



## Guidance on Children with Additional Needs

Some children have additional needs that place additional responsibilities on those who care for and work with them. It is often the situational and environmental factors that disable the child, rather than the physical or intellectual difficulty the child experiences. Where possible, the environmental factors should be adapted to the child's needs. Prohibitive attitudes need to be addressed through education and information. In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children with a disability have the same rights as any other child.

### Points to consider when including a child with additional needs in your group:

- Work in partnership with the child, parents/carers and guardians and any professionals involved to establish how the child can be included.
- Make sure inclusion is possible before bringing the child into the group.
- Make reasonable adjustments.
- Be interested in the child and build a rapport with them.
- If the child has a communication impairment, acquiring some key skills in their communication method will be useful.
- Some specific training may be useful or required, for example, the autistic spectrum, epilepsy.
- Hazard assessments may be necessary to ensure the safety of some children with additional needs.
- Higher staff ratios may be required if the child has additional needs or behavioural problems.
- Intimate care issues: when introducing a child with additional needs into an activity, it is important to establish if they have intimate care needs, and who should provide or assist with this if it is necessary. It is important to remember that not every child with a disability has intimate care needs. Intimate care is, to some extent, individually defined and varies according to personal experience, cultural expectations and gender. It may be described as help with anything of a personal or private nature that the individual is unable to do themselves.
- Children with additional needs may be more likely than other children to be bullied or subjected to other forms of abuse, and they may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries.
- It is particularly important that children with additional needs are carefully listened to, in recognition of the fact that they may have difficulty expressing their concerns, so that the importance of what they say is not underestimated.
- Church personnel are not expected to be involved in the provision of intimate care of children/young people. This should be undertaken by suitably qualified people. See the Intimate Care policy.