

GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL-BASED INCLUSION TEAMS

Inclusive Futures Project on Inclusive Early Childhood Development and
Education in Kenya,

Task Order 20

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1. Introduction

The Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities (2018) of Kenya outlines the commitment of the government to achieving inclusive quality education for all children in the country. The vision, aligned with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) Article 24 is 'An inclusive and equitable quality education opportunity for all for sustainable development' (p.3). In order to ensure that children with disabilities have the necessary support within an inclusive education system, the policy adopts an eco-systemic approach which includes training of teachers, support of the family and individualized education plans for children with disabilities who require additional accommodations to enable effective learning. It requires also the effective collaboration between different sectors and Ministries, including the Ministry of Health, Education, Social Welfare and other structures such as KISE.

As part of the inclusion agenda of the Government of Kenya, every learner with disability must be assured of an opportunity to learn in mainstream education environment together with his or her peers without disabilities. All learning institutions are urged to ensure that children with additional support needs have the opportunity to access a broad and relevant curriculum within their neighbourhood school. Teachers and the community should be fully committed to inclusion and to developing innovative and effective systems of support that are underpinned by a strong inclusive ethos. This ethos respects and values individual difference; capitalizes and builds on strengths; celebrates success and achievement; recognizes, understands and responds supportively to individual needs and limitations; and continually reviews and revises practice in order to ensure the highest possible standard of provision.

A school management structure is typically made up of various committees, with different responsibilities and roles to effectively administer the school. A School-Based Inclusion Team (SBIT) is one such committee that supports management, teachers, learners and community members in making education accessible to all learners, and who are interested in education for all in their school and the community at large. The SBIT brings together a wealth of experience and specialist training to support the needs of all children. Team members work together with all members of the school community to overcome barriers to learning thereby maximizing opportunities for success.

In respect of the school system, early identification of barriers to learning will focus on learners in the Early Childhood Education and the Junior Grades who may require support, e.g. through the tailoring of the curriculum, assessment and instruction.

2. Establishment and functioning of School-Based Inclusion Teams

If there is no School-Based Inclusion Team at a school, the District office may work with the head teacher in setting it up and ensuring that it is functional and supported. The SBIT should appoint an Inclusive Education Coordinator (IECo).

SBITs need to support teachers and caregivers by providing opportunities for regular, collaborative problem-solving around areas of concern, and facilitating the provision of support where needed. In each case a cycle of intervention and support by the teacher, facilitated by

the SBIT, needs to be implemented before additional support from outside the site of learning is requested.

To ensure effective intervention by the SBIT, their role must be accommodated in timetabling. They should meet regularly to discuss issues referred to them by class teachers or learning support assistants. During these meetings they will problem-solve and jointly identify strategies of how learners could be supported by their class teacher/s or by learning support assistants. They should keep a record of all learners who require additional support and track whether the support is being provided and is effective.

Functions carried out by SBITs include the following:

- Study reports of support provided by teacher or learning support assistants
- Assess support needed and develop a programme for teacher, parents and learning support assistants
- Provide training or support to be implemented in the classroom or at home as necessary.
- Monitor and evaluate the situation after the proposed programme has been implemented
- Identify and mobilise assets in support of inclusive education.
- Encourage peer support and partnerships between teacher and parents.

3. Functions of School-Based Inclusion Teams

SBITs should aim to:

- I. Cultivate an understanding of inclusion and an environment of mutual respect with the Head teacher, Pre-Primary, Primary and Senior Teachers and School Management Teams.
- II. Develop an annual action plan for inclusion that is integrated with whole-school priorities.
- III. Lead school-based activities around inclusive education when requested – for example, the completion of accessibility audits, continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- IV. In consultation with the Head teacher, teachers and PTC, develop and review relevant school policies.
- V. Support the school administration to ensure **that processes and procedures are in place** to:

1.Support the teaching and learning process.

- Coordinate all learner, teacher, curriculum and school development support in the school. This includes linking the SBIT to other school-based management structures and processes, or even integrating them in order to facilitate the coordination of activities and avoid duplication
- Provide oversight of home-based education being provided by learning support assistants
- Collectively identifying school needs and, in particular, barriers to learning at learner, teacher, curriculum and school levels
- Collectively developing strategies to address these needs and barriers to learning. This should include a major focus on teacher development and parent consultation and support

- Drawing in the resources needed, from within and outside the school, to address these challenges

2. Support children

- Identify 'at risk' learners, including children with disabilities and address barriers to learning.
- Identify children's needs and advise on access to appropriate assistive devices, supplemental aids and accommodations to help them to access, participate and benefit from the curriculum.
- Ensure that target children access the curriculum and are supported to achieve their potential.
- Ensure that children with disabilities, especially girls, are safe in the school environment.
- Identify strategies for supporting low-cost transport to and from school for disabilities, and especially girls.

3. Support families

- Ensure that the families of children with disabilities including girls, understand their right to attend the school and receive reasonable accommodations to help them to do so.
- Have access to information about appropriate facilities and support available for their children.
- Provide the families of children with disabilities with information on who they can approach when they have concerns or worries about their children in school.

4. Support teachers

- Provide teachers with professional development opportunities to sensitise them to the needs of learners and to develop the skills to support them.
- Help teachers to identify children with disabilities and those with other special educational needs such as learning, behavioural, medical, health or emotional difficulties.

5. Develop and maintain Assessment, Monitoring and Record Keeping processes

- Ensure that appropriate methods of assessing and recording children's needs and progress are introduced and maintained.
- Maintain a register of children with disabilities, identifying provision given and ensuring that details are kept up to date.
- Monitor teaching and learning of learners who have been identified as requiring specific support.
- Monitor and evaluate the work of the team within an 'action-reflection' framework.

3. Composition of School-Based Inclusion Teams

The SBIT is led by one member of the school staff, known as the Inclusive Education Coordinator (IECo). The roles and responsibilities of the Inclusive Education Coordinator include:

- ✓ Coordinate the activities of the Inclusion Team.
- ✓ Keep records of the work of the Inclusion Team.

- ✓ Be a link between the Inclusion Team and the Management team of the Learning Institution.
- ✓ Attend Management meetings in the learning institution.

All members of the team must be given an equal opportunity to participate and contribute positively without discrimination. Members should feel happy to work in a group.

It is suggested that the following people make up the core members of this team:

- Teachers who are involved directly in the management of the school. They could be the head teacher, the deputy or another member of the management team
- Teachers involved with the teaching of the particular learner(s) who experience barriers to learning
- Teachers from the school. These could be teachers who volunteer because of their interest, or who represent various levels of the programme, e.g. Pre-primary
- Teachers with specialised skills and knowledge in areas such as learning support, life skills/guidance, or counselling
- Teachers on the staff who have particular expertise to offer around a specific need or challenge
- Support staff from the school, such as administrative and care-taking staff.
- Learners

Non-core, but other important members:

In addition to the above core team who meet on a regular basis, additional people could be brought in to some of the SBIT meetings and processes to assist with particular challenges. These could include:

- Practitioners from early childhood education centres.
- Learning support assistants, who support home based education for children with disabilities
- Parents of children with disabilities
- Specific members of the District Education Office, EARCs, and special/resource schools
- Members of local Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
- Teachers from other schools, particularly from inclusive schools and those who may be in a 'cluster' relationship with the school concerned.

4. Importance of School-Based Inclusion Teams

SBITs can make an important impact through:

- ✓ Supporting schools to identify and address contextual barriers to learning and development
- ✓ Sharing joint expertise of school staff, problems can often be solved without bringing in external professionals
- ✓ Ensuring that all children who need additional support can be effectively supported
- ✓ Identifying partners in the community who could support inclusion in the school and in home based learning.

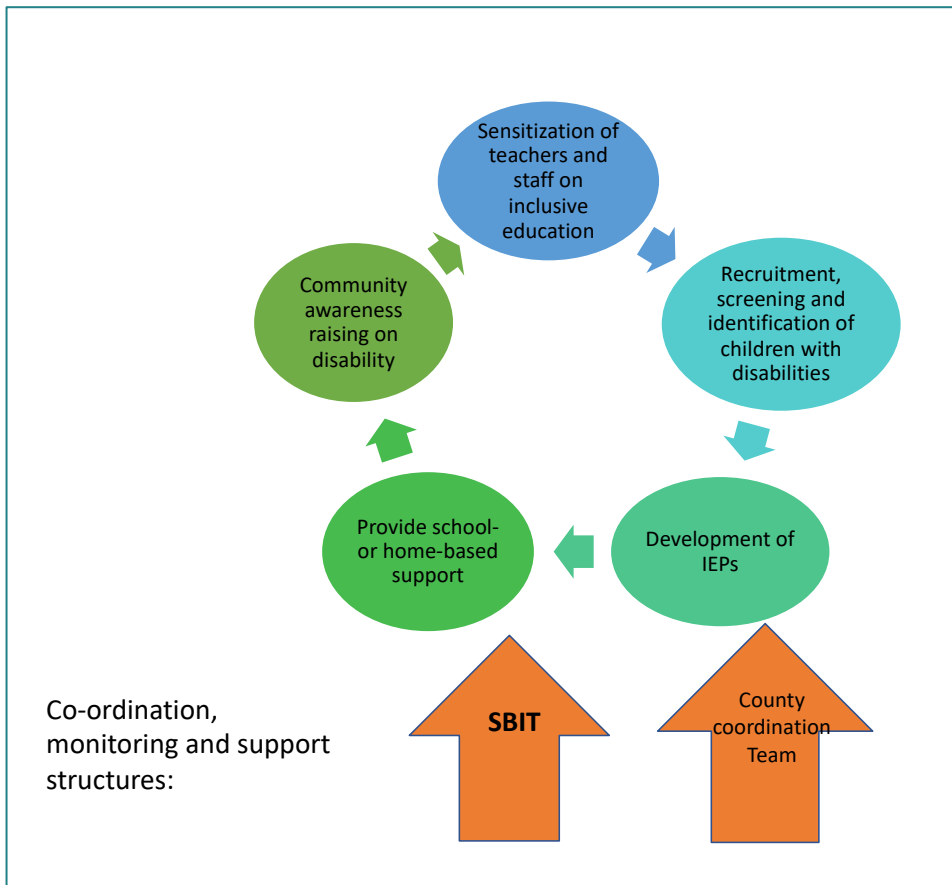


Figure showing the role of SBITs in supporting inclusive practices at ECDE level