

Working with a Child with a Physical Disability in an Early Years Setting

Things to Consider -

- Some children may need support with movement, coordination and balance. Some might use additional equipment such as a walking frame or a specialist chair.
- Find out what additional equipment and mobility aids are being used and if further training is required in using these, including Moving and Handling training.
- Talk with parents to gain information about their child's diagnosis and implications for them.
- Work with other professionals such as Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists who are involved with the child.
- Consider the need for individual risk assessments, fire evacuation plans and intimate care plans.
- A physical disability, alongside neurological and medical conditions may impact on other areas of development for the child, such as processing time, fatigue and speech - what strategies need to be considered to help in these areas and professional involvement ?
- Free online basic training is available for anyone working within the early years setting to develop their awareness and understanding of physical disabilities - **www. pdnet.org.uk**

The Learning Environment



- Consider if play equipment needs to be modified or if an additional adult is required to promote full participation.
- Help children develop movement skills and aim to engage children in active activities every session where possible. Follow advice from the Physio's.
- Practice fine motor skills regularly.
- Use repetition and routine to support understanding.
- Use heavy stable furniture and equipment that cannot be easily knocked over.
- Consider the physical space, so that a child can move easily and without risk of injury if they are using mobility aids around the environment.

Communication

- Children with physical disabilities may need extra support with communication and might use pictures, gestures, Makaton or technology such as tablets and speech devices. Encourage the child's peers to use the preferred communication method during learning activities and play.
- Provide a schedule and routine -Visual and verbal clues can let children know what is coming up.
- Ensure that there is plenty of time allowed for moving between activities.