Students who have obtained a statement from the National or the Municipal Pedagogical and Medical Commission[1] about appropriate education programme can attend a mainstream school if the school has licensed the necessary special education programme and has necessary infrastructure and learning environment. The National and Municipal Pedagogical and Medical Commissions are the authorities competent to diagnose children's need for special education provision, to define special conditions necessary for teaching and learning as well as provide information about schools implementing appropriate education programme.

A pupil will be admitted to an ordinary, general class, or to a separate class for certain categories of pupils recognized as having special educational needs. They correspond to eight target groups:

- learners with visual impairment,
- learners with hearing impairment,
- learners with mental disabilities,
- learners with physical disabilities;
- learners with chronic health disorders,
- learners with language disabilities;
- learners with mental health disorders; and
- learners with learning disabilities.

Besides, all special education institutions of Latvia are extending their functions and cooperation with general education institutions (schools) and vocational training schools. National Centre for Education has developed the ESF project "Development of support system for students with functional disabilities" (2011-2013). In framework of the project, inclusive education support centres are developed in main cities of Latvia. A set of methodology support materials[2] (available in Latvian language) are developed and published online for teachers and parents.

Together with general schools, teachers and medical staff of support centres check and diagnose children, determine children's education and development problems and possible ways of special assistance, apply and develop new methodical and teaching aids, plan classes and events, develop individual curricula, consolidate information about children's development and health condition, organize seminars and courses for general education institution educators and children's parents.

Integrated schools provide individual education programmes for children with special needs; organize education in compliance with the requirements of the respective special education programme and the regulations of the institution, taking into account the following main principles of activities:

- content of education is practical;
- comprehensive work aimed at checking and rehabilitation of pupils;
- cooperation of educators, tutors and children's parents in order to develop individual education programmes, create favourable environment, compensation of development problems thus
giving the best possible value to the child's life and development, allowing him/her to work and participate in social life;

- formation of vocational skills that would allow pupils to compete in labour market after the completion of school;
- formation of a data basis and consolidate information about children's development and health condition;
- preparation of educators, medical staff, children's parents and other pupils for the integration of children with special needs in school life;
- adaptation of school facilities to suit the needs of children having serious physical disability;
- cooperation with special education development centres.

Children that are inmates of a hospital more than two weeks should also receive tuition. Children who cannot attend school because of illness more than a month receive home education.

**Definition of the target groups**

There are 8 kinds of special education groups organized accordingly to the person's health or development problems.

- Children with learning disabilities attend special education institutions or general education institutions. Relevant treatment cures the inadequacy of children's intellectual capacities to their age and if it helps, children may continue learning in ordinary schools.
- Children with mental health disorders attend sanatoriums at boarding schools or general education institutions and learn on the basis of curriculum for general education institutions. These children are treated individually to avoid mental overwork and are provided with necessary conditions for recovery, an adequate regime of work and rest, also medical and psychological assistance is provided, if required.
- Children with vision impairment attend special boarding schools, development centres for children with poor eyesight or blind children, or general education institutions. Special educators, who develop school tasks and methods preserving eyesight and compensating eyesight problems, perform educational, psychological and medical control of such children.
- Children with hearing impairment attend special boarding schools or general education institutions. The task of special educators is to make children acquire the contents of the given subject and to overcome deviations appearing in the thinking process of such pupils.
- Children with physical disabilities or children with primary damages of support and motion apparatus (cerebral origin), or who have distinct scoliosis, attend sanatorium boarding schools and special schools, rehabilitation centres or general education institutions. Together with movement problems, cerebral palsy includes deviations in mental and speech development. The task of educators is to correct such deviations.
- Children with language disabilities attend speech therapy schools or general education institutions. Children with serious speech problems attend speech therapy schools. The task of a speech therapist is to prepare children for studies in general education institutions.
- Children with chronic health disorders attend sanatorium boarding schools or general education institutions. Children who have tuberculosis, asthma or other respiratory diseases, digestion problems may attend sanatorium boarding schools and receive the necessary medical assistance.
- Children with mental development disabilities attend special or general education institutions. When educating such children, educators take into account three levels of mental retardation: minor, medium or severe mental retardation, or several severe development impairments.
Specific support measures

In 2018, the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers were adopted defining requirements for the enrolment of students with special needs in general education programmes implemented by general education institutions (Prasības izglītojamo ar speciālām vajadzībām uzņemšanai vispārējās izglītības iestāžu īstenotajās vispārējās izglītības programmās [3]). The pupil might be integrated either in a general education class or in a special class only for pupils with special needs within a mainstream school. All provisions are divided into three categories –

1. institutional facilities and utilities of premises (territory);
2. additional rehabilitation measures; and
3. additional pedagogical staff and support staff.

Main measures include – all necessary auxiliaries (like slat-pencils, aerophones, ramps, elevators etc.) for the respective kind of disorder; additional lessons for rehabilitation and correction under the guidance of the respective specialists, therapeutic lessons, systematic psychological and medical examination and analysis, cautious regime etc.

The assistant helps the teacher working with learners with physical and/or mental development disabilities, vision or hearing impairment. During lesson, the assistant works individually with one, two, but no more than three pupils. He/she also helps pupils to prepare for lessons, for a walk, as well as helps to integrate in a class and school in general. A teacher - speech therapist works with children with speech problems in the first six classes.

National Testing Procedure Regulation by the Cabinet of Ministers (Valsts pārbaudījumu norises kārtība [4]) sets up support measures for learners with disabilities during the tests.

Starting with the 2018, the learning of sign language in educational institutions is officially regulated. According to the amendment of the Education Law, education should be provided in the sign language in schools that implement special education programs for students with hearing impairments. Also in other schools where an appropriate educational environment for the acquisition of education in the Latvian sign language is provided, the education may be obtained in the Latvian sign language. In November 2018, the Cabinet of Minister adopted the new National Standard [5] for Basic Education (integrated primary and lower-secondary education) which will come into force on September 1st, 2020 in which the special education programme specifies that learners with hearing impairments who are included in mainstream educational settings should be provided with the opportunities to develop communication skills including the Latvian sign language.
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