

## Abstract

### The Education Of A Special Child: *Discovering Kevin Anand*

By

Flora Teichner - Lecturer, Multimedia University of Malaysia, West Malaysia  
Caroline Martin - Lecturer, Mara University of Technology, West Malaysia

This paper attempts to give a better insight into the education of children whose cognitive development is impaired. Such children have come to be recognized as having learning disabilities. Often they are called special children. As such, this study was generated by the belief that the education of these children is highly essential as it is through education that the future and the quality of life of these special children could be nurtured, enhanced and secured.

This paper discusses the education of special children through the case of Kevin Anand, an 8-year old non-verbal child. The selection of Kevin as the subject of this study was based on the fact that he suffers from multiple disorders which include poor eye contact, lack of speech, poor motor skills, incomprehension, lack of communication skills, sleeping disorder and self-injurious behavior among others. These are some classic symptoms of children with learning disabilities. Needless to say, he was diagnosed with intellectual disability and as being somewhere in the autism spectrum. Therefore, through the case of Kevin, the underlying focus of attention is on:

- The problems faced by children with learning disabilities
- The challenges encountered by their parents
- The importance of day-to-day teaching of these children in order to intervene and modify their behavior
- Some common methods that could be used at home to help and educate these children so as to exploit their potential, however limited, to the maximum.

The term 'education' in this paper goes far beyond academic teaching. As special children are often faced with a prognosis that is not only devastating but entails a life long permanence, 'education' here refers to teaching the special child to live as a normal person. This includes teaching communication skills, self-help, play skills and social skills among others. What has to be taught will depend very much on each individual child. However, the end result of the education should be that it has made the child reach his potential.

Furthermore, irrespective of the disability, the paper looks at some common principles that the researchers believe could be used to teach these children. Education of special

children is also underscored in terms of who should teach, the individual nature of the special child in question, methods of intervention and the teaching environment.

The challenging task of teaching or educating a special child is not just tremendously difficult but a life long process. Extraordinary demands are placed on the parents' spiritual, emotional, physical and financial resources. However, using the right approaches and adopting the right attitudes could make teaching interesting and bring about a difference in the child's life. This can only be done if parents and teachers set realistic goals for themselves and for the children. They also need to recognize the milestones that the child crosses at each stage in the process of learning. Each milestone is an achievement for the child and for all others who have made that happen for the child.

Lastly, individuals involved in the education of a special child also need to keep themselves abreast of professional and scientific literature in this area. As the human race progresses new ways of teaching and intervention will continue to materialize in time to come. These might help these children to maximize whatever potentials they have and enable them to lead lives that are more meaningful and fulfilling.