

# STANDARD 1

## CREATING AND MAINTAINING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS GUIDANCE FOR INDICATOR 1.4

### 1.4F Guidance on the Participation of Children with Specific Needs

Some children have specific needs<sup>8</sup> 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.

Children who have a disability have the same rights as any other child, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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

- Work in partnership with the child, parents/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, e.g. the autistic spectrum, epilepsy and others;
- Risk assessments may be necessary to ensure the safety of some children with specific needs;
- Higher staff ratios may be required if the child has additional needs or behavioural problems;
- Intimate care issues: when introducing a child with specific 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 specific 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 specific needs are carefully listened to, in recognition of the fact that they may have difficulty expressing their concerns, and so that the importance of what they say is not underestimated.

<sup>8</sup> Specific needs mean the specific, or unique, out-of-the-ordinary concerns created by a person's medical, physical, mental or developmental condition or disability. Additional services are usually needed to help a person in one or more of the following areas: thinking, communication, movement, getting along with others, and personal care.

# STANDARD 1

## CREATING AND MAINTAINING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS GUIDANCE FOR INDICATOR 1.4

Generally, Church personnel are not expected to be involved in the provision of intimate care of children. This should be undertaken by suitably qualified people. Decisions regarding who provides intimate care for a child should be discussed and agreed by everyone concerned: the child's views should be ascertained; parents/guardians should be consulted and their consent sought; a rota of carers of the same sex as the child should be agreed; and the age, stage of development and ethnicity of the child will need to be considered. Most importantly, it should be agreed in advance who will carry out intimate care and how it should be done. Guidelines to be borne in mind when providing intimate care include: the sensitive nature of such tasks; the need to treat every child with dignity and respect; the need to ensure an appropriate degree of privacy; the need to involve the child as much as possible in their own care; and trying to ensure consistency in who provides care.

If a child appears distressed or unhappy, this should be discussed with parents/guardians, if appropriate, and the activity leader. Any concerns or allegations should be reported following the procedures outlined in the safeguarding policy and procedures document of the Church body.