

## **MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SETTING IN NIGERIA**



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### **ABSTRACT**

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*School administrators in their management and administrative roles ensure the success of the school. In the school with special needs children, the teachers ensure a successful management of the Special Needs for wholesome results in change of behaviors. Inclusive Education has been globally accepted to be the appropriate method in educating children and youths who were previously excluded on the ground of disability. The practices of Inclusive education has witnessed a lot of challenges in the areas of unpreparedness of regular school teachers to accept Special Needs Children in their class room and Examination Boards to recognize and consider the peculiar learning challenges and characteristics of students with Special Needs while setting their questions. This paper therefore discusses the management and administration practices of Special Need Children in an Inclusive setting in Nigeria and the steps in the management practices of special needs in an inclusive setting.*

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### **Introduction**

This paper is on the management and Administration practices in special needs in an Inclusive Education setting in Nigeria. Education is a public goods and it is in the interest of communities and societies that all children receive quality and safe education. Education is also a fundamental right of individuals regardless of the conditions and challenges/differences that may be inherent among individuals. This is why every citizen needs education whether you are an adult that is a victim of social status, culture, religion and disability. This results in many nations including Nigeria seeking ways to administer or manage their people with special needs in an inclusive setting in order to be of much benefit and usefulness to their community.

Adults also are involved in the education which aims at providing basic education for adults and youths who have never had the advantage of formal education or who left school too early. The target groups on management includes migrant folks,

special needs children, almagiris illiterates, semi literates adults, youths and adolescents people who left school system early and are willing to come back and continue schooling; and other categories of disadvantaged groups who are unable to have access to the conventional educational system and therefore requires other forms of educational programmers to cater for their peculiar needs and circumstances (Richardson, 2018).

Inclusive education is therefore a prerequisite for inclusive societies and non – discrimination are also at the core of sustainable development agenda in order to achieve inclusive process. Administration of teaching programmes must be managed with equality of all.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Inclusive Education**

Inclusion or integration is an essential part of equal opportunity in education. Inclusive is the process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning cultures and communities and reducing inclusion from education (UNESCO, 2021). Inclusive education provide opportunity to all student regardless of any challenges they may have and placed in age appropriately in general education classes that are in their neighbourhood schools to receive high quality instructions, intervention and support that enable them to meet success in the co-curriculum.

#### **Management**

This refers to control of children and properties that needs repositioning a wide variety of skills. It is the techniques that a teacher uses to keeps children organized, orderly, focused, attentively on a task and academically productive during a class. At home, parents take charge of the management of their children. Management in class room is a process by which teachers and schools create and maintain appropriate behavior of children in the classroom settings.

#### **Administration**

This is a due process of providing specific administrative organizations that facilitates the achievement of some educational goals that are pursued by the normal children.

#### **Special Needs Education**

Special needs education is education for students with disabilities, in consideration of their individual educational needs, which aims at full development of their capabilities and at their independence and social participation. It is given to learners with special needs at the schools, home and hospital settings and it is designed to facilitate the learning of individual for varieties of conditions that requires

additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet their learning objectives in educational programs.

### **Management and Administration**

Management in most cases is left in the hands of classroom teachers no matter the area, been at school or at home; teachers in the classroom administer education in the class while at home parents and others manage their children. The task of behavior modification of children in an inclusive setting lies with the teachers and the management staff of the school as the parents are often too busy, frustrated and ignorant to make meaningful impact on their children at home.

Smiths (2007), Obani (2005) and Adenigbagbe (2004) is of the opinion that teachers should be armed with some tips while aiming at quality in the change of behaviors of children

- The child should be protected from harassment and teasing from other pupils especially during free periods in order not to make the child withdrawn or depressed.
- The child should be taught specific behaviors such as how to relate with other, initiate and maintain conversations, take turns respectively for behavior to be more successful; the teacher should maintain a good balance between reward and punishment such that the child knows why he/ she is being rewarded or punished.
- The teacher should reduce anxieties in the children by avoiding unnecessary demands on them which might be anxiety provoking and tension producing.
- A well structured routine for daily activities should be maintained in the classroom, in order to checkmate disruptive behaviours.
- The teacher should demonstrate that learning is a pleasurable and rewarding experience that will help the child in real life experiences in the community.
- The teacher should avoid rude and aggressive or deviant behaviors. They should understand pattern of behavior the child currently has which he is expected to modify using all possible means. The UBEC Programme aims to bring all school age Nigerian children to school. This implies that a good number of children with disability will also be there if is necessary, therefore teachers are educated about these children, the nature and characteristics of their special needs and how to attend to them along with other children in their regular classes.
- A child as a member of the human race is a member of the family, The birth of a child brings joy, happiness and self fulfillment of the parent because children are precious gifts from God when old age comes your way. However, unarguably, their arrival brings grief, sadness and confusion on how to link the child in the society. The nurture and the question of what will be the future outcome for the child is more worrisome. This calls for the management and administration of special education to the special needs in an inclusive setting and administration of services of special educators to guide parents of special needs effectively.

### **The Place of Parents in Inclusive Education**

In the management of special needs, parents also have several roles to play for active participation of their children to bring actualization, realization and accomplishment of the specific goals and ultimately solve their problems.

Warnock Report (1978) stated that a successful education of children with special needs is dependent on the full involvement of their parents. This is connected with the home as the first institution of every child and is the bedrock of any development or achievement in the child's life. In the management of special children with disability, the following steps are important.

**Steps:** Acceptance through counseling. The parents should first of all accept the child as he/she is, the condition he or she came out with. The parents should not exhibit different reactions to the handicapped child. Umolu (1996) and Okeke (2001) opined that, one of the most difficult things for a parent to do, is to accept and show love to the child as he is. There are parents who reject their Special Needs Children at the point of abandoning them. Obani, (2005) posits that, not until parents come to terms with their child's limitations and banish from their minds the notion that a child with problem is a curse and a realistic assessment and forecast of this child's future development, possibilities in the light of his or her limitations can they contribute the health education and development of such a child. The total acceptance of the special needs child and the ability to have acceptance of the special needs child requires a comprehensive understanding of the nature of disability. The child capabilities vis-avis his/her needs to live effectively and independently and the ability that the child may have.

**Step II:** Willingness to receive professional help: it is normal for parents of a Special Needs Child to seek cure for their child. However, most of the handicapping condition is not curable (Umolu, 1996) while appropriate medical treatment is necessary, it is a substitute for special education that will start from early childhood for a handicapped child. These parents should avail themselves to professional assistance for help. This should be home-based, where a teacher or consultant comes to the house on a regular basis.

**Step III** Willingness to provide a nurture family environment: parents should understand that it is neither doctors, nor teachers, nor schools that can replace the role of the family environment in meeting the Special needs. In view of this, Umolu (1996) also buttressed by Okeke (2001) asserts that during early childhood the home has the most significant impact on the child, his future and success depends upon the extent to which the family is able to provide a conducive and nurturing home environment for the special needs children as they needs a lot of attention and a stimulating environment to make up for what he or she misses out due to the disability.

Mba (1991) also noted that it is important for the families to ensure that the child does not become overly dependent. It takes time and patience, but the benefits

of teaching the child to do things himself are what may involve months of efforts of hard work.

**Step IV:** The family group needs to form a strong safeguard to protect their handicapped child in their home in order to achieve this. Momor (1997) stressed that parents must actively be involved in providing the needs of the child; there must be new direction which must be handled with care.

**STEPV:** Formation of parents' organization which could organized economic education programmes to disseminate economic information to the special needs child. This could create opportunity and accessibility to loan facilities for business, soft loans and grants.

**STEP VI:** Recreational and physical activities: it is an opportunity to let out the steam, and soothe the nerves of the child and change the mood and discover the game and talent in someone. It is important that recreational centres and equipments for use be provided to enable people with special needs recreate and engage in physical activity.

### **Impact of School Management and Administration on the Special Need Children in an Inclusive Classroom Setting**

UNESCO (2018) states that inclusive education is the most effective means of combating, disseminating attitude and creating a welcoming community where every member of the society has equal opportunities of participating in the educational system in the era irrespective of sex, ability, age, race and so on. In line with the forgoing discussion, Ozoji (2015) opined that inclusive education is a policy that follows all children and young people with or without disabilities to learn together in ordinary pre- school primary, secondary, colleges, polytechnics and universities with appropriate network of support.

However, school administrators play important roles in effective schools. This role must be understood within the context of the school and should be viewed as a complete interaction between environment and school relationship that influence outcome (Hollinger and Heck, 1996). Inclusive education is a target of the provision of adequate and appropriate education to learners with or without challenges in an inclusive environment i.e the inclusive classroom. Inclusive education is the type of education that gives all children irrespective of physical and psychological conditions equal opportunity to learn. Inclusiveness gives all children and individual adults the right to education in the same environment to the maximum feasible with their counterparts without disability.

Ozoji (2015) states that inclusive education is agenda in a whole school programme. It has to do with providing socially designed instruction and support for students with special needs in the confines of regular classrooms. Inclusive education is managed by professionals who are mainly teachers and also Inclusive education programme is being adopted worldwide (especially in developed countries) as the best

options for educating children living with special needs. However, the biggest challenges of inclusive education are its implementation process.

Adequate planning is necessary to avoid problems that may arise in the school classroom level.

### **Conclusion**

Programmes that are for special needs should occasionally be planned and evaluated to verify the successes and failures in inclusive education. It should be carried out constructively by planners, administrators to facilitate improvement where necessary where success is achieved so that their reaction to been made to feel different or special is the same as that of any other persons reactions, distress, anxiety, frustration and embarrassment.

### **Recommendations**

All administrators working in schools system that has rules boundaries which governs the way individuals behave.

- i. Educational administrators and policy makers should start strategizing a factor for successful inclusive education in Nigeria for the benefit of special needs children
- ii. Schools administrators should provide instructional materials that could assist the teachers in managing special needs children in an inclusive setting.
- iii. School administrators should be trained on how to handle special needs children in various classroom and schools.
- iv. Parents should give continuous consent, loving care for the child. It is very important for the mind health as food is for the body.
- v. There should be a continuous awareness through all forms of mass media on the issues of inclusive education so that all Nigerian citizens *especially school administrators will embrace inclusion.*
- vi. Never threaten that you will stop loving the child you give him cause to think that you dislike him.

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