

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Activities of MoWCA on Autism and other Disabilities

A large number of children are born with Autism and other Neuro-Developmental Disorders. Autism is neither a sin nor a curse rather it is a diversity of human life. The person with disabilities has right to live with proper dignity in this world. Now we should act in such a way that awareness and other actions will lead the persons with autistic and other disabilities towards social and economic inclusion for their mainstreaming.

The Constitution of Bangladesh

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ensured fundamental human rights of women, children and other distressed segment of the society, like persons with disabilities in the Constitution of Bangladesh. The constitution provides.

- No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to access to any place of public entertainment or resort, or admission to any educational institution.
- Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making special provision in favor of women or children or for the advancement of any backward section of citizens.
- There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in respect of employment or office in the service of the republic.



Honorable Prime Minister is visiting a stall of International Women's Day 2019 Program



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- Mass Campaign for preventing Child Marriage is going on through two specific projects supported by GIZ.
- A high-level committee has been formed with the chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs for the welfare and development of street and underprivileged children. The committee coordinates the activities of different ministries for underprivileged children including the issue of disabled and autistic children.
- World Autism Day is being observed on 2nd April every year.
- National Training Academy of Department of Women Affairs (DWA) organized an orientation program for the DWA's officers where clinical psychologists of OCC (One-Stop crisis center) were engaged for identifying and counseling the children with Autism and other Disabilities.
- Topics on Autism and Neuro-Developmental Disorders are being incorporated in the regular training curriculum of DWA. Gradually training on Autism will be provided to all officers of DWA by experts.
- To increase community awareness on autism, the issue will be included in the safety net programme of DWA.
- If necessary, autistic children along with their mother will be provided short safe shelter under women support programme of DWA.
- The Autistic children under such shelter will be provided free medical support through women support programmes, clinical psychologist of OCC may also be engaged if needed.
- About 30 children with special needs are trained on art at central office of Bangladesh Shishu Academy every year.
- Annual cultural competition programmes are organized by District and Upazila offices of BSA for children with special needs.
- Discussions on Autism are being held in monthly Co-ordination Meetings of Jatio Mohila Shangtha.
- JMS organized two seminars on Autism in its head office, 145 New Baily Road, Dhaka in June 2015. District and Upazila Chairman of JMS participated in the programme.
- Guideline/tools/protocols are being developed for Early Screening to detect Disabilities including Autism with the support of MoHFW and MoSW. Developing master trainer with technical assistance from Shuchona Foundation to train up field level officials and Frontline Workers of MoWCA, teachers of Day care and ELCD's learning centers.
- Preventing Autism through safe delivery as well as stopping early marriage through awareness campaign by GO-NGO-Development Partners, Media and Civil Societies (through courtyard meetings, parenting sessions etc.) and ensuring no marriage for girls before 18 years and for boys before 21 years by involving formal and non-formal marriage registrar and field level officials of MoWCA in awareness programmes.
- Formulating operational and implementation plan for Early Screening and Awareness Building for Children with disability including Autism and Strengthen helpline service to provide emergency support for children with Autism.
- Disseminating core messages on disability including Autism to parents and society, adolescents in club meetings and strengthening Upazila based adolescent network for awareness building.

Early Brain Development Skill Enhancement Program

Early Brain Development Skill Enhancement Program of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) is being implemented with assistance of the Institute of Child and Human Development (ICHD) as a technical expert.

• Specific Objectives of the programme

- To enhance knowledge and raise awareness of the different level of Government officials and other relevant actors on early childhood and early brain development.
- To make them aware about the importance of early brain development and its science.
- To sensitize them about their crucial role as sensitive parents in the development of children.
- To motivate them how they can apply their experience from the training and course at their work.
- To give them an idea of how they can play a supportive role in the implementation of the government approved Comprehensive ECCD Policy.

• Total Beneficiary

About 1,075 government officials and other relevant actors will receive short Foundation Course Training on ECCD and about 2,425 Government officials and other relevant actors will receive the parenting education course training. The number of participants is 25 in each batch.

- Coverage of Training on Parenting Education
 - City Corporation Level: 350 participants (14 batches)
 - District Level: 1,000 participants (40 batches)
 - Total: 1,350 participants (54 batches)

National Women Development Policy 2011

- To ensure rights to recognition and to live with honor and dignity according to UN disadvantage right convention.
- To have the disabled women unified with the mainstream society and ensuring their active participation in all the areas of life including education. To give importance to the differentiation of disability in aspect of education.
- To consider special type of education in only those areas where they could not be mainstreamed for reasons obvious.
- To undertake appropriate institutional programmes for education, treatment, training and rehabilitation of the disabled women.
- To undertake programmes to prevent disability and its determination and extending special co-operation to their families for taking care and growth of the disabled women.
- To ensure facilities and services accessible to all so that no women with disability are deprived of any kind of rights, facilities and services endowed under the National Women Policy.



On the occasion of celebration of 99th birthday of the Father of the Nation Bongabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Children Day.

National Children Policy 2011

- Each school shall have recreational programmes wherein the idea of a library shall be inculcated. The disabled children shall have appropriate recreational facilities.
- The rights of all types of disabled children to recognition and respectable living as enshrined in the UN Charter on the rights of the disabled shall be ensured.
- Measures shall be taken for mainstreaming of the disabled children in the society and for ensuring their active participation in each area of life including education. Education is a major concern, according to the types of disability, shall be given due importance.
- The children who cannot be mainstreamed in education for the reason obvious, special educational arrangements shall be considered for them.
- Appropriate institutional programmes shall be adopted for education, treatment, training and rehabilitation of the disabled children.
- The families of the disabled children shall be given special assistance and co-operation by undertaking programmes in the matter of preventing and assessing of such disability and for their upbringing and growth.
- All infrastructures, facilities and services shall be made accessible to all to ensure that no child is deprived of any kinds of rights and receiving services under the National Child Policy because of their disability.
- Most autistic children have normal intelligence. So measures shall be taken to their mainstreaming in the society and their active participation in all areas of life including education.
- Measures shall be ensured to make provisions for specific educational institution, educational method and material for the autistic children.
- Age appropriate training shall be ensuring to the parents and their family members for overall development.
- Appropriate institutional programmes shall be taken for education, treatment, training and rehabilitation of the autistic children
- Importance shall be given to the special needs of the autistic children during and after diagnosis.



Dhaka Conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management

- Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Relief and Disaster Management and Ministry of Social Welfare jointly organized an international seminar titled Dhaka Conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management in 2015.
- It is observed that autistic persons are more vulnerable to disaster rather than other children, women and aged persons in the family and community.
- Autistic women and children are more vulnerable than the common people during disaster.
- Recommendations were made to design special programmes for mitigating the risks before, during and after the disasters for safety, security and rehabilitation of autistic people.

Expected ability of children covering by ELCD project

Children will be able to-

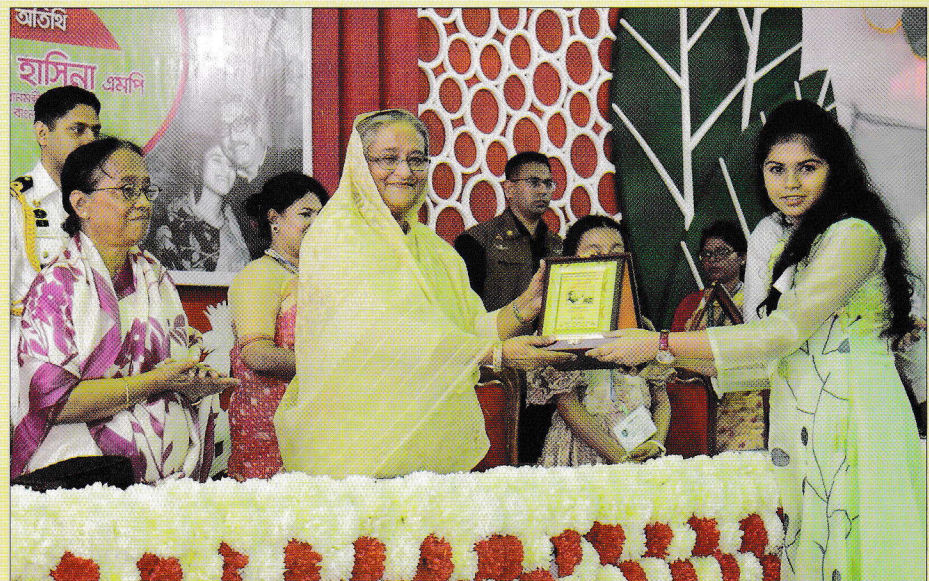
- say own name and address and names of parent, brothers/sisters
- recite rhymes with correct pronunciation and body movement
- sing juvenile songs with rhythm and melody
- participate in group play with joy
- conduct group play following rules
- play maintaining physical balance
- tell story observing the picture sequentially
- tell story as their own
- draw picture on the wall or paper as they wishes with chalk and pencil
- answer short questions from a known story
- work in small groups following instruction
- expose their own creativity by doing work alone
- know how to keep neat and be able to keep neat for their own
- arrange play materials at the end of the play
- maintain social norms.

Observation of World Autism Awareness Day

- Bangladesh Shishu Academy organizes cultural programme on 2 April each year for the observance of World Autism Awareness Day.
- Cultural programmes are organized with the participation of children with special needs justifying the theme of the day.



Artists from Society for the Welfare of Autistic Children (SWAC) delivering a group dance with the song titled "2 April". The learners of PROYASH Special School charmed the audience with deliberation of a dance based on a song titled "Nimphuler Ban".



On the occasion of celebration of 99th birthday of the Father of the Nation Bongabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Children Day.

Action Plan for Children with special needs

Strategic provisions on Autism and NDD in ECCD Policy 2013

- Formulation of mechanism for early Identification of children with special needs and appropriate service delivery framework.
- Formulation of Integrated Service Delivery system based on demands, locality, socio-economic conditions of children with special needs.
- Introduction of appropriate tools to identify the types and degrees of Neuro-Developmental Disorder and create appropriate service delivery system to the children with special needs and gradually make all the efforts within in a specific institutional coverage.

- Identify the types and degrees of special needs for children with special needs and thus to design necessary service delivery procedure.

Action plan to address the strategies

□ Short-term Activities

- Identify the risk or special needs of children aged from zero to 3 years through early screening process.
- Provide minimum service package for children 3 to 6 years.
- Introduce integrated mandatory education system for children 6 to 8 years.
- Provide necessary service towards the children with special needs immediately after being identification.
- Introduction of all information related to the curriculum and training module of disabilities in all health services program.

□ Mid-term Activities

- Establishment of permanent infrastructure based on the risk and demands of special needs gradually.
- Introduction of modern technology and skilled manpower for effective identification and comprehensive service delivery system.
- Mainstreaming the whole service process framework.
- Enhance the capacity of employees of community clinics in accurate identification of disability.

□ Long-term Activities

- Inclusion of all children in unified Service Package of thorough identification process

□ Lead Ministries/Divisions and Associate agencies

Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Department of Women Affairs, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs.

- A Nation can't advance by ignoring a section of people. So it is very important to ensure social security and co-operation for the children with Autism & Neuro-developmental Disabilities. For the development of the children with Autism & Neuro-developmental Disabilities, respective ministries should formulate a comprehensive Action Plan. If all sections of people stand for the betterment of the children with special needs then days are not very far to mainstreaming them in our society.