

By Community for Community Series

Making a Good Individualised Child Plan

What is an individualised Child Plan?

Simply put this is a written plan which clearly states

- a learning intention
- the learning strategy
- the teaching strategy
- the resources needed
- the inclusion opportunities
- the monitoring arrangements
- the success criteria
- the review arrangements

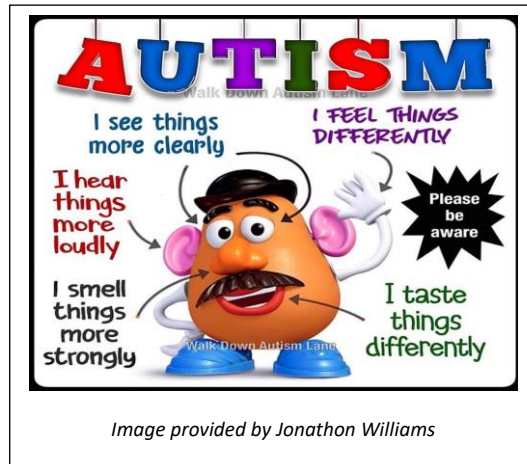


Image provided by Jonathon Williams

A plan is written for children who are not making progress through conventional or differentiated classroom teaching and should always be in place for any individual with an additional support or special need, whether in a supported unit or supported within mainstream education.

The original guidance states “It should only record that which is additional to or different from the normal curriculum provision” or should it? More modern guidance places a stronger emphasis on partnership working and sharing strategies, e.g. Communication practice, managing behaviour, etc.

There are many ingredients and inclusions in making a good plan.

One will never have a good plan if one doesn't know the individual holistically, for example by using the 'My World Triangle', an integral part of the National Practice Model.



<http://www.nhconline.net/nhconline/triangle>

Positive Partnerships Thom Kirkwood May 2017

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Using this for example at home, at school, in other social environments like clubs etc., one gains a broad understanding of person, it helps support their inclusion, identify communication needs and practice, identify triggers and solutions, many of which can be adaptable from place to place and transferable across situations.

A good plan must be:

- Outcome focussed to benefit the individual, make targets achievable and measurable
- Ensure holistic education and social development both in and out of school
- Encompass the individual is as fully involved in the development of his/her plan to the best of their own capability (provide supportive advocacy if required)
- Take account of hidden sensory issues often a key trigger for meltdowns
- Have a proactive partnership approach which includes individual, parent/carers, practitioners
- Be if required inter-agency connected, health, social care, including third sector clubs etc. if appropriate

Consider if an individualised plan should not be solely about in school/home learning. They often work better when shared widely to include all working with an individual. For example, sharing communication practice, what their triggers are etc.

It is worth noting that when consistent adoption of individualised approaches is shared and of course used, this does not just bring benefits for the individual, this also has huge knock benefits, for parents, carers, siblings, and of course all practitioners, as it:

- Improves outcomes
- Improves Job satisfaction
- Reduces stress levels
- Enhances quality of life.

Consent to Share is still a requirement in Scotland. A young person from the age of 12 is now deemed to give consent if they have capacity.

Who is responsible for and included in writing and monitoring?

This is the function of the educationalist, usually a key teacher, however in some schools this falls to either a deputy head or assistant head, more often this is the case within supported learning within mainstream.

Planned targets whilst suggested by the educationalist, are **not** solely their decision, parent carers and the individuals themselves have equal input into this. It is the responsibility of the class or subject teacher to write the plan and ensure they incorporated both the parents/carers input and most importantly as far as possible the views of the individual themselves and when agreed are incorporated into the day-to-day classroom planning. The pupil and the parents/carers and others if required, should be fully involved in deciding on the content and targets to be included in the Plan. However, it is not just the teacher's professional judgement that is essential, it's everybody's collective judgement, agreement and partnership approach that is essential for a good plan to be an integral part to deliver successful outcomes for an individual. *This is of importance in developing the individual's transferable skills.*



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Plans and legislation currently place an imbalanced burden on education to have a thorough knowledge of:

- the child's learning style
- the child's rate of learning
- the child's current skill level
- the curriculum requirements.

Importance of partnership approach and working. As is all too often the case, learning style and rate of learning are more varied, with communication and learning ability often identified in the home and other places, like clubs etc. Therefore, it is important for a holistic partnership approach utilising for example 'My World Triangle' with all involved to be identifying what works, how it works, and to share such strategies.

Every plan, whether it is single or multi-agency, should include and record:

- reasons for the plan
- partners to the plan
- the views of the child or young person and their parents or carers
- a summary of the child or young person's needs
- what is to be done to improve a child or young person's circumstances
- details of action to be taken
- resources to be provided
- timescales for action and for change
- contingency plans
- arrangements for reviewing the plan
- lead professional arrangements where they are appropriate
- details of any compulsory measures if required

The reviewing of a plan should be a continuous process carried out by individual class and subject teachers, with the child. The success of a plan should be evaluated at least twice a year and should include input from all who work with the individual inclusive of all professionals, support workers, parent/carers and the individual themselves as far as practically possible. NOTE: - This does not necessarily require every practitioner involved to be around the table at every meeting. Much can be done and agreed via email in advance.



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What makes a quality Plan?

It is important to remember that children learn most when they are motivated, having fun and feeling confident.

A good plan will have a simple learning intention but a creative/fun holistic inclusive partnership approach.

It is important to state a learning intention which you will be able to demonstrate has been achieved. It is essential that if a target is not achieved then the plan is analysed to consider what went wrong.

- Was the target too big a step?
- Did the child have all the entry skills required?
- Was the child motivated to practise the skill?
- Was the teaching strategy appropriate?
- Were the resources used appropriate (using a paintbrush and A3 paper instead of a pen and lined paper)?

The size of the target and the length of time that a plan will run will depend upon the level of difficulty the individual is experiencing. A child with significant additional needs will require plans with very small target step sizes which are reviewed regularly, often through the communication / link home school diary.

Staff, parents and children will be motivated by the successful completion of targets.

Targets that are too ambitious or too many targets running concurrently are unlikely to be successful.

Targets for literacy and numeracy should be linked to the learning objectives in the strategies, inclusive of out of school activities and practical everyday things.

A successful outcome-based plan will have been produced by listening, understanding and inclusive partnership working.

It is important to note that whilst a plan is required, they should include and take account of national and local guidelines, eg. Curriculum of Excellence, GIRFEC, SHANNARI or equivalent, and they should not however become or develop the need to be over managed.

It is worth noting if one has a good interconnected individualised plan, working in partnership, this would reduce the need for a Coordinated Service Plan. Why? Good Practice working.

All this work has been generated by community for community and coordinated and compiled by Thom Kirkwood, Engagement and Participation Officer, ANS.

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