

1. What are SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability), and Inclusive Education?

A document* written for education in Sierra Leone describes Special Educational Needs as:

SEND – a child having Special Educational Needs (SEN) is a young person who has a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. In this respect, a ‘disability’ is a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The document states that a ‘learning difficulty’ occurs when a child:

- Has a significant greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age;
- or
- Has a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in school.’

(Rose, Garner, Farrow and Zhao, 2017, p8)

Inclusion / Inclusive education

As well as the term SEND you will come across the terms ‘Inclusion’ and ‘Inclusive education’. These terms mean that the needs of children with SEND are expected to be met through being included in education alongside their peers:

‘Inclusive education is a process; it is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers to children’s learning. Inclusive education is about the presence, participation and achievement of the learner in a regular class.’

(Mariga, McConkey and Myezwa, 2014, p16)



As a teacher what do you need to remember?

- Inclusive education is about how teachers, classrooms and schools need to change to help the child, rather than focusing on the issue as a problem that a child brings with them.
- Inclusion is a process, and often happens in very small steps. When supporting children with SEND, be patient and don’t expect them to make lots of progress straight away. Keep trying different approaches to help them learn and feel included in your class.

References:

*Rose, R., Garner, P., Farrow, B., Zhao, Y (May 2017) *Report on Research to Inform the Development and Production of a Policy document and a Strategy on Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in the Republic of Sierra Leone*, University of Northampton

Mariga, L., McConkey, R. and Myezwa, H. (2014) *Inclusive Education in Low-Income Countries: A resource book for teacher educators, parent trainers and community development workers*, Cape Town: Atlas Alliance and Disability Innovations Africa. https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Inclusive_Education_in_Low_Income_Countries.pdf

Acknowledgements

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Extracts from *Inclusive Education in Low-Income Countries*: Mariga, L., McConkey, R. and Myezwa, H. (2014) *Inclusive Education in Low-Income Countries, A Resource for Teacher Educators, Parent Trainers and Community Development Workers*. Published by Atlas Alliance

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