

Barachel Christian Academy

SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS WITH LEARNING PROBLEMS

Educators at this school realize that

- (a) Each child is unique with his / her own genetic composition, character and spirit.
- (b) Each child have certain talents.
- (c) The home conditions of learners differ.
- (d) The intelligence of all children are not the same.
- (e) There are differences in the physical make-up of children.
- (f) Some children have disabilities while others have none.

2. Educators also realize that all these factors have an influence on the learners' scholastic prowess. For precisely all these reasons there should be differentiation in the learning process and assistance have to be given to those learners with learning problems, educators must remember that all the faults, deficiencies and deviant behaviour that manifests itself during the learning process on the part of the learner are but symptoms of a deeper problem. In order to help the learner the educator must get to the root of the problem before remedial or other intervention strategies are implemented.

3. We as educators know that giving remedial instruction to the learner will take up extra time. We also know that we shall never be able to help all the learners. We must however endeavour to help as many of these learners as possible. Fortunately we do not stand alone in this noble task. The following institutions are there to support us in helping learners.

- (a) The Support Services of the Education Department (Psychologists, remedial consultants, speech therapists, occupational therapists).
 - (b) Social Services (social workers).
 - (c) Medical and Dental Services (Doctors, nurses, dentists, clinics, hospitals).
- We must make use of all the above Services in order to help the child with learning problems.

In practice it means that

- (a) Educators must identify learning problems that the learner might have as soon as possible.
- (b) The parents have to be informed about the problem and asked to furnish the school with information about the learner's home conditions, state of health, behaviour at home and importantly what kind of birth the child had.

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4. Depending on the above diagnosis and the information gathered one or more of the following steps should be taken:
 - (a) The educator, in consultation with the School's own Learner Support Team, must prepare individual programs for the learners and then start giving remedial instruction.
 - (b) If necessary the help of a remedial consultant must be procured.
 - (c) The learner must be referred to a school psychologist for scholastic and psychological evaluation.
 - (d) The learner must be referred to a medical practitioner or hospital for a medical evaluation.
 - (e) The help of a social worker must be called in.
 - (f) Keep the parents informed about every intervention strategy that is followed.
5. It is essential that as many educators as possible, especially Foundation Phase educators as well as Language and Mathematics educators, receive basic training in diagnosing learning problems and in remedial instruction methods in order for the school to have a strong Learner Support Team. The larger the team, the more learners could be HELPED.