



MULTISECTORAL SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

CHILD CARE, DEVELOPMENT & SPECIAL NEEDS UNIT
FAMILY HEALTH BUREAU
MINISTRY OF HEALTH - 2022



**World Health
Organization**
Sri Lanka



Multi-sectoral services Available for Children with Disabilities

**Child care, Development and Special Needs
Unit/Family Health Bureau**

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Synopsis of IncluDe Logo

The IncluDe logo depicts the concept of ‘embracing diversity’. All children are valuable for our motherland. Children are diverse and their diversity brings different strengths to the development of the country. Hence, as a country we include all the children in any health program. The different shape and coloured letters of the logo symbolizes the diversity. Some may be with disability but they too stand bold. The Inclusive Early Childhood Development program is about all children in Sri Lanka! All are INCLUDED!



Message from the Director General of Health Services

Provision of health care services for the vulnerable and marginalized population is a priority in equitable service delivery models. This is highlighted in the sustainable developmental goal agenda for the 2030. Children with developmental delays and disabilities are one of the most underprivileged and marginalized categories among children. The services for these children are scarce, especially in the low to middle income countries.

A health care service is a priority for the children with disabilities. However, health care alone is not sufficient for holistic developmental stimulation of these children. Services from other sectors are mandatory including the services from education and social services.

This booklet contains a comprehensive guidance on numerous community-based services available for children with special needs. My heartfelt gratitude goes to Family Health Bureau of Ministry of Health and World Health Organization for bringing out such a valuable guide to our notice. Let's utilize this compact guidance to bring a smile to those children with special needs as well as to their families by providing countless inter-connected services.

Dr. Asela Gunawardena,
Director General of Health Services,
Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka

Message from the Director, Maternal and Child Health

The Family Health Bureau is the national focal point for the child care. It provides care for all the children including, children with disabilities. Though those children with disabilities are entitled to have special needs they do have same expectations as a normal child to have a brighter future.

As a country providing free health services, numerous programs have been developed to deliver health care needs of all children and services are delivered on the basis of equality. As well as the child with disability, the family also faces many issues related to various aspects other than health such as economy, social life, education and opportunities for career. Even a normal child requires various services to fulfill their demands and generally they have far more better accessibility to such services than a disable child.

Solely the Health sector's assistance is not sufficient for children with disabilities to bloom in the future. All the sectors have to work as a team to make their lives brighter. Multi-sectoral approach of services will direct children with disabilities to a clear pathway leading to the world they dream to have. This booklet has been composed for the benefit of children with special needs with all the pertinent information on different sectors and I hope we, each and every sector will utilize it to obtain the maximum.

This would not have been an accomplished work without the intense effort by child care, development and special needs unit of Family Health Bureau. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate their hard work. Moreover, I would like to extend warm thanks to World Health Organization as well for giving us this golden opportunity.

Dr. Chithramalee de Silva,
Director Maternal and Child Health,
Family Health Bureau,

Message from the World Health Organization Representative to Sri Lanka

Global estimates show that one in 20 of those under 15 years of age – live with a moderate or severe disability. As per the World Report on Disability (2011), adults and children with disabilities experience chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional health conditions, and they rely on a wide range of support to meet their health, education, employment, and other needs. Gaining access to such support can be a complex challenge for such children and families.

The WHO Global Disability Action plan for 2014–2021: Better health for all people with disability points out that people with disabilities, have higher health care needs, yet face many barriers in accessing health services resulting to worse health outcomes. This was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic also. The said plan urges Member States to focus on effective multi-sectoral approach, with practical mechanisms for coordination and implementation between relevant sectors responsible for the provision of health, rehabilitation and associated services for persons with disabilities.

A health and Social Service sector in Sri Lanka has been working hard to introduce services to children with disabilities since early 2000. However, the said efforts were stagnant due to limitations in trained human resources. With the gradual increase of availability of allied health professionals and sub-speciality experts, Ministry of Health wishes to revamp the services for children with disabilities.

WHO aims to pursue the goals of inclusion and empowerment of people with disability, in our work, with the Ministry of Health. This publication contains information on available multi-sectoral services for children with disabilities to facilitate access to comprehensive array of services to meet their diverse needs.

My appreciation to the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka for their leading role in this important endeavor.

Dr. Alaka Singh

WHO Country Representative for Sri Lanka

Contents

1.	Introduction - Socio economic Support available in the community	8
2.	Early Intervention.....	9
3.	Education (formal and non-formal)	9
3.1.	Preschool and school education	8
3.2.	Special provisions at the National Examinations.....	10
4.	Vocational Training.....	11
4.1.	Vocational training provided by the department of social services...	11
4.2.	Other institutions providing vocational training.....	12
5.	Financial Assistance	13
5.1.	Through Department of Social Services	13
5.2.	Cenral Bank credit counselling centre	13
6.	Child Protection.....	14
6.1.	Department of probation and childcare services	14
6.2.	National Child Protection Authority	14
7.	Other Specialized Services	14
7.1.	Prevention of Violence in the families and enhance the psychological wellbeing of parents and care givers	14
7.2.	Providing leave for parents with disability who employed in Government or Private sector.....	15
7.3.	Transfer the pension of the parents to disabled child	15
8.	Multidisciplinary team members at field level to support children and families with disabilities	16

List of Tables

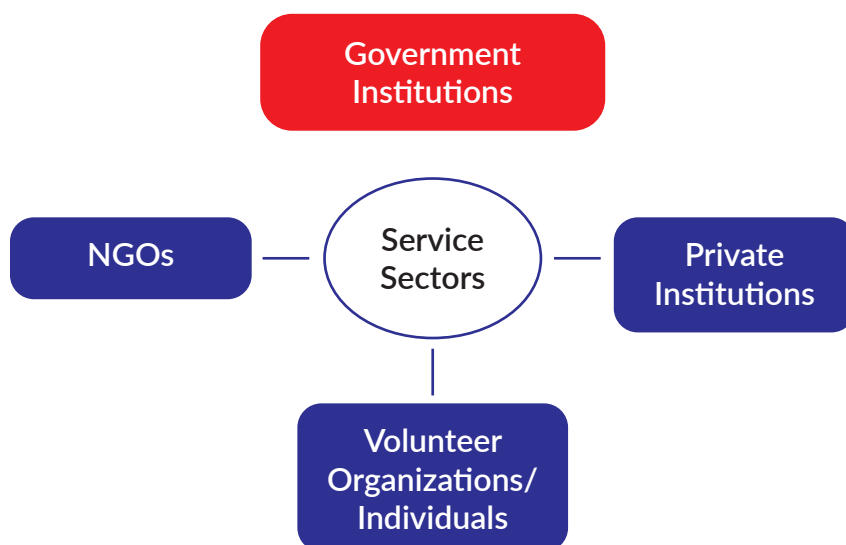
Table 1: Institutions responsible for providing schools/preschools for children with disabilities	10
Table 2: Institutions providing aids for victims of family violence	14
Table 3: Multidisciplinary team members at field level to support children and families with disabilities	16

1. Socio economic Support available in the community

Persons with disabilities are more likely to experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes such as less education, poorer health outcomes, lower levels of employment, and higher poverty rates (World Bank report, March 2021). This situation is same or even worse for the children with disabilities and their families. In general, they have greater healthcare needs, dependence on family and complicated socio-economic needs. Therefore, providing health services alone is not sufficient and it must be supplement with an interlinked network of community-based services in order to achieve the best possible outcome for every individual and family.

In developed countries, service systems have been well established to provide necessary care for disabled children and their families throughout the life course. However, those socio-economic needs are poorly addressed and less prioritized in developing countries. In order to achieve an optimal outcome for children with disabilities in Sri Lanka this gap in service provision has to be addressed properly and all the sectors should be collaborated towards a holistic approach.

The objective of this booklet is to identify the currently available non-health services for children with disabilities and families in Sri Lanka within the Government sector and link it to the care pathways on early identification and management of developmental disabilities. It will facilitate the referral process to those services by the health staff and ensure their maximum utility by the needy individuals and families. There are different sectors involved in service provision for children and families with disabilities as given by the diagram below.



Ideally management of developmental disabilities should include the multidisciplinary team interventions from health institutions to community level and those essential supportive services can be categorized into five main sections. They are,

1. Early intervention
2. Education (formal and non-formal)
3. Vocational training
4. Financial/social assistance
5. Child protection

2. Early Intervention

This includes the early identification and providing early interventions through neonatal, Public health and primary care pathways as described in the booklet on “Care pathways for Early Identification and management of developmental disabilities”.

In addition, the two institutions mentioned below provide early intervention services in selected areas.

1. Nawinna Child Guidance Center No 11, Wela road, Pathiragoda, Maharagama, Tel No: 0112746801

Services provided: Therapies, parental counselling, and early interventional activities. All these services are provided by free of charge.

2. Inclusive Education Department of the National Institute of Education Maharagama, Tel No: 0117601601

Services provided: Early Intervention for Children with Autism

3. Education (formal and non-formal)

3.1. Preschool and school education

Although “education for all” is conceptualized in the education policy of Sri Lanka, we have still faced many challenges on providing formal education opportunities to children with disabilities. Therefore, identifying the educational needs and selecting an appropriate system for a child (inclusive or special education system) can be best carried out by the liaison between the parents, education sector and all the other sectors involved in the care of that child.

The table 1 indicates the officers to be contacted, if there's difficulty in selecting a suitable preschool/school or there are ongoing issues with the current preschool/school of the child.

Table 1: Institutions responsible for providing schools/preschools for children with disabilities

Level	Officer	Institution	Contact details
Pre school	Early Childhood Development Officer (ECCD officer)	Relevant Divisional secretariat office	
Primary education	Director of primary education	Relevant zonal education office or provincial educational department.	
Special education/ secondary and above	Director/Non-formal and Special Education	Ministry of Education, Isurupaya, Battaramulla	Tel No: 0112784847
	Coordinators for special education	Relevant zonal education office	

3.2 Special provisions at the National Examinations

- ☐ Extra time given at Grade 5 Scholarship exams, G.C.E O/L exam and G.C.EA/L exam (e.g. **15 min for one hour**)
- ☐ **Aids and Interpreters** being provided at the examination hall.
- ☐ For Further inquiries contact Department of Examinations Sri Lanka, Pelawatta, Battaramulla, Tel No. 011 2786200-7, **hotline 1911**

4. Vocational Training

4.1 Vocational training provided by the department of social services:

- This programme is implemented through 05 vocational training centers located in three districts.
- The trainees are free to choose a course of their choice at an institute located in an area convenient to them.
- Further information can be obtained from the Social Service Officers or Development Officers of the Department of Social Services attached to Divisional Secretariats across the island.
- Qualifications required:
 - Between 16-35 years of age
 - Single
 - Being a person with disability (a certificate from registered medical practitioner is needed)
- Facilities provided
 - Free Residential facilities
 - An Allowance of Rs. 110.00 for external trainees, Rs. 50.00 for residential trainees and Rs. 75.00 for trainees of voluntary institutions is paid.
 - A Tool kit to the value of Rs. 10,000.00
 - A Government recognized certificate
 - Employment opportunities
- Special benefits
 - Sports and aesthetic activities
 - Youth society activities
 - Socialization programmes
 - Leadership training
 - Orientation and mobility training
 - Sign language and Braille training
- Training Period - Depends on the course, one- or two-year training period

Department of social services has a programme to Obtain information of those who are looking for employment opportunities and directing them for vacant places

4.2 Other institutions providing vocational training

There are several formal vocational training programmes conducted by different institutions available for the youth with minor disabilities to provide inclusive training to find a job opportunity in the labour market

1. Sri Lanka vocational Training Authority,

“Nipunatha Piyasa”, Elvitigala Mawatha, Colombo 05, Tel No:0112 502 342, Email: info@vtasl.gov.lk , Hotline -0117 270 270

2. National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA)

971, Sri Jayawardenepura Mawatha, Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, Tel: 0112884722, Email: mcgnaita@gmail.com

3. National Youth Council “ Youthforce programme”

65, Highlevel road, maharagama, Tel No: 0112 850 986, Email: info@nysc.lk

5. Financial Assistance

5.1 Through Department of Social Services

Following welfare facilities can be obtained from the department of SocialServices to low-income families with disabled members.

- Providing facilities to secure medical assistance. (Medical assistance programme for minor surgeries maximum up to Rs.20,000 or transportation allowance to take medicine from the nearest hospital or reimburse expenses of drugs which are not available in the hospital)
- Obtaining information on persons with disabilities and facilitating to provide Rs.5000 worth disability allowance once a month from the National Secretariat for persons with disabilities.
- Providing essential assistive devices to persons with disabilities.
- Carrying out infrastructure development activities in their homes.
 - Construction of houses.
 - Providing toilet facilities.
 - Providing water and electricity facilities.
 - Guidance for self-employment (Special priority is

- given to single mothers of children with disabilities)
- Referring to various support programmes in the community.
- Officers responsible to coordinate above activities
 - Social Service Officers and Development Officers of the Department of Social Services have been attached to some hospitals
 - Social Service Officers in all Divisional Secretary offices of the island (Monday or Wednesday)

5.2 Central Bank credit counselling centre

- This institute provides free counseling services for parents who are in debt or financial crisis and to overcome the issues.
- Contact details: No. 58, Sri Jayawardenepura Mawatha, Rajagiriya, contact No: 0 11 2477840

6 Child Protection

Every child has a right to protect from abuse or violence. Following institutions has the responsibility to intervene such incidents and ensure the safety of children including children with disabilities.

6.1 Department of probation and childcare services

Officers/institutions to contact:

- Child rights promotion officers at Divisional secretariat offices
- Provincial probation departments
 - * Department of probation and child care services – central level (3rd Floor, Sethsiripaya Stage II, Battaramulla, Tel. 011 – 2187283, 011 – 2187285, Email: pcc@sltnet.lk)

6.2 National Child Protection Authority

No. 330, Thalawathugoda Road, Madiwela, Sri Jayawardenapura,
Tel No: 0112 778 911 – 15, Email: ncpa@childprotection.gov.lk,
Hot Line: 1929

7. Other Specialized Services

7.1 Prevention of Violence in the families and enhance the psychological wellbeing of parents and caregivers

Table 2: Institutions providing aids for victims of family violence

	Institution	Contact details
1	Police Children and Women Bureau and Children and womendesk at each police station	180/19, Grandpass Rd, Colombo 14, TelNo:0112 444 444 Hot Line 1938
2	Legal Aid Commission of Sri Lanka	No 129, Hulftsdorp Street, Colombo - 12, Tel No: 011-2433618 Email: legalaid1978@gmail.com
3	GBV Prevention Center, National Institute of Mental Health, Angoda	Helpline 1926
4	Women in Need	25, Tickell Rd, Colombo 08, Tel No: 0112671411
5	Center for the Study of Human rights at Faculty of Law, University of Colombo	Tel No: 0112502001
6	Family Rehabilitation Centre Child and Family Adolescents services (CAFS)	73, Gregory's road, Colombo 7 Tel: 0112674112, 0117446919
7	Social Security Board Sri Lanka (They introduced special pension scheme for self-employers and specially for other people who are at risk of having residential care in the future)	18 , Rajagiriya Road , Rajagiriya, Tel No: 0112 886580 – 86, Email: info@ssb.gov.lk
8	Mithuru piyasa	Some Base and above level hospitals

7.2 Providing leave for parents with disability who employed in Government or Private sector

- Maternity leave
- Parent or care taker can apply for additional maternity leave
- They should have a medical certificate of the child and/or medical given under the name of the child.
- According to the child's need for growth and development, health care professional can decide to extend the time of the leave (maximum 1 year) or grant permission to apply for a new leave facility in the workplace. It is considered to give as a no pay leave for approved period.

Other – either of parents can obtain leave under special circumstances with the recommendation by a medical certificate.

Reference:

1. නිවාඩු පිළිබඳ අත්පොත

https://www.pubad.gov.lk/web/images/contents/e_code/leavehandbook.pdf

2. Public Administration Circular: 11/2013, Revision of Section 22, Chapter XII of the Establishments Code

7.3 Transfer the pension of the parents to disabled child:

- If a parent has being contributed to W&OP scheme of the government sector he/she can claim to transfer and continue to pay the pension to the disabled child, after his/her death.

Requirements:

- Medical certificate of the child
- ☐ Parent's request to transfer the pension after his/her demise
 - Officers & Institutions to be contacted:
 - Director (Pensions), Department of Pension, Colombo 01, TelNo: 0112 320 045, 0112 209 870, 0112 342 078, Email : helpdesk@pensions.gov.lk

Can obtain necessary counseling from the Cenral Bank creditcounselling centre, No. 58, Sri Jayewardenepura Mawatha, Rajagiriya, Tel No:0 11 2477840

8. Multidisciplinary team members at field level to support children and families with disabilities

Table 3: Multidisciplinary team members at field level to support children and families with disabilities

	Institution	Officer	Main activities
1	Divisional secretariat office	Social Services Officer	Provide Financial assistance to low - income families/persons with disabilities in the community
2		Child Rights Promotion Officer	Issues related to child protection and Child welfare up to 14 years
3		Early Childhood Development Officer	Wellbeing of Children under 5 years and monitoring the preschools in the division.
4		Counseling Officer	Provide counselling and psychosocial support
5		Women Development Officer	Promote and provide self-employment opportunities
6		Grama niladhari	Responsible to follow up overall wellbeing of people in the GN division or provide income certification and residential certification for relevant financial assistance programme
7		Samurdhi Development Officer	Provide Samurdhi assistance for the respective candidates, get an insurance for hospital admission
8	Provincial Probation Office	Probation Officer	Responsible for the custody and care of children who are receiving care under government
9	Child and Women Desk	Police Officer	Report any violence and abuse relate to vulnerable groups such as children and women. Ensure violence free community and protection of human rights.

All the above-mentioned services can obtain by meeting the relevant officer on Monday or Wednesday at the Divisional Secretary or Institution.

