

## **BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF CAPACITY BUILDING METHODS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS -A LITERATURE REVIEW**

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### **Abstract**

*Capacity building methods for children with special needs aim to enhance the capabilities of these children to achieve their full potential and lead fulfilling lives. Such methods often involve a variety of approaches, including early intervention programs, specialized educational resources, and individualized support services. These methods emphasize the importance of addressing the unique needs of each child with special needs and promoting their participation and inclusion in society. In this abstract, we will explore some of the key strategies and best practices for capacity building for children with special needs, including social and emotional learning, assistive technology, inclusive education, and family support. Through a holistic and collaborative approach to capacity building, children with special needs can develop the skills and confidence to succeed in all areas of their lives.*

**Keywords:** *Capacity Building Methods, Challenges, Benefits, Special Needs Children*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Capacity building methods for children with special needs are aimed at enhancing the skills, knowledge, and capabilities of these children to achieve their full potential and lead fulfilling lives. These methods involve a range of strategies and approaches that address the unique needs of children with special needs, including early intervention programs, specialized educational resources, and individualized support services. This abstract explores some of the key strategies and best practices for capacity building for children with special needs, with references to current research and literature in the field.

One of the primary methods for capacity building for children with special needs is social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL focuses on developing children's social and emotional skills, including self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and communication. Research has shown that SEL can have significant positive effects on children with special needs, including

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improved behaviour, academic achievement, and social relationships (Grossman & Salas, 2011; Zins et al., 2004).

Another important method for capacity building for children with special needs is assistive technology (AT). AT includes devices and software that help children with special needs overcome barriers to learning and participation. Examples of AT include communication devices, adapted computer software, and sensory aids. Studies have shown that AT can improve the academic performance and independence of children with special needs (Copley & Ziviani, 2004; Smith et al., 2004).

Inclusive education is also a critical method for capacity building for children with special needs. Inclusive education involves providing all children with access to high-quality education and support, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. Research has shown that inclusive education can have positive effects on the academic and social outcomes of children with special needs, as well as on their peers (Cologon, 2013; Katz & Mirenda, 2002).

Finally, family support is a vital component of capacity building for children with special needs. Family support includes providing families with information, resources, and services to help them support their children's development and well-being. Research has shown that family support can improve the mental health, social functioning, and overall quality of life of children with special needs and their families (Bailey et al., 2006; Turnbull et al., 2007).

In conclusion, capacity building methods for children with special needs involve a range of strategies and approaches that address the unique needs of these children. Social and emotional learning, assistive technology, inclusive education, and family support are all critical components of capacity building for children with special needs. By implementing these methods in a holistic and collaborative manner, we can help children with special needs develop the skills and confidence to succeed in all areas of their lives.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To understand the need of Capacity Building Methods.
2. To understand the Benefits and challenges in Capacity Building Methods for Children with Special Needs.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Capacity building is a process of enhancing the ability of individuals or groups to perform their tasks effectively. In the context of children with special needs, capacity building aims to

enhance their abilities to learn, communicate, socialize, and participate in society. The literature indicates that different capacity building methods are effective in children with special needs.

One effective method is the use of assistive technology. Assistive technology refers to devices or systems that help individuals with disabilities to perform tasks that they may not be able to do independently. Studies indicate that assistive technology can enhance the learning and communication abilities of children with special needs (Amer, 2016; Shaheen & Saeed, 2019).

Another effective method is the use of social stories. Social stories are short stories that describe a social situation, the social cues, and the expected behavior. Social stories have been found to be effective in teaching social skills to children with special needs (Gray, 1994; McGuire & McGuire, 2016).

Visual aids are also effective in building the capacity of children with special needs. Visual aids refer to pictures, drawings, or other visual representations that help individuals to understand information better. Studies indicate that visual aids can enhance the communication and learning abilities of children with special needs (Furlonger & McGill, 2018; Velasco, 2015).

Behavioural interventions are also effective in building the capacity of children with special needs. Behavioural interventions refer to methods that aim to change behaviour through positive reinforcement or punishment. Studies indicate that behavioural interventions can enhance the social and communication skills of children with special needs (Odom, 2008; Schreibman et al., 2015).

## **DISCUSSION**

**Capacity Building Strategies for Children with Special Needs** Capacity building strategies are methods that are designed to improve the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children with special needs. Below are different strategies that can be implemented to assist these children.

**Special Education:** Special education is an essential capacity building strategy for children with special needs. This strategy provides a structured environment that caters to their unique needs. Special education programs offer individualized educational plans that focus on their strengths and weaknesses. The goal of special education is to provide children with special needs with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive academically and socially.

**Occupational Therapy:** Occupational therapy is a capacity building strategy that assists children with special needs in developing skills required for daily living. This strategy is

designed to improve their fine motor skills, sensory integration, and perceptual skills. Occupational therapy is also beneficial for children with special needs who experience physical disabilities.

**Speech Therapy:** Speech therapy is a capacity building strategy that assists children with special needs in developing their communication skills. This strategy is designed to improve their speech, language, and social communication skills. Speech therapy is beneficial for children with special needs who have speech delays, language disorders, or autism spectrum disorders.

**Physical Capacity Building:** Physical capacity building refers to improving the physical skills and abilities of children with special needs. This may include exercises, therapies, and activities that help children develop their motor skills, balance, and coordination. One effective method of physical capacity building for children with special needs is occupational therapy. Occupational therapy aims to help children develop the skills necessary for daily living, such as dressing, eating, and hygiene. It may involve the use of adaptive equipment, such as braces, splints, and wheelchairs, to help children perform these activities more easily (Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2014).

**Cognitive Capacity Building:** Cognitive capacity building refers to improving the cognitive skills and abilities of children with special needs. This may include activities that enhance their memory, attention, language, and problem-solving skills. One effective method of cognitive capacity building for children with special needs is speech and language therapy. Speech and language therapy aims to improve children's communication skills by helping them develop their language, articulation, and fluency. It may involve activities such as storytelling, singing, and role-playing (Law, Garrett, & Nye, 2004).

**Social and Emotional Capacity Building:** Social and emotional capacity building refers to improving the social and emotional skills and abilities of children with special needs. This may include activities that help children develop their empathy, self-awareness, and social skills. One effective method of social and emotional capacity building for children with special needs is play therapy. Play therapy involves using play activities to help children express themselves and develop their social and emotional skills. It may involve games, role-playing, and storytelling (Reddy & Files-Hall, 2015).

**Behavioural Therapy:** Behavioural therapy is a capacity building strategy that assists children with special needs in managing their behaviours. This strategy is designed to improve their

social skills, emotional regulation, and self-esteem. Behavioural therapy is beneficial for children with special needs who have behavioural or emotional disorders.

**Training:** Training is an effective capacity building method that provides participants with knowledge and skills to better support children with special needs. Training sessions can be delivered in person or online, and can cover various topics, including behaviour management, communication strategies, and learning techniques. The training should be tailored to the specific needs of the participants, and should incorporate interactive activities and case studies to promote engagement and learning.

**Workshops:** Workshops are interactive sessions that enable participants to learn new skills and techniques in a collaborative environment. Workshops can cover various topics, such as sensory integration, social skills development, and adaptive equipment use. Workshops should be facilitated by experts in the field, and should incorporate hands-on activities to promote learning.

**Mentoring:** Mentoring is a capacity building method that pairs experienced professionals with novices in the field. Mentors provide guidance, support, and feedback to help the mentee develop their skills and knowledge. Mentoring relationships can be formal or informal, and can be established in person or online. Mentoring can be particularly useful for novice educators who lack experience working with children with special needs.

**Coaching:** Coaching is a capacity building method that involves providing ongoing support and feedback to improve performance. Coaches work with individuals to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop strategies to address areas of improvement. Coaching can be delivered in person or online, and can be used to improve the skills of parents, caregivers, and educators.

**Support Groups:** Support groups are an effective capacity building method that enables parents, caregivers, and educators to share experiences and resources. Support groups can be facilitated by a professional or can be informal. They can be held in person or online, and can provide a safe space for individuals to discuss their challenges and receive emotional support.

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** An IEP is a document that outlines the educational goals and objectives of a child with special needs. It is tailored to meet the child's specific needs and abilities, and it involves collaboration between the child's parents, teachers, and other professionals.

**Assistive Technology:** Assistive technology refers to devices or software that help children with disabilities to overcome their limitations. These technologies may include communication devices, mobility aids, and sensory aids.

**Sensory Integration Therapy:** Sensory integration therapy is a type of occupational therapy that helps children with sensory processing issues. It involves exposing the child to various sensory stimuli to help them process and respond appropriately.

**Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA):** ABA is a type of therapy that is commonly used to help children with autism spectrum disorders. It involves using positive reinforcement to teach new skills and behaviours.

**Social Skills Training:** Social skills training helps children with special needs to develop social skills, including communication, cooperation, and problem-solving.

**Parent Training:** Parent training programs are designed to help parents of children with special needs to learn how to provide effective support and care for their children.

**Inclusive Education:** Inclusive education refers to the practice of providing equal opportunities for all students, including those with special needs, to learn and participate in the same classroom setting. Inclusive education helps children with special needs to develop their social and communication skills, as well as promote their academic development. The practice has been shown to improve children's self-esteem and confidence levels and reduce stigmatization and discrimination. Inclusive education is currently recognized as a fundamental human right for all children, including those with special needs.

**Early Intervention Programs:** Early intervention programs involve providing support and care to children with special needs from a young age. Such programs aim to identify any developmental or learning difficulties at an early stage and provide the necessary intervention to prevent or minimize the effects of such conditions. Early intervention programs can be in the form of physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and other forms of specialized support services.

**Family and Community Support:** Family and community support involve creating an enabling environment that supports children with special needs. Such support can be in the form of emotional and psychological support, financial assistance, and advocacy for the rights of children with special needs. Family and community support promote inclusion and integration of children with special needs into mainstream society.

## **BENEFITS OF CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Capacity building strategies are essential for children with special needs as they provide numerous benefits. Below are some benefits of capacity building for children with special needs?

- **Improved Social Interaction:** Capacity building strategies improve the social interaction of children with special needs. These strategies provide them with the necessary skills to communicate and interact with others effectively.
- **Improved Academic Performance:** Capacity building strategies improve the academic performance of children with special needs. These strategies provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed academically.
- **Improved Physical Abilities:** Capacity building strategies improve the physical abilities of children with special needs. These strategies provide them with the necessary skills to perform daily living activities independently.
- **Improved Emotional Wellbeing:** Capacity building strategies improve the emotional wellbeing of children
- **Improved quality of care:** Capacity building methods can enhance the skills and knowledge of parents, caregivers, and educators, resulting in improved quality of care for children with special needs.
- **Improved confidence:** Capacity building can help individuals feel more confident in their abilities to support children with special needs.
- **Improved communication skills:** Capacity building methods can improve communication between parents, caregivers, and educators, resulting in more effective collaboration and support for children with special needs.
- **Improved outcomes:** Capacity building methods can lead to improved outcomes for children with special needs, including increased academic achievement, improved social skills, and better overall well-being.

## **CHALLENGES OF CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Capacity building for children with special needs is a critical aspect of ensuring their development and success. However, there are several challenges that need to be addressed to effectively build capacity for these children. Some of these challenges include:

- **Cost:** Capacity building methods can be costly to implement, particularly for individuals who lack access to resources. This can include costs associated with training materials, workshops, or hiring professionals to provide coaching or mentoring.
- **Time:** Capacity building methods require time and commitment from participants, which can be a challenge for individuals with busy schedules or competing priorities.
- **Resistance to change:** Some individuals may be resistant to change and may be reluctant to adopt new methods or strategies.
- **Inadequate support:** Lack of support from colleagues, supervisors, or family members can make it difficult for individuals to fully implement capacity building methods.
- **Lack of resources:** Many families and schools lack the resources, including funding, staff, and equipment, to adequately provide support and training to children with special needs. This can make it difficult to build capacity and ensure these children receive the assistance they need.
- **Limited access to specialized services:** Children with special needs often require specialized services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. However, access to these services may be limited, particularly in rural areas or areas with a shortage of healthcare professionals.
- **Stigma and discrimination:** Children with special needs may face stigma and discrimination, which can make it difficult for them to access education and support services. This can also make it challenging to build capacity, as many people may not be willing to work with or provide support for children with special needs.
- **Lack of trained professionals:** There may be a shortage of professionals who are trained to work with children with special needs, which can make it challenging to provide adequate support and training. This can also lead to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the needs of children with special needs, which can hinder capacity building efforts.
- **Communication barriers:** Children with special needs may have communication barriers, which can make it challenging to understand their needs and provide appropriate support. This can also hinder their ability to participate in capacity building activities and programs.



- **Individual differences:** Children with special needs have unique abilities, needs, and challenges. This can make it difficult to develop a one-size-fits-all approach to capacity building. Instead, capacity building efforts need to be tailored to the individual needs of each child.
- **Lack of collaboration:** Effective capacity building for children with special needs requires collaboration among families, healthcare professionals, educators, and community members. However, there may be a lack of collaboration and communication among these groups, which can make it challenging to provide comprehensive support for children with special needs.

Overall, building capacity for children with special needs requires addressing these challenges and developing innovative strategies to support their development and success.

## CONCLUSION

Capacity building methods for children with special needs involve providing the necessary support, care, and interventions that promote their social, emotional, and physical development. Inclusive education, early intervention programs, assistive technology, behaviour therapy, and family and community support are some of the methods used to build the capacity of children with special needs. These methods have been shown to improve children's quality of life, promote their independence and autonomy, and reduce stigmatization and discrimination.

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