

# NATIONAL POLICY ON SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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## FOREWORD

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1977 paid attention to the issues on Special Needs Education by creating a section for it. The implementation of the Policy between 1978 and 2013 has been subjected to various interventions which include among others: teacher development, institutional development framework, establishment of special schools, curriculum reviews and other initiatives by the Government and Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs).

However, research at global, continental and regional levels and by human rights groups has given rise to new concepts. These have therefore necessitated the need to review the policy to ensure best practices in the field of Special Needs Education.

Based on the above, government will, in future, drive Special Needs Education on the following principles:

- Creating the least restrictive environment.
- Zero Reject (Education for all irrespective of circumstance of life, setting and services).
- Total inclusion of Persons with Special Needs within the ambience of societal operation.
- Diversification of services beyond the school setting to include the home and the hospital.

I am therefore delighted to pioneer the maiden editions of:

- the National Policy on Special Needs Education;

- and
- the Implementation Guidelines on the National Policy on Special Needs Education.

With these documents in place, the practice of Special Needs Education (SNE) in the country would reflect best global practices for our nation's development.

A handwritten signature in red ink, consisting of a stylized 'I' and 'D' followed by a horizontal line.

**Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, CON**

Sardaunan Kano,

Honourable Minister of Education.

## PREFACE

Every decade brings in new series, models, patterns, concepts and practices. If a decade fails to usher in some of these new ways, it is said to be static.

Interpolations, extrapolations, needs and challenges that were not in tandem with global best practices had to be expunged from what the country has as a Policy. Nigeria is bold to ask that those actions that are no longer in vogue with world best practices should be expunged from its policy and implementation guidelines.

Situation analysis is to critically assess how effective our service delivery had been over the years. Once we were able to delineate our strengths and weakness, pinpoint our needs and prioritize them, this then enabled us prepare the National Policy on Special Needs Education. The situation analysis therefore acts as a precedent to the preparation of a National Policy in the field of Special Needs Education (SNE). Situation analysis is not about stating challenges or negativism. It is rather an opportunity to question the effectiveness of service delivery.

The National Policy on Special Needs Education lays emphasis on least restrictive environment, zero reject, total inclusion and diversification of services beyond the

school target.

With the Policy and the Implementation Guidelines developed, it is expected that the practice of Special Needs Education will henceforth be based on global best practices.

This Policy is comprehensive, holistic and all encompassing as it touches all aspects of Special Needs Education. It is therefore a milestone towards the improvement of Special Education in Nigeria and its implementation will definitely enhance the educational service delivery for Persons with Special Needs.



**Dr. MacJohn Nwaobiala**  
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) wishes to acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of all the stakeholders who participated in the various stages of the development of the National Policy on Special Needs Education and the Guidelines for Implementation.

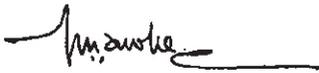
We highly appreciate the consultants from the following institutions, namely: the Universities of Jos, Ibadan, Georgia USA, Bayero University Kano, and Colleges of Education (Special) Oyo and Minna, who spear-headed the drafting, critiquing and editing of the Policy. The Special Assistants (Technical and Special Duties) to the Honourable Minister of State for Education who participated actively are also appreciated.

We express our gratitude to NERDC, UBEC, NCCE, FMWASD, The Albino Foundation (TAF), National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASSET), National Association for Exceptional Children (NAEC), the Nigerian National Association for the Deaf (NNAD) and the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD) for their input.

We also wish to thank members of the Joint Consultative Committee on Education (JCCE) 55<sup>th</sup>

Reference Committee on Special Education in Abuja, for their scrutiny of the documents. Our appreciation also goes to the JCCE/National Council on Education (NCE) Secretariat for their efforts to get the documents approved.

Finally, the FME staff and especially the staff of the Special Needs Education Branch are commended for their commitment and contribution to the actualization of this document.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. C. Uwaezuoke', followed by a long horizontal flourish line.

**D. C. Uwaezuoke (Esq.)**

Director, Basic and Secondary Education,  
Federal Ministry of Education.

## ACRONYM

<b>OAE</b>	-	Otoacoustic Emission
<b>ABR</b>	-	Auditory Brainstem Response
<b>ASSR</b>	-	Auditory Steady State Response
<b>DFID</b>	-	Department for International Development
<b>FME</b>	-	Federal Ministry of Education
<b>FMWASD</b>	-	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
<b>ICT</b>	-	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IDPs</b>	-	International Development Partners
<b>IEP</b>	-	Individualized Education Programme/Plan
<b>ILO</b>	-	International Labour Organization
<b>JCCE</b>	-	Joint Consultative Committee on Education
<b>JONAPWD</b>	-	Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities
<b>LRE</b>	-	Least Restrictive Environment
<b>NASET</b>	-	National Association of Special Education Teachers
<b>NCCE</b>	-	National Commission for Colleges of Education
<b>NCE</b>	-	National Council on Education
<b>NAEC</b>	-	National Association for Exceptional Children

<b>NERDC</b>	-	Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council
<b>NNAD</b>	-	Nigerian National Association for the Deaf
<b>NUC</b>	-	National Universities Commission
<b>NPE</b>	-	National Policy on Education
<b>NGO's</b>	-	Non-governmental Organization
<b>O/M</b>	-	Orientation and Mobility
<b>PHI</b>	-	Physical and Health Impairment
<b>PSN</b>	-	Personal with Special Needs
<b>PWD</b>	-	Personals with Disabilities
<b>SNE</b>	-	Special Needs Education
<b>SNERs</b>	-	Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation services
<b>TAF</b>	-	The Albino Foundation
<b>UBEC</b>	-	Universal Basic Education Commission
<b>UNESCO</b>	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	-	United Nations International Children Education Fund
<b>UNDP</b>	-	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNIJOS</b>	-	University of Jos
<b>USAID</b>	-	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WHO</b>	-	World Health Organization

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## **1.0 SITUATION ANALYSIS ON THE NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

The Federal Ministry of Education constituted a Committee to develop exclusively the first broad-based National Policy on Special Needs Education (SNE) in Nigeria. The constitution of the drafting committee with the mandate to formulate a National Policy on Special Needs Education gave birth to the National Situation Analysis Report. This implies that the status has changed to a National Policy (an expanded version) thereby widening its scope and activities.

The situation analysis has to do with:

- Challenges
- Prospects
- Needs
- The way forward for meeting the needs; and
- Prioritizing the needs.

Nigeria is involved in Special Needs Education but the present practices are not fully consistent with existing global best practices. More so, the Special Needs classrooms laboratories in the country are not yet technology driven.

The cognitive domain for the child with Special Needs is not well addressed especially for the child who

possesses outstanding cognitive abilities (gifted, creative and talented children) and others who experience intellectual deficits, that is, learning disabilities, and so on. The gifted education programme in Nigeria is organized like that of a regular school. In other words, techniques and strategies (such as curriculum compacting, enrichment, bibliotherapy and so on) that drive gifted education are not generally being practised. The practice of Special Needs Education in Nigeria is therefore deficient in two areas:

**1. Classroom activities** - Facilities and materials that enhance learning are either lacking or where they exist, inadequate and/or obsolete. What is more, many Special Needs Education practitioners lack the technical knowhow to operate specialized Special Needs Education gadgets.

**2. Rehabilitation** - Middle and high level manpower have been produced following exposure to Special Needs Education programmes. The Special Education programme in Nigeria does not emphasize rehabilitation. Exposure to Community Based Rehabilitation Programmes will make the beneficiaries self-reliant. The need to produce graduates with Special Needs who are self-reliant as well as gifted children who would mastermind technological breakthroughs made the formulation of a Policy on Special Needs Education even more urgent.

### **1.1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:**

Access to appropriate education for Persons with Special Needs is the main thrust of inclusive education. Making appropriate education available to children and youth with Special Needs is one sure way of achieving access and equity as prescribed by UNESCO for inclusive education programmes. The focus over the years has been in the area of producing graduates without preparing them for life after school. Transition programme should therefore be a necessary component of Special Needs Education in Nigeria.

Global best practices of Special Needs Education occur in:

- a. School - bound settings;
- b. Home - bound settings; and
- c. Hospital - bound settings.

In Nigeria, Special Needs Education takes place largely in school bound settings to the exclusion of home and hospital settings. There is therefore the need to articulate a policy that captures the home and hospital settings.

In addition, the practice of Special Education in Nigeria appears to be an open field for all. Practitioners are not formally licensed to operate in Nigeria. Inclusive Education has been misconstrued in some quarters to

mean integration or mainstreaming. There is need to spell out guidelines for inclusive practices for Special Needs Education.

Also, professionals in the area of gifted education are few in Nigeria. Learning materials are generally inadequate. It is the general purpose teachers that seem to be dominating the field of Special Needs Education. Graduates of Special Education in Nigeria face the challenge of relevance on graduation because the curriculum in place is not skill-relevant after school life.

The school curriculum has limited space for Special Needs Education service educators because of the other competing courses. There is need, therefore, to produce a curriculum that will make professionals in Special Needs Education relevant on the job.

### **1.1.3 LEGISLATION**

There was no functional legislation on Special Needs Education. The kind of laws that existed then were mainly that of grants-in-aid. Some of the laws in some states are now moribund. What exist now are policies which must be backed by legislation and the role of Special Education teachers in the context of the policy must be highlighted.

#### **1.1.4 NOMENCLATURE**

A terminology being used generally for Persons with Disability is, “physically challenged”. There is no such terminology in Special Needs Education like physically challenged. The term “Physically Challenged” describes only a limited portion of Persons with Special Needs (PSN). It has been wrongly used to mean Persons with Special Needs. Persons with Special Needs are identified as those with various forms of exceptionalities including: Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation, (Intellectual Disability/Intellectual Developmental Disability) Physical and Health Impairment, Behavioural Disorders, Communication and Speech Impairment, Learning Disabilities, Multiple Disabilities, at Risk Children, Autism, Albinism and the Gifted and Talented, to mention but a few.

#### **1.1.5 EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL**

Government has not put in place a proforma and anecdotal record chart for distribution to schools, centres, hospitals, homes and public offices aimed at tracking early detection of Persons with Special Needs. This gets the public informed about where to go to for service delivery. A national directory on service centres and referrals needs to be put in place, while Special Needs diagnostic and assessment centres are of utmost necessity.

### **1.1.6 DATA**

The absence of comprehensive data on Persons with Special Needs has hampered planning and implementation of programmes over time. In Nigeria, available data are silent on Albinism. The issue of access, vision and skin problem in the case of albinism makes their inclusion into Special Needs Education necessary.

### **1.1.7 EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS AND FUNDING**

The classrooms of the 21st century should be entirely technology driven. There is need to look at equipment, materials and funding that will propel this process. The nature of funding is an evolving thing as we develop the policy.

### **1.1.8 NON-RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

- Bias, cultural archetypes and negative behaviour patterns about Special Needs Education are endemic in Nigeria.
- In the National Policy on Education, it is stated that services to Persons with Special Needs should be free but it was not stated in an imperative term for the Federal Ministry of Education to operate. Positive re-attitudinization and rebranding for both the

service givers and the end users should form the basis of the new policy. The sources or scope of funding Special Needs Education should be clearly defined.

- Even where funding is available, it is sometimes accessed by unqualified professionals of non-existent organizations in the social services sector or diverted because Special Needs Education services are seen as secondary humanitarian services.
- History has shown that Special Needs Education is seen as voluntary or humanitarian affairs only, instead of scientific study.
- In Nigeria, accurate data on the incidence and prevalence of Persons with Special Needs are not available for service delivery from centres.
- It will be difficult to plan without relevant data. Data collating system centre for Persons with Special Needs are inadequate or near non-existent.
- The various sectors of Special Needs Education are not manned by Special Needs Education professionals.
- Special Needs service provisions at pre-school level are lacking. Early Child Special Needs Education and Development is not practised because most of the private schools are owned by people who have little or no knowledge of Special Needs Education.

### **1.1.9 STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR ROLES**

These comprise: Government, Persons Living with Disability (PWD), professionals, philanthropists, caregivers, non-governmental organizations, professional groups and organizations, private sectors, inter-disciplinary professionals, non-professionals, implementers, planners and International Development Partners (IDPs). Most of them have not fully played their roles.

- There is inadequate synergy between the Federal Ministry of Education and other Government ministries, agencies and IDPs.
- Multiple responsibilities on rehabilitation services and programmes are thereby given to the Ministries of Education, Women Affairs and Social Development, Health, Youth and Sports and Labour and Productivity.
- In the Federal Ministry of Education, these responsibilities are lumped under a Division instead of creating a Division exclusively for Special Needs Education.
- The 1978-1979 Implementation Blueprint on the National Policy on Education stated that there would be a Joint National Committee on Special Needs Education. This is yet to be implemented. It is expected that this would be done as the opportunity to bring it to birth has presented itself.

## **2.0 THE NATIONAL POLICY ON SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

The Federal Ministry of Education is moving away from the narrowed scope nomenclature of Special Education to a more broad-based focus of Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation Services.

### **2.1 VISION**

A paradigm shift to maximize human potentials of Persons with Special Needs and nurture their intelligence, notwithstanding social, economic, political, religious, language and other circumstances.

### **2.2 MISSION**

To ensure inclusion of Persons with Special Needs, provide equal opportunity, equity and access in a barrier free environment.

### **2.3 THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

- i. To take care of total service delivery of the physical, mental and emotional disabilities of the Nigerian child, irrespective of setting (school, home and hospital).
- ii. To provide adequate and qualitative education for all Persons with Special Needs in all aspects

- of national developmental endeavours.
- iii. To ensure that all Persons with Special Needs develop at a pace commensurate with their abilities and to contribute to the nation's socio-economic and technological development.

## **2.4 PHILOSOPHY**

- i. To identify the dignity and worth of the human person and to utilize the residual strength to overcome the weakness.
- ii. To enable the Nigerian child acquire appropriate skills for global competitiveness in the world of ICT.
- iii. To develop the child into a sound, effective and productive citizen.
- iv. To ensure full inclusion of the individual into the community.
- v. To provide equal access to educational and other service opportunity for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels and also those outside the formal school system.

For the philosophy to be in harmony with Nigeria's national goals, education has to be geared towards self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity as well as towards

attaining social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress.

### **3.0 SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation Services (SNERS) is a formal Education given to Persons with Special Needs. It is tailored towards Individualized Educational Programme (IEP). It is rendered at school, home and hospital bound settings and can be classified into three categories:

- 1) Persons with Disabilities:** These are persons with physical and sensory impairments including albinism, who because of their condition cannot cope with regular school/class methods and processes without formal Special Needs Educational training. In this category, we have persons with:
  - i. Visual Impairment (total, partial sightedness and low vision).
  - ii. Hearing Impairment (mild, moderate, severe/profound hearing Impairment).
  - iii. Physical and Health Impairment (paraplegia, quadriplegia, seizures, orthotoid, cerebral palsy, etc).
  - iv. Mental Retardation/Intellectual Disability/

- Intellectual Developmental Disability (educable, trainable, bed ridden).
- v. Behavioural Disorders (hyperactivity, hypo activity/the socially maladjusted/emotional disorder).
  - vi. Speech Impairment (stammering/stuttering, voice disorders, etc).
  - vii. Learning Disabilities (dyscalculia, dyslexia, auditory processing disorder, visual processing disorder, attention deficit disorders etc).
  - viii. Multiple Impairment (intellectual with visual impairment).
  - ix. Autism Spectrum Disorders.
  - x. Albinism (an inherited genetic condition that affects the production of melanin – the pigment responsible for colouration of skin, eyes and hair).
  - xi. This list is not exhausted
- 2) At risk children/youth:** The children of nomadic pastoral, migrant fisher folks, migrant farmers, hunters, almajiri et cetera, who due to their lifestyles and means of livelihood, are unable to have access to the conventional educational provision/services and therefore require Special Needs Education/services to cater for their particular/peculiar needs and circumstances.
- 3) Gifted and Talented Children/Youth:** These are persons who possess very high intelligence

quotient and are naturally endowed with special traits (in arts, creativity, music, leadership, intellectual precocity, psychomotor prowess etc.) and therefore find themselves insufficiently challenged by the regular school/college/university programmes in relation to pace and curricula.

#### **4.0 RESPONSIBILITY OF FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

The Federal Ministry of Education has the responsibility of coordinating Special Needs Education in Nigeria. This is done in collaboration with relevant Ministries and bodies e.g. Federal Ministry of Sports, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity, Federal Ministry of Justice, National Human Rights Commission, Non-Governmental Organizations as well as International Development Partners (IDPs), - UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, WHO, DFID, World Bank, USAID, ILO etc.

- a. The Federal and State Ministries of Education shall, in collaboration with appropriate bodies, provide special programmes for gifted and talented persons. The special programmes include:
  - i. Early-age identification and nurture.

- ii. Early-age admission into primary, secondary and tertiary institutions.
  - iii. Early completion of educational programmes at the three educational levels (primary, secondary and tertiary).
  - iv. Technical and vocational programmes beyond the regular school setting.
  - v. Multiple learning environments in the school, home and hospital bound settings.
- b. Federal and State Governments shall ensure that the education of children with Special Needs shall be free at all levels.
  - c. Federal and State Governments shall ensure that all necessary training, facilities and equipment that would ensure easy access and implementation of Special Needs Education programmes and services are in place for the following groups:
    - **Visual Impairment** – Training in Orientation and Mobility (O/M) Braille Reading and Writing, use of computer with Job Access With Speech (JAWS) and repairs of special equipment etc. The facilities/equipment include, everest braille embosser, duxbury braille translator, ominipage/open book, quick tac, Job Access With Speech (JAWS) for windows, acoustic cabinet, scanner, laptop, low vision aids and devices, binocular, camera etc.

- **Hearing Impairment:** Training in Sign Language interpretation, audiometric technique (pure tone and speech audiometry) and computer application devices. The facilities/equipment include: audiometer, tympanometer, otoscope, video otoscope, tuning fork, Otoacoustic Emmission (OAE), Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR), Auditory Steady State Response (ASSR) etc. Total communication (include aural, oral, lip reading and Sign Language interpretation), hearing aids, cochlea implants speech synthesizer, Teletype (TTY), doorbell, alarm, auto scope, etc.
- **Speech and Language Disorders:** Training in speech therapy which has to do with speech/lip reading, total communication. Equipment include: speech audiometer, speech analyzer etc.
- **Physical and Health Impairment:** Training in Orientation and Mobility, use and management/manufacturing of prostheses and other mobility devices (basic physiotherapy materials for PHI, wheel chairs, cerebral palsy chairs) etc.
- **Mental Retardation (Intellectual Disability/ Intellectual Developmental Disability)** Training in daily living skills, self-help skills, livelihood skills. Materials include: toys, plastic drawing sheets jigsaw, puzzle etc.

- **Behavioural Disorders:** Training in diagnostic assessment technique. Materials include various foreign and local assessment tools and texts.
- **Learning Disabilities:** Training in reading concepts and methods, speech and language concepts and methods, perceptual/cognitive concepts and methods training, Arithmetic/Mathematics concepts and techniques etc. Materials include sensory stimulation toys, plastics, drawing sheets, atomic absorption electro spectro photometer, quantum body image analyzer.
- **Multiple Impairment:** Individualized programme requirement and technique in needs assessment training.
- **Albinism:** Training in HD Acrobat low vision assistive devices. Training of Teachers on teaching and learning for children with albinism in the classroom. Learning enhancement equipment, protective clothes, hats spectacles, special blackboard, e.t.c
- **Gifted and Talented** – such as curriculum compacting training, use of bibliotherapy, use of e-learning mode, Individualized Education Programme/Plan (IEP), enrichment and acceleration technique especially telescoping

and training in the use of historic technique. Training to use learning portals, thematic units hyperlinks, virtual learning environment, use of rubrics, web quest, museum world and adapting technology differentiated instruction, Renzulu, Learning system, providing digital museum.

- **Community - Based Rehabilitation and Mental Health** - To focus on the Nigeria health care system, the roles of the mental health team and mental health rehabilitation worker. Examine the common pictures and unique roles of physical therapy, therapeutic recreation etc.
- **Community Based Rehabilitation and Primary Health** - To Focus on biomedical issues, social and behavioural factors related to health and environment etc.
- **Community - Based Rehabilitation and Adult Disabilities** - To focus on the genesis of disabilities, types, causes, prevention, identification and rehabilitation approaches etc.
- **Community - Based Rehabilitation and Childhood Disabilities-** To focus on the principles of community based rehabilitation and childhood disabilities, exploration of the concept of community, rehabilitation and childhood disabilities, intervention programmes etc.
- **Livehood and Rehabilitation Therapy** - To focus on economic empowerment opportunities,

instructional strategies and techniques that respond to the diverse learning styles and needs of learners, training design, organization and delivery of programmes, post - training support for micro-enterprise development etc.

- **Community Based Rehabilitation and Social Empowerment** - To focus on life span development, interpersonal communication, health behaviours and society, stress, health and college life, homelessness etc.

## **5.0 Special Training and Re-training of Personnel:**

- Capacity building/development.
- Developing counselling and relevant teaching techniques for various categories of Persons with Special Needs.
- Developing relevant therapeutic techniques.
- Keep abreast with modern/best practices and research techniques in the various areas of Special Needs Education.
- Developing course work for educators of the gifted, creative and talented tutors, parents and students.
- Providing internship/exchange programmes for policy makers, implementers and practitioners in the field of Special Needs Education.

**6.0 Teacher - Pupil Ratio** – shall be 1:5-10 in inclusive classroom, 10 being the maximum and 5 being the normal.

**7.0 Curriculum** -Multiple curricula and differentiated curricula that will be tailored to individualized needs.

**8.0 Planning of Special Needs programmes and Services** – Adequate arrangement shall be made to relate programmes and services to individualized needs and personnel capacity building shall be projected to match service needs.

**9.0 Access** – Universality of access, removal of all forms of barriers that may interfere with learning and other support services are to be provided to meet their unique needs.

**10.0 Adaptation of various equipment, materials and facilities** - The following shall be carried out to determine relevance of usage before equipment/materials and facilities are procured or built:

- Sensitization and awareness creation.
- Advocacy and mobilization.

## 11.0 Physical Facilities

In Nigeria, areas of Special Needs that were inadequately serviced are now requiring access to full service delivery. Consequently, existing facilities shall be upgraded and new structure put in place.

- **Specialized Facilities** - As the scheme advances, there shall be need for specialized facilities to be built such as Special Needs laboratories, clinics and resource centres within the various existing centres/schools with provision of virtual learning resources, hyperlinks and computer networks.
- **Architectural Design** – shall be disability friendly, that is, provision of toilets, ramps, enlarged entrances, classrooms, administrative offices, embossed rio speech and language laboratories, doorbells, as well as indicators on doors and elevators shall be provided etc.
- **Environment** – Ensuring that outdoor play areas and roads are barrier and hazard free and generally disability friendly, containing hyperlinks and portals for lessons.

## 12.0 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The following professionals play various roles in the identification and assessment of Persons with Special Needs.

- **Special Needs Education professionals** – such as learning disabilities, Special identification and assessment specialists, audiologists, Speech therapists and so on.
- **Interrelated professionals** - such as medical practitioners, clinical psychologists, counselling school psychologists, neuro-psychologists, physiotherapists, nurses, and physiologist etc. occupational therapists and rehabilitation counsellors shall equally play the role of identification and referral.
- **Parents/guardians** - who are the primary source of identification and shall consent to make the children available for further action including screening, diagnosis, assessment and placement; and
- **The School-** shall be required to arrange regular sensory, medical and psychological screening assessments to identify any incidence of disability.

### **13.0 Stakeholders**

The National Policy on Special Needs Education shall recognize the following stakeholders in order to maximize service provisions for Persons with Special Needs.

- Federal Ministry of Education
- Federal Ministry of Finance
- Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity
- Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
- Federal Ministry of Health
- Federal Ministry of Youths and Sports
- Federal Ministry of Justice
- Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council
- Universal Basic Education Commission
- National Universities Commission
- National Teachers' Institute
- National Institute for Planning and Administration
- National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education
- National Commission for Nomadic Education
- National Commission for Colleges of Education
- Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board
- National Planning Commission
- Human Rights Commission
- National Orientation Agency
- National Population Commission
- National Bureau of Statistics
- Federal Fire Service
- National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
- State Governments

- Local Governments
- International Development Partners
- Corporate Organizations
- Civil Society Organizations
- Non Governmental Organizations
- Faith Based Organizations
- Professional Groups in Special Needs Education
- Private Sector
- Media
- Research Institutions
- Community Based Organizations
- Traditional Rulers
- Corporate Organizations

#### **14.0 Service Provision Centres**

Service provision centres shall be established in schools, hospitals and home/private bound settings for Persons with Special Needs. Such centres shall include among others, Special Needs Diagnostic and Assessment Centres, resource rooms, Speech and Language therapy centres, audiology clinics, children clinic, and transition work skill preparation centres.

#### **15.0 Legislation**

Government shall put in place functional legislative framework with implementation force for Persons with Special Needs. These include:

- i. The rights of Persons with Special Needs as citizens;
- ii. The responsibility of each level of government in

- the provision of education for Persons with Special Needs;
- iii. Environmental rights of Persons with Special Needs;
  - iv. Federal guidelines for funding education of Persons with Special Needs
  - v. Communication rights of Persons with Special Needs;
  - vi. Architectural barrier-free specifications for Persons with Special Needs;
  - vii. Incentive grants for Persons with Special Needs in and out of school;
  - viii. Employment of Persons with Special Needs after training;
  - ix. Consequential effect or failure to comply with any provision of the legislation for Persons with Special Needs.

## **16.0 Funding/Resource Mobilization**

The provision of Special Needs Education requires heavy funding and comprehensive planning, especially when the population of those requiring such services in Special Needs Education increases by the day. Such funding and resources shall be required for the following:

- I. Special facilities that are free of architectural

- barriers or have appropriate architectural modification
- ii. Special equipment and materials
  - iii. Resource centres
  - iv. Diagnostic and assessment centres
  - v. Supportive services
  - vi. Personnel development
  - vii. Scholarships for Persons with Special Needs
  - viii. Workshops and seminars
  - ix. Special library
  - x. Transportation
  - xi. Administrative and management services
  - xii. Monitoring and data collection and records

There shall be adequate remuneration (Special Needs Education Allowance) for teachers and those working with Special Needs units, centres and institutions.

## **17.0 Financial Responsibility**

Funding required for Special Needs Education shall be provided by:

- Federal Government
- State Government
- Local Government
- Government Agencies/Parastatals
- Private Sector
- International Development Partners

- Non-Governmental Organizations (Local and International)
- Corporate Organizations
- Civil Society Organization
- Faith Based Organizations
- Individuals and philanthropists

## **18.0 Administration**

Educational leadership is the hub around which all activities in education rotates. The Federal Ministry of Education shall be the coordinator of government at the various levels. Therefore, for effective administration of the education of Persons with Special Needs in Nigeria, there shall be three major operational divisions which represent the three levels of government – Federal, State and Local Governments.

The Federal Ministry of Education shall coordinate the activities of State Ministries of Education. There shall be regular inspection and counselling at other levels of governments on matters relating to implementation of programmes for the education of Persons with Special Needs.

### **18.1 The Administrative Structure**

The administrative structure of the education for Persons with Special Needs shall follow the existing administrative structure of the regular school system.

Government, however, shall ensure that specialists of the education of Persons with Special Needs are available at Zonal, State and Local Government levels.

- i. Each State shall establish at least, one diagnostic and assessment centre for early identification, analysis and placement of Persons with Special Needs to determine proper and adequate intervention.
- ii. Each Local Government Area shall establish at least one pilot inclusive setting to accommodate Persons with Special Needs to meet their needs.

### **19.0 Staff Development**

There is need to select a special breed of teachers for highly specialized training to inject adequate Special Needs Education into pre-service teachers education programme. Both administrators and teachers should be selected and trained to acquire in-depth knowledge in various specialized areas in the field of Special Needs Education. Faculties of Education, Institutions and Colleges of Education shall be involved in designing training programmes to cater for the training needs of these personnel. The Teacher Education curriculum must differentiate clearly administrative responsibilities. Educational institutions shall introduce basic courses of Special Needs Education into Teacher Education curriculum at the Nigerian Certificate of Education

(NCE), undergraduate, Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) and Post Diploma in Education(PDE) levels. The National Universities Commission (NUC) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) shall prevail on Faculties of Education and Schools of Education to introduce basic courses in Special Needs Education nationwide. The courses shall be taught by professional special educators.

### **19.1 Support Staff Development**

Support staff encompasses all who are not necessarily teaching staff. These include nurses, psycho-therapists, school counsellors, sign language interpreters, brailers, brailenote takers, braille transcribers, sighted guides etc. Effort shall be made by government to ensure that the services of these are needed and training will be provided to update their skills.

### **19.2 Administrative Staff**

The staff at the Ministries (Federal, State as well as the Local Government levels) who will be charged with the administration of Special Needs Education shall also be given staff development attention.

## **20.0 Instructional Materials**

Instructional materials constitute an integral part of the conception of the physical facilities. It includes general classroom materials, clinical services materials, diagnostic and assessment materials etc. reading text, films, educational softwares and technological softwares. The supply of instructional materials shall therefore correspond with the Special Needs services being rendered.

Thus, the schools, the units, centres, clinics, and laboratories shall be designed to deliver Special Needs services that are enriched in terms of staffing, equipment and materials in order to give equal opportunity for optimum or maximum development of human potential and intelligence through quality programme services.

## THE POLICY DRAFTING COMMITTEE

S/N	Name	Organization	Post
1.	Prof. Iheanacho, I.J.	Dept. Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Jos	Chairman
2	Uwaezuoke, D.C. (Esq.)	Director, Basic & Secondary Education, FME	Member
3	Omotowa, E.B. (Mrs.)	DD Special Education, FME	Member
4	Ogbobilea, Loretta K.	AD Special Needs Education	Member
5	Nduka, Ngozi (Mrs.)	AD (Planning, FME)	Member
6	Omale, O.A.F	AD JCCE &NCE FME Secretariat	Member
7	Dr. Ayewoh, Oluwafemi	SA (Technical) HMSE, FME	Member
8	Oparah Lambert	SA (Special Duties) HMSE, FME	Member
9	Dr. Shonibare, D.O.	SNEB Unit, NERDC Sheda, Abuja	Member
10	Prof. Nwazuoke, I A.	Department of Special Education University of Ibadan	Member
11	Assoc. Prof Dantata, F	Department of Special Education, Bayero University, Kano	Member
12	Dr. Okuoyibo, J.N	Federal College of Education, Special Oyo	Member
13	Prof. Agunloye, O.O	Department of Educational Leadership, Counselling and Special Education, University of Georgia, USA	Member
14	Isah, B.M	CEO Special Needs Education, FME	Member
15	Anyanwu, B.N	ACEO Special Needs Education, FME	Member
16	Nwankwo, E.N	ACEO Special Needs Education, FME.	Member
17	Ekwugha, B.U	SEO (ANFE) FME	Member

## CRITIQUE TEAM

S/N	Name	Organization
1.	Uwaezuoke, D. C. (Esq.)	Director, Basic and Secondary Education FME
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5	Dr. (Mrs.) Ibe, Juliana C.	AD Special Needs Education, FME
6	Yakwal, S.M.	University of Jos, Jos
7	Oyundoyin J.O.	University of Ibadan, Ibadan
8	Anakwe, A.I.	University of Jos, Jos
9	Nalado, A.	College of Education, Minna
10	Epelle, Jake	The Albino Foundation
11	Kasim, Afam	Joint National Association of Person with Disability (JONAPWD)
12	Nwaeseni, Felix	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
13	AcSU Ann	Universal Basic Education Commission
14	Mal. Isah, B.M.	CEO Special Needs Education, FME
15	Anyanwu, B.N	ACEO, Special Needs Education, FME

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2	Ogbobilea, Loretta. K.	DD, Special Needs Education, FME
3	Ekong, Grace (Mrs.)	DD, Education for All, FME
4	Uya, Grace (Mrs.)	DD, Nigerian Educational Research & Development Council (NERDC)
5	Nwosu, Ngozi (Mrs.)	DD, Federal Inspectorate Service.FME
6	Dr. (Mrs) Ibe, Juliana C.	AD, Special Needs Education, FME
7	Dr. Elemukan, I.S.	President, National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASSET) UNIJOS
8	Alhaji Dagbo, S.S.	Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo
9	Daramola, Martina O. (Mrs.)	Vice-President, National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASSET), Abuja Chapter
10	Uji, V.I.	National Commission for Colleges of Education
11	Adaka, Terfa Ahon	National Association for Exceptional Children (NAEC) Federal College of Education (Technical), Gombe
12	Anyanwu, B.N.	ACEO, Special Needs Education, FME
13	Ugorji, Elizabeth. K.	Secretary, JCCE/NCE Secretariat) FME

