children must be accessible and they would benefit from studying in the neighbourhood school. While travelling to the school, they may require accessible transport.

Inclusions of children with locomotor problems in education would necessitate the removal of architectural barriers and making school buildings accessible with simple ramps, handrails, wide doorways, proper toilet arrangements and also seating arrangements since it is difficult for some of these students to sit in one place without changing position. Removal of architectural barriers will help these children to participate fully in the educational process.

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**Provisions Required**

- Medical Provisions
- Physiotherapist
- Speech pathologist
- Proper toilet and assistance with toileting
- Mobility devices
- Adapted furniture
- Accessible ramps and handrails
- Accessible play equipment.

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I was once asked a question by my peer while I was eating my tiffin: Are you going to die young? Why do people act stupidly with me? Is it because I am different from them? (A girl with physical disability who cannot speak properly)
Meeting Special Needs in Schools

students to be more independent. Modification in the assessment procedures, identification of required assistive technology, assistance from peers for managing their books and school materials and support of a physiotherapist to improve the mobility, posture and efficient movement are some of the special needs associated with locomotor disability at this stage.

Secondary Years

At this stage the emphasis would be more on building self-esteem, leadership and involving the community to provide these students opportunities to interact more and more with other teenagers. Focus of all endeavours is to assist students in gaining both personal and academic independence.

Other Special Needs

Now and then you may also see a student engaging in distracting behaviour such as loud laughter or hugging a peer who does not want to be hugged. You may notice that s/he lacks interest in class activities and appears to be helpless with new activities. You may also come across children exhibiting limitation in adaptive skills like To include does not mean to exclude from special supports.
communication, self care, social skills, functional academic skills etc. and need support to go on with their life.

You may be tempted to stop a child’s distracting behaviour, scold her/him or excluding her/him from classroom activity. Instead of doing so, you can assist this child in identifying an alternative acceptable behaviour by using techniques of role-play, maintain high expectations from her/him but modify the curriculum in accordance with her/his special needs and give her/him a chance to participate in activities which s/he can successfully accomplish.

Also, providing opportunities for leadership can result in changing attitudes in the classroom. Acceptance, assistance and tutoring by peers help the child with intellectual challenges to grow with others to the best of her/his ability.

The following description of special needs would help in bringing the required changes in the school system.

Prabhu is an eight year old boy who goes to the neighbourhood school with his elder sister Meena. Everyday in the morning his sister puts on the radio for waking him up. After getting up he asks her, “Do we have school today”? Meena assures him, “Yes there is school today” and Prabhu looks happy. He gets up and gets ready but makes a lot of fuss about eating anything before going to school. Finally both Prabhu and Meena leave for school walking and Prabhu runs ahead because he knows the way and is quite proud of it. After reaching school, both of them go to their respective classes. In his class Prabhu hangs out with his classmates.

In the beginning Prabhu had no friends. Making friends and learning appropriate social interactions has been a struggle. He would just hug his peers who would keep discouraging him from doing so. Gradually he learned that this was not welcome behaviour and he stopped doing it. Now, even if he finds their conversation difficult to
understand, he is happy staying close to them and playing whenever possible. In his language class his goals are modified. While others can read stories he listens to them and looks at the pictures. Gradually he has started reading a few words with the help of his friends and would sometimes tell the same story to his nephew who is just three years old. This makes him feel very proud and grown up. There are other activities in the language class which are quite a lot of fun. The teacher gives commands like “Put your hands on top of your head”, “Put your finger on your knees”. It is fun to do all this in class and learn concepts like “top”, “over”, “bottom”, “under” etc. After a while when other children are doing some written assignment his teacher calls Prabhu and tries to teach him money concepts. Prabhu recognises different coins and how many of them make a rupee. Maths is a difficult subject for Prabhu but his teacher Malini does not hear the words “I can’t”. She has high expectations from all her students and believes that there is no failure but only learning. This encourages all students and Prabhu also counts the coins with little help from his peers. After returning from school Prabhu plays cricket with children from his neighbourhood and enjoys this game. He loves to throw ball and feels happy when he gets success in this game and all the other children praise him.

The above description clearly points out that diversities in the classroom make learning interesting. It is important to emphasise a life skills curriculum at an earlier stage to help the students to succeed in the environments they encounter everyday. The provision of a special educator intermittently may be important while developing classroom plans and learning strategies.

Finally, there may also be children in the classroom having problems:

- with understanding and using non-verbal, verbal and social cues;
- in social interactions;
- in thinking flexibly and playing imaginatively;
- in behaviour patterns and may exhibit extremely rigid and repetitive patterns of unusual behaviours like flapping hands or rocking or jumping; and
- in eye contact and may not respond when called.

These are the children within spectrum of autism and would exhibit a wide range of special needs. Some may appear to be
quiet and withdrawn while others may be hyperactive. No one type of intervention may be helpful in meeting these special needs and what works at an earlier stage may not work at a later stage. However, early intervention and mediation for language facilitation are quite helpful. Resource may be required for supporting accommodations in the curriculum delivery. Collaborating with a psychologist and a special educator would be advantageous to understand what is the best intervention at different stages of development.