

Certificate in Child Disability Studies

Module 4

Education



The Education of Children with Disabilities

Section 1 The current local situation

In October and November 2006 four regular schools were visited in Mashan and four in Fusui. The total number of children attending the 4 schools in Mashan was 1888. Of these, 18 children (0.9%) had been identified as having a disability. In Fusui the total number of children attending the 4 schools is 3636. Of these, 23 children (0.6%) had been identified as having a disability. All the children identified have an impairment but for eight of these children in Mashan and 7 in Fusui this impairment does not affect their school work or their everyday lives.



This boy, for example, has quick lime burns to one side of his body. The burns do not affect his ability to carry out everyday task or his school work.

Ten children in Mashan (0.05% of the schools' total population) and sixteen children in Fusui (0.045% of the schools' total population) have a disability that affects their school work and may affect their everyday lives. None has a severe disability. Children with severe disabilities are not thought of as potential school pupils.

Children who need help with daily living skills cannot be accepted in special schools, however intelligent they may be. There are 64 children attending the special school in Mashan and 107 children in Fusui. All have a disability but all are independently mobile and independent in self-care

Generally schools do not adapt any aspect of their provision to the needs of the range of children in any one class. Currently children have to be able to cope with a very rigid concept of schooling, if they are to attend school at all. If they cannot fit into the ways in which the school makes provision, they cannot attend. All classrooms are very formal with desks in rows. There is no scope for individual or small group work, or for children to work on different topics or at different levels. Teaching is based on the curriculum for the grade, and not on the learning needs of the children in the class. Although the curriculum is different, special schools replicate regular schools and make very few adaptations to meet the learning needs of the children.

Adaptations or adjustments to support children with disabilities in school are very rare. In one (private) school, a special seat had been made for a child with achondroplasia, who is very short

. Some children with intellectual difficulties in regular schools are placed in a grade lower than their age group. For two boys with intellectual disabilities this was significantly below their chronological age group.

Children who need any help with daily living activities or who cannot walk or climb steps cannot go to school, other than Fang Zhou School and Angel House in Nanning, both of which are special schools run as charities which are independent of the educational system. All the schools visited had steps, even up to the ground (first) floor. In several cases these were very steep. No outdoor steps have handrails. The outdoor and play areas in most schools also have additional hazards, such as broken paving stones, pipes at ground level across doorways or slippery floors, for children who have poor vision or who are unsteady on their feet.

Schools have little good information about the children's impairments or disabilities. Information usually comes from parents who may not have had a full diagnosis of their child's condition and whose understanding of the issues may be incomplete.

The language of instruction is Mandarin Chinese. In rural areas this is not the language which children speak at home. There is little recognition of the difficulties that it may cause if the children do not understand the language of instruction, particularly if they are slow learners or have difficulties with hearing or understanding.

Surveys carried out by Handicap International indicate that some 50% of children of school age who have disabilities do not attend school.

Section 2 Knowing the current educational system

In order for judgements to be made about the kind of education that would be most beneficial for each individual child with a disability, it is vital for experts to have a good understanding of the overall educational system, particularly up to the end of primary education. The part of the module is designed to encourage you to gain information on the education system as it exists in your locality and in the localities of the children you work with. The following piece of information on the development of modern education in China was taken from the internet. It does not contain very recent information. Do you recognize the description? What has changed in the last five –ten years? Is any part of this particularly relevant to your county or city?

Children usually enter primary school at seven years of age for six days a week. The two-semester school year consists of 9.5 months, with a long vacation in July and August. Urban primary schools typically divide the school week into twenty-four to twenty-seven classes of forty-five minutes each, but in the rural areas the norm is half-day schooling, more flexible schedules, and itinerant teachers. Most primary schools have a five-year course, except in such cities as Beijing and Shanghai, which have reintroduced six-year primary schools and accepted children at six and one-half years rather than seven. The primary-school curriculum consists of: Chinese, mathematics, physical education, music, drawing, and elementary instruction in nature, history, and geography, combined with practical work experiences around the school compound. A general knowledge of politics and moral training, which stresses love of the motherland, love of the party, and love of the people (and previously love of Chairman Mao), is another part of the curriculum. A foreign language, often English, is introduced in about the third grade. Chinese and mathematics account for about 60 percent of the scheduled class time; natural science and social science accounted for about 8 percent.

Putonghua is taught in regular schools and pinyin romanization in lower grades and kindergarten. In the past the State Education Commission requires that all primary schools offer courses on communist ideology and morality. Beginning in the fourth grade, students usually had to perform productive labor two weeks per semester to relate class work with production experience in workshops or on farms and subordinate it to academic study. Most schools had after-hour activities at least one day per week--often organized by the Young Pioneers--to involve students in recreation and community service.

Since about 1980 the percentage of students enrolled in primary schools was high, but the schools reported high dropout rates and regional enrollment gaps (most enrollees were concentrated in the cities). Only one in four counties had universal primary education. On the average, 10-percent of the students dropped out between each grade. During the 1979-83 period, the government acknowledged the "9-6-3" rule, that is, that nine of ten children began primary school, six completed it, and three graduated with good performance. This meant that only about 60 percent of primary students actually completed their five year program of study and graduated, and only about 30 percent were regarded as having primary-level competence. Statistics showed that more rural girls than boys dropped out of school.

Within the framework of the Law on Nine-Year Compulsory Education and the general trend toward vocational and technical skills, attempts were made to accommodate and correct the gap between urban and rural education. Urban and key schools almost invariably operated on a six day full-time schedule to prepare students for further education and high-level jobs. Rural schools generally operated on a flexible schedule geared to the needs of the agricultural seasons and sought to prepare students for adult life and manual labor in lower-skilled jobs. They also offered a more limited curriculum, often only Chinese, mathematics, and morals. To promote attendance and allow the class schedule and academic year to be completed, agricultural seasons were taken into account. School holidays were moved, school days shortened, and full-time, half-time, and spare-time classes offered in the slack agricultural seasons. Sometimes itinerant teachers were hired for mountain villages and served one village in the morning, another village in the afternoon.

Rural parents were generally well aware that their children had limited opportunities to further their education. Some parents saw little use in having their children attend even primary school, especially after the

establishment of the agricultural responsibility system. Under that system, parents preferred that their children work to increase family income--and withdrew them from school--for both long and short periods of time.

Preschool Education

Preschool education, which began at age three and one-half, was another target of education reform in 1985. Preschool facilities were to be established in buildings made available by public enterprises, production teams, municipal authorities, local groups, and families. The government announced that it depended on individual organizations to sponsor their own preschool education and that preschool education was to become a part of the welfare services of various government organizations, institutes, and state- and collectively operated enterprises. Costs for preschool education varied according to services rendered. Officials also called for more preschool teachers with more appropriate training.

Special Education

The 1985 National Conference on Education also recognized the importance of special education, in the form of programs for gifted children and for slow learners. Gifted children were allowed to skip grades. Slow learners were encouraged to reach minimum standards, although those who did not maintain the pace seldom reached the next stage. For the most part, children with severe learning problems and those with handicaps and psychological needs were the responsibilities of their families. Extra provisions were made for blind and severely hearing-impaired children, although in 1984 special schools enrolled fewer than 2 percent of all eligible children in those categories. The China Welfare Fund, established in 1984, received state funding and had the right to solicit donations within China and from abroad, but special education remained a low government priority.

Practical Activity

Read the above information carefully and consider how much of it is true today. For example:

- Is the primary curriculum the same as is described here?
- How many hours a day do children attend primary school in your locality, for how many days a week, and for how many months of

the year?

- What is the most prevalent attitude to education in rural areas today?
- How many children do not complete primary school? Why?
- What is the current attitude to special education? How big a role does the China Welfare Fund playing the funding of special education today?
- What is a day in a preschool or primary school actually like? (It would be really helpful to you if you could spend a morning or afternoon in a pre school or primary school classroom, but that is not compulsory for this course)

Section 3 Readiness for school

This section may help you make a decision about mainstream education Experts say no single or simple factor determines whether a child is ready for preschool or school. Instead, a child's development needs to be evaluated on several fronts. His ability to think logically, speak clearly, and interact well with other children and adults are all critically important to success in school. A child's physical development also needs to be considered.

In reality, very few children are equally competent in all these areas. Many children who are advanced mentally may lag behind emotionally, while children who are extremely adept physically may be slower in terms of language development.

But most early childhood educators agree that a child's brain development is the most important gauge of readiness for school. In other words, the child may be small for his age, and lagging behind other kids socially and physically, or a have a physical disability but if his language, thinking, and perceptual skills are good enough, then he'll probably do well in school.

How can I tell if a child is ready?

Visiting a kindergarten class in the school in which you plan to enroll your child can give you invaluable information. As you stand in the back of the room, pay attention to how the other children are behaving, how they play with each other, and what kinds of skills they have. Can you picture your child sitting in one of those chairs and joining in an activity?

Then ask yourself the following:

1) Can the child listen to instructions and then follow them? Children need these skills to function in class, to keep up with the teacher and with their peers.

2) Is he able to put on his coat and go to the bathroom by himself? Children need to be somewhat self-sufficient by school age.

3) Can he say his name and count to five or ten?

4) Can he hold a pencil? Cut with scissors? He will need these fine motor skills to begin working on writing and to keep up with classroom projects.

5) Does he show an interest in books? Does he try to "read" a book by telling a story based on the pictures? This is a sign that his language development and that he's ready to start learning how to read.

6) Is he curious and receptive to learning new things? If a child's curiosity is stronger than his fear of the unfamiliar, he will do well in school.

7) Does he get along well with other children? Does he share and know how to take turns? He'll be interacting with other children all day, so your child's social skills are particularly important for success in school.

8) Can he work together with others as part of a group? The ability to put his needs second, to compromise and join in a consensus with other children, is also part of emotional competence.

If you answered "yes" to most of these questions and "sometimes" to the rest, the child is ready for school. If not, your child might well benefit from another year of preschool, or from spending more time at home learning the skills he needs

A further assessment

- 1 Copy the two assessment sheets below
2. Have the child do the tasks involved.
3. Read out each instruction slowly and clearly.
- 4 Get them to complete each task while you observe closely the child's reaction to each instruction.
5. The first eleven questions relate to the Test Sheets so make notes as you go.

6. If the child cannot do at least half of the tests he is probably not ready for school yet

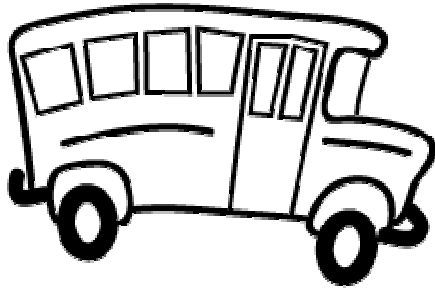
School Readiness Assessment

Could the child write his or her name?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Could the child follow the maze to the end?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Did the child know which color was yellow?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Did the child know which color was red?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Did the child know which color was green?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Did the child stay within the lines?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Could your child copy the square?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Could the child copy the triangle?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Could the child copy the circle?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the child hold his or her pencil correctly?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Did the child cut out neatly?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Day to day activities:

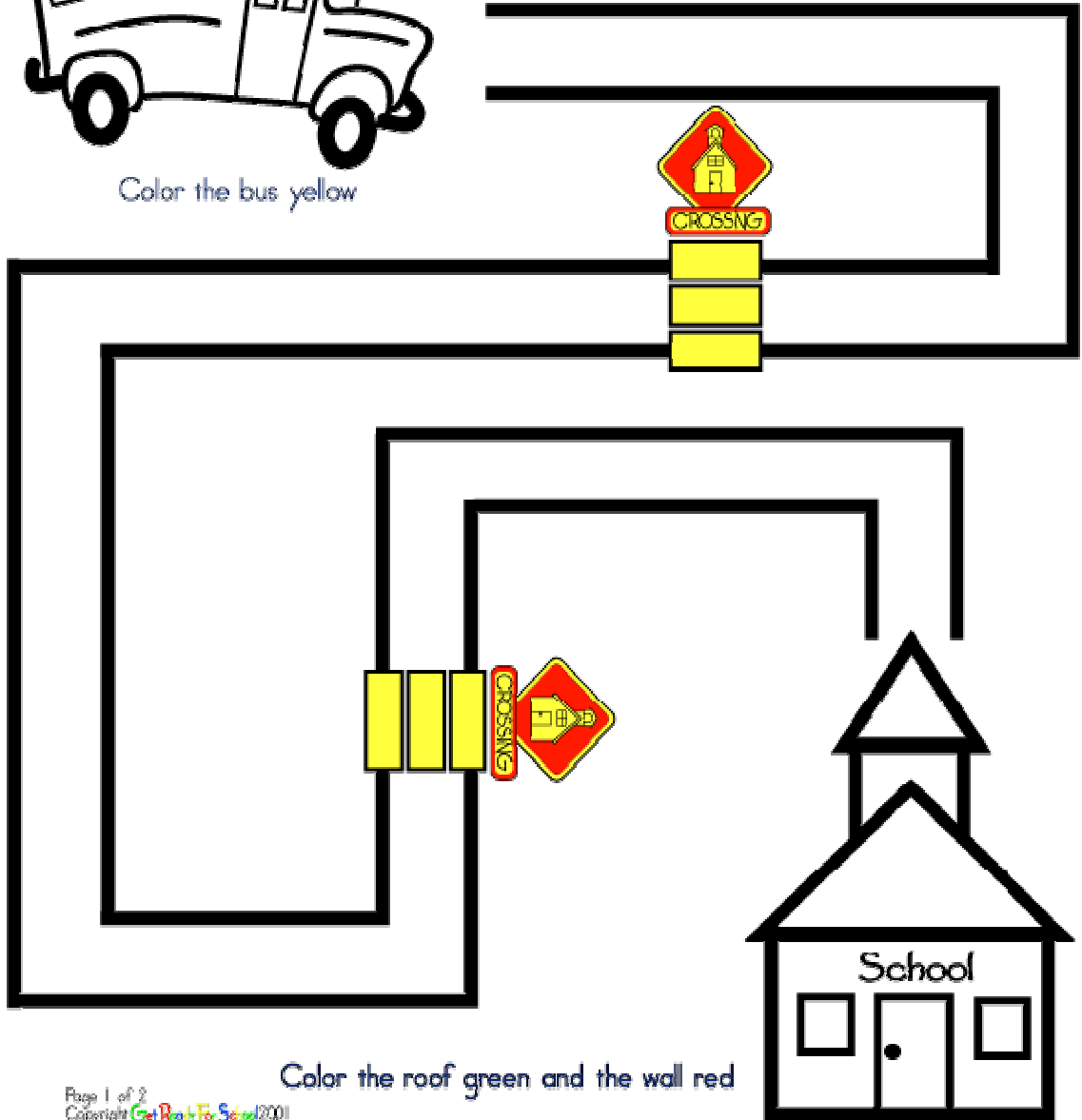
Can the child dress himself or herself?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Can the child tie his or her shoelaces?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the child recognize some writing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Can the child write the numbers from 1 to 10?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Can the child jump?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Can the child hop?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Can the child skip?		

Write your name here _____



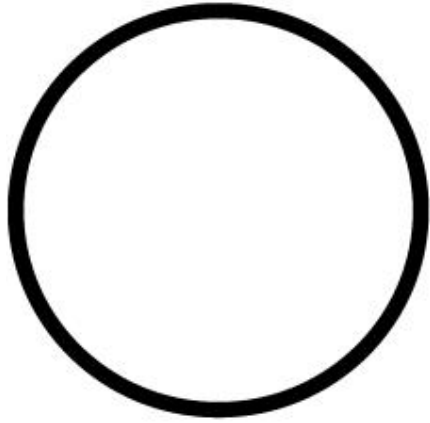
Color the bus yellow

Follow the maze to the School

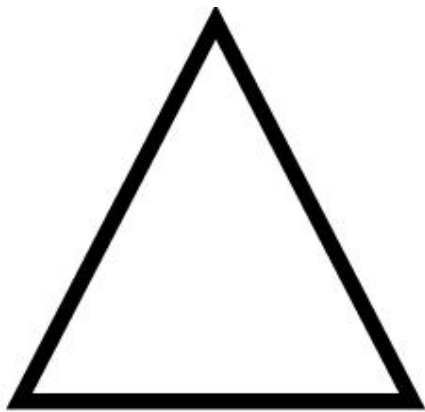
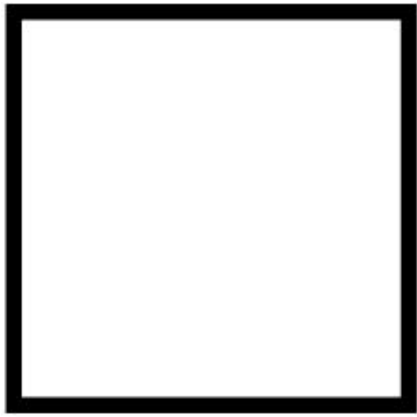


Color the roof green and the wall red

Page 1 of 2
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Copy each shape



Section 4 The educational referral process

THIS IS THE REFERRAL PROCESS FOR MAKING A DECISION ABOUT WHAT EDUCATION IS RIGHT FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL CHILD

- 1 The assessor should visit the child at home and make an informal first assessment by observing the child, talking to his parents or grandparents (and to the child if that is possible). Ensure that you know the child's correct age and think about how the child's cognitive development compares with that of most children of the same age. Use module 1 as a guide. It may be that the child is so far behind in his development, and that this is so obvious, that you do not need to carry out a more detailed and formal assessment to know that at the moment it would not be possible for him to go to school. Write a short report on **Form A** which is attached at the end of this module and was also part of Module 2.
- 2 If the child is behind in his cognitive development and/ or in his skills for everyday living, and not yet ready for school, recommend to his family some of the skills training that is set out in Module 3. Maybe the child would benefit from learning some signs to communicate. Perhaps some of the way of teaching every day skills would help him become more independent. Do not give too much information at once. It is best to agree a simple programme that can be practiced every day. If possible reassess the child in about 6 months to see what progress he has made. If you do this, complete another Form A. You should do this before look at the previous form as this will mean you are not influenced by it and your judgement will be more objective
- 3 If you think that there is good chance that the child might be ready for a special school, because he may be more than three years behind the norms for his age, you should carry out a formal assessment. (Module 2). You should assess cognitive development, communication skills and skills for everyday living. (Use Modules 1 and 3). Write up the outcomes of your assessments on **Form B**, which is also attached at the end of this module.

- 4 If, as a result of your assessments, you judge that the child is within the normal cognitive range for her age, or is one or two years below and could start school with a lower age group without looking too much bigger than the rest of the children, you may decide that a mainstream kindergarten, preschool or school place would be best for her. You will need to use your knowledge of the education system that you gained earlier in this module, as well as the outcomes of assessment to make this judgement Write up the outcomes of your assessments on Form B, which is also attached at the end of this module.

- 5 The main difficulty to be faced in including children with disabilities into regular educational settings, even kindergarten classes is that all children are expected to proceed at the same pace. The child is responsible for keeping up and poor performance is usually attributed to "not working hard enough." The solution is to admonish the child to work more diligently. This does not, of course, help children who are trying as hard as they can but are slower or less adept than their peers. You will have to decide whether, with or without help and with or without the equipment that could be available, the child you are assessing could manage in the regular educational system.

- 6 A completed copy of each form should be kept on file and given to:
 - the child's parents
 - the Rehabilitation Centre (unless the assessor is part of that service)
 - any other service that has contact with the child

A copy of form B should be given to:

 - any kindergarten, pre-school, special school or mainstream school that the child attends

- 7 Each year the child's progress should be reviewed by carrying out a re-assessment. This will be recorded on form C. A copy of Form C should be distributed as for forms A and B

Form A Stage 1 of the review process

Child's name _____

Age _____ years _____ months

Date of assessment _____

Name and contact details of assessor _____

Medical diagnosis (if any)

How does the child look? (For example big/small for age; any obvious signs of di

Can the child see and hear well? (Show a picture with some small details and see important because many children are wrongly diagnosed as having cognitive impair

How much can the child talk compared to others of her age?

How much does he understand compared to others of his age? (Children with

What is his likely level of cognitive development? (Ask the child to draw a picture. Difficulties with using their hands the drawing will reflect this, so don't automatically

How does the child behave? (Does he carry out any activities independently? Is withdrawn or afraid of strangers for a child of this age? Does he play with toys?)

Is the child attending school? If not, why not?

Do you propose to carry out a formal assessment? If so, why? How will gre

Signed_____

Form B Stage 2 of the review process

Child's name_____

Age_____years _____months

Date of assessment_____

Name and contact details of assessor_____

Medical diagnosis (if any)

Reason for formal assessment

Assessments

1 Cognitive Ability

Outcome

2 Communication

Outcome

3 Skills for every day living

Outcome

4 School Readiness Assessment

Outcome

Judgements based on the outcomes of assessment

Recommendations (If you are recommending school or preschool, please indicate teachers to teach him/her effectively)

Signed _____

Form C Stage 3 of the review process

Child's name_____

Age_____years _____months

Date of assessment_____

Name and contact details of assessor_____

Medical diagnosis (if any)

assessments

1 Cognitive Ability

Outcome

2 Communication

Outcome

3 Skills for every day living

Outcome

4 School Readiness Assessment (if the child is not already in school)

Outcome

Progress the child has made since the last assessment

Recommendations (If you are now recommending school or preschool, please include the teachers to teach him/her effectively)

Signed_____

You have now completed Module 4

You should understand the current situation regarding the education of children with a disability

You should have a good understanding of the current education system, which will help you make sound recommendations about whether a child is likely to succeed within it

You should also be able to carry out a school readiness assessment

You should understand and be able to carry out the education referral system

Mg19April 19, 2007