



**MINISTRY OF  
EDUCATION & SPORTS**

# **NATIONAL LEARNING NEEDS IDENTIFICATION TOOL**





**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS AND INCLUSIVE**  
**EDUCATION**  
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**Background**

This tool is meant to identify Individuals who are at risk of failing to benefit from inclusive education and fail to live independent lives. The tool covers 21 conditions and other health-related conditions commonly seen in Uganda. The conditions include: gifted and talented, Autism Spectrum Disorders, hearing impairment, visual impairment, deafblindness, social-emotional difficulties, Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, speech and language difficulties, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, sensory processing disorder, Spina bifida, hydrocephalus, multiple disabilities, intellectual disabilities, little people, albinism and other health-related conditions like HIV/aids and Sickle cell anaemia. The purpose of the tool is to identify Individuals who may need follow-up assessment in order to determine their learning goals and resources for optimal learning. The information generated by this tool forms a basis for generating reliable statistics for disabilities/impairments, creation of awareness about learning needs/disabilities, curriculum adaptations, resource mobilisation, personal development at different levels and lobbying and advocacy for better service provision in Uganda.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This tool is a property of the Uganda MOES, department of Special Needs and Inclusive Education. It was designed with support from CRANE through the Girls' Education Challenge-UKAID. It was developed in collaboration with CRANE Special Needs Quality Assurance & Monitoring Initiative represented by staff from Kyambogo University, Center for Life Long Learning, KCCA, Special Children's Trust, PASNEC Foundation, Silent Angels, Marigold Preschool and Friends of People with Disabilities, Back up Uganda, PEDN, Cheshire Services, USDC and Sight Savers. Nikki Hayns and Charlotte Louisa Thorpe, both teachers from Great Britain, provided the technical specialised editing.

The tool has been designed to enable stakeholders to gain a wider picture of the Individuals in their community and to help identify potential learning needs a Individual may have. This identification tool is not diagnostic and cannot be used as a way of proving a Individual's learning needs.

This identification tool is to be completed by a trained person in the presence of the caregiver (which may sometimes be done in school with support).

Each category of conditions has the key features highlighted as a guide. However, it is important to point out that Individuals may not exhibit all these features and may show others. The lists are by no means exhaustive.

If an Individual has more than 3 features, then there is need for further assessment.

## CLASSIFICATION/SCORING

**Never;** means it has never been observed

**Rarely;** means that the child has mild symptoms

**Sometimes:** Individual needs follow up assessment

**Always: The Individual needs follow up assessment**

To complete the form, read the statement and mark whether this is never, rarely, sometimes or always shown by the Individual. Once you have decided where the Individual fits best, make a comment to explain your mark.

**An example is shown below:**

Feature	Never 0	Rarely 1	Sometimes 2	Always 3	Comment
The Individual engages in repetitive activities.		x			The Individual will tap a pencil on the table if there is one there to tap. If there isn't a pencil available the Individual doesn't perform this repetitive action.
The Individual has poor eye contact.				x	The Individual never makes eye contact with anyone.

## INDIVIDUAL'S BIO DATA

*It is important to note that we cannot put Individuals into neat little boxes according to their learning/educational needs. Many Individuals will display aspects of different learning needs, so it is important to consider the whole Individual when assessing them. For example, a Individual with autism can also have hearing/visual difficulties or ADHD.*

Name of Individual		Date of birth or age	Gender ( F/M)	
School name and Type (inclusive/special		Class		
Name/ Title of data collector		Contact details		
Village/Community/Sub county		District		
Biological ParentP/carers name(s)		Parent/carers contact details		
Languages Spoken				
Any concerns about the child				

## GIFTED AND TALENTED

Gifted and talented: Is a term used in schools to describe individuals who have the potential to develop significantly beyond what is expected of their age. 'Gifted' refers to an individual who has abilities in one or more **fields such as unique reasoning, creativity, innovativeness, problem solving, and high vocabulary way above age**. 'Talented' refers to an individual who has skills in a **practical** area such as music, sports, art and/ or mechanics.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual is very curious					
The Individual likes to try new things					
The Individual has a very good imagination					
The Individual has an excellent memory					
The Individual asks interesting questions					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual is a fast Individual					
The Individual has skills that he/she taught him- or herself					
The Individual has a strong judgement of right and wrong					
The Individual gets frustrated easily					
The Individual prefers doing things his/her own way					

## AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

Autism Spectrum Disorder: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), or Autism, is a complex developmental disability. Individuals with Autism show difficulties related to social interaction, communication, repetitive behaviors and sensory sensitivity. It is considered a lifelong disorder.

Asperger's Syndrome: This is a form of autism on the autistic spectrum. Individuals with Asperger's Syndrome do not usually have the learning disabilities associated with autism but may still have difficulties, particularly in understanding speech, language and social interaction.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual chooses the same activity or object over and over again					
The Individual rocks forwards and backwards					
The Individual finds it difficult to cope with changes					
The Individual finds it difficult to make friends					



Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual avoids eye contact with others					
The Individual finds it difficult to be in large groups and likes to be alone					
The Individual finds some sounds too loud, lights too bright or materials too rough, etc					
The Individual has problems with his/her speech – he/she knows fewer words or uses words incorrectly					
The Individual seems to ignore his/her name when called					

## HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Hearing impairment, loss of hearing and deafness: Hearing loss, or hearing impairment, is a partial or total inability to hear through the ear. A deaf person has little or no hearing. Hearing loss may occur in one or both ears. Hearing loss can be temporary or permanent.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual has difficulty hearing					
The Individual asks for things to be repeated					
The Individual has difficulty saying some words					
The Individual's speech sounds are unusual (nasal – it sounds like he/she is pinching the nose)					
The Individual needs the volume turned up louder than usual					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual does not respond to sounds at all even when he/she is looking at you					
The Individual speaks loudly or softly or uses gestures					
The Individual has difficulty hearing even if using a hearing aid					
The Individual tends to turn sideways more frequently than other Individuals of the same age					
The Individual tends to over stare at the face of the speaker					

## VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Visual impairment: Is the inability to see at all or see clearly. A person with visual impairment may not see at all or may need support to be able to see.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual has difficulty seeing					
The Individual writes letters and numbers incorrectly					
The Individual rubs his/her eyes to try to see					
The Individual has to hold an object closer or further away to see it or moves him- or herself closer or further away					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual has problems with the appearance of the eye (either red, watery or itchy)					
The Individual has difficulty reading and spelling					
The Individual finds it difficult to copy words correctly from the board/book					
The Individual has difficulty to correctly identify colours					
The Individual has difficulty seeing even if wearing glasses or contact lenses					
The Individual bumps into objects					

DEAFBLINDNESS

Deafblindness: Deafblindness is a combination of visual and hearing impairments

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual has difficulty in seeing and hearing					
The Individual shows elements of deafness and blindness described in the above section 4 above					
The Individual uses more of touch (feeling), smell and taste when exploring objects					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual has difficulty interacting with others and the environment					
The Individual has difficulty in performing activities of daily living such as washing, dressing, etc.					
The Individual rubs/blinks his/ her eyes to try to see and caps the ear to be able to hear					
The Individual takes extra time to respond when you speak to him/her					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual makes few sounds or speaks little compared to peers					
The Individual does not like being touched by people or things					
The Individual rocks backwards and forwards, bangs his/her head or pokes his/her eyes					



## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES

Social-emotional difficulties: Include the inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers expressed through inappropriate types of behaviour or feelings even when nothing has changed.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual finds it difficult to make or keep friends					
The Individual clings to selected adults					
The Individual experiences frequent mood swings (looks either very unhappy or very happy without an obvious reason)					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual shows physical symptoms of fear/anxiety (expressed through headaches/ stomach aches)					
The Individual finds it difficult to talk to a new person					
The Individual frequently seeks attention					
The Individual may look exhausted without obvious cause					
The Individual shows aggressive tendencies					
The Individual cries/laughs without reason					

## ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER/ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADD/ADHD)

ADD/ADHD: Both are developmental disorders that are marked especially by persistent symptoms of inattention (such as distractibility, forgetfulness, or disorganization). Unlike ADD, ADHD also includes symptoms of hyperactivity and impulsivity.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual is easily distracted and/or distracts others					
The Individual shouts/signs unnecessarily					
The Individual loses or misplaces things					
The Individual finds it difficult to concentrate					
The Individual interrupts conversations					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual finds it difficult to wait for his/her turn					
The Individual finds it difficult to sit still					
The Individual finds it difficult to remember things					
The Individual may look exhausted					
The Individual gets confused					

## **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES (both mother tongue and other languages)**

Speech and language difficulties: Are conditions when a person has difficulty expressing their needs or understanding what others say to them. They can be expressed verbally or non-verbally.

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The Individual has difficulty in expressing meaning through words, gestures etc.					
The Individual has difficulty in expressing him- or herself through signs.					
The Individual has difficulty imitating word/signs					
The Individual has reduced vocabulary according to age and exposure					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual finds it difficult to follow instruction, conversations or stories in relation to age and exposure					
The Individual finds it difficult to understand what others are saying					
The Individual stutters/stammers					
The Individual refuses to speaking in some situations					
The Individual has difficulty in applying rules of the language (grammar)					
The Individual has difficulty pronouncing sounds or words					

## DYSLEXIA

**Dyslexia:** Is a specific language impairment that affects the Individual's ability to understand and express meaning through words. Dyslexia may come along with other conditions like dyscalculia etc.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual finds difficulty identifying shapes					
The Individual makes mistakes when speaking – puts words in the wrong order					
The Individual finds difficulty drawing shapes, writing numbers and letters					
The Individual finds spelling difficult					
The Individual's writing or drawing is difficult to read or understand					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual writes the letters and numbers the wrong way (b instead of d...w for m, u for n, 9 and 6)					
The Individual finds it difficult to find a word that rhymes (cat, hat...)					
The Individual has difficulty with the names of letters and the sounds they make					
The Individual finds reading difficult					
The Individual finds difficulty copying shapes, letters or words					



## DYSCALCULIA

Dyscalculia: Is a specific learning disability in mathematics. Individuals with dyscalculia may have difficulty understanding number-related concepts or using symbols or functions needed for success in mathematics.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual has difficulty in counting correctly					
The Individual has difficulty linking maths words to numerals					
The Individual finds it difficult to remember simple facts in maths such as formulas					
The Individual takes a long time performing calculations compared to peers					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual finds it difficult to concentrate in maths					
The Individual struggles to put numbers/objects in the right order					
The Individual has difficulty applying operational symbols (+, -, /, x)					
The Individual becomes worried or upset in maths lessons					
The Individual has difficulty in playing number games					

## DYSPRAXIA (DEVELOPMENTAL CO-ORDINATION DISORDER)

Dyspraxia: Is a condition that affects a Individual's ability to do a wide range of daily tasks involving body movement, posture and coordination without any obvious physical impairment.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual finds it difficult to walk up, down or over obstacles					
The Individual finds it difficult to get dressed – doing up buttons, zips or shoelaces					
The Individual finds it difficult to catch/ throw a ball					
The Individual's handwriting or drawing is not easy to read or understand					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual presses too hard/softly with their pencil					
The Individual bumps into things					
The Individual has difficulty performing large body movements such as hopping, skipping, balancing or jumping					
The Individual finds it difficult to use his/her hands to feed him- or herself					
The Individual has difficulty completing tasks with a series of steps e.g. dressing, brushing, bathing					
The Individual has difficulty in body balancing					

## DOWN'S SYNDROME

Down's syndrome: **Is a genetic condition that affects the Individual's ability to develop age-appropriate skills in addition to other obvious observable physical features.**

Feature	Yes	No	Comments
The Individual has a small flat nose			
The Individual has a flat back of the head			
The Individual has a small mouth with a tongue that usually protrudes out			
The Individual has wide, short hands with short fingers			

Feature	Yes	No	Comments
The Individual has a single, deep crease across the palm of the hand			
The Individual developed slower than his/her peers of the same age did			
The Individual may have varying degrees of hearing problems			
The Individual has problems with his/her sight			
The Individual shows varying degrees of learning difficulties			
The Individual has difficulty in understanding social boundaries			

**CEREBRAL PALSY:** Is a condition that primarily affects body movement, posture, balance and coordination.

Feature	Yes	No	Comments
The Individual's arms or legs are too stiff or too floppy			
The Individual shows uncontrollable movements			
The Individual has difficulty in mastering activities of daily living (personal hygiene, feeding, toileting)			
The Individual has difficulty sitting, standing, squatting, walking etc (posture and movement)			
The Individual finds difficulties with self-expression, verbally or nonverbally			

Feature	Yes	No	Comments
The Individual finds difficulty with oral motor control such as controlling saliva, swallowing and mouth closure			
The Individual has difficulty grasping small objects			
The Individual finds difficulty with body balance (walking in a straight line)			
The Individual delays in developing basic physical skills like head control, crawling, sitting, walking etc			
The Individual has jerking body movements			



## EPILEPSY

**Epilepsy: Is a condition that affects the brain and causes repeated seizures.** The severity and frequency of seizures can differ from person to person.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual stares and cannot remember what has happened					
The Individual has stiffness in some part of the body - an arm or hand					
The Individual makes uncontrollable strange noises					
The Individual suffers from uncontrollable shaking movements of the arms and legs					
The Individual's muscles become stiff and he/she falls over					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual loses consciousness (appears to fall asleep and cannot be woken up)					
The Individual loses control over his/her body functioning (Individual may urinate or defecate)					
The Individual progressively loses ability to perform skills originally mastered					
The Individual appears tired and confused after a convulsion					
The Individual appears absent-minded					

## SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER

Sensory processing disorder: Is a condition in which the brain has difficulty receiving and responding to information that comes in through the senses.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual becomes upset in busy places					
The Individual covers his/her ears in noisy or crowded environments					
The Individual likes or dislikes to rub or feel specific objects					
The Individual does not like putting on certain pieces of clothing					
The Individual turns away from lights or covers his/her eyes					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual cries or moves away when touched, even slightly					
The Individual dislikes touching certain things – like water or sand but likes listening to the flow of water					
The Individual bumps into things					
The Individual likes spinning or jumping					
The Individual does not respond to pain appropriately					

## INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY/GENERAL LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT DISORDER)

Intellectual Disability/general learning difficulties: Is a condition that affects a Individual's ability to develop skills for independent living.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual has difficulties in learning academic skills					
The Individual lacks curiosity					
The Individual has difficulty in regulating emotions and behaviour e.g. explosive tantrums					
The Individual needs support in activities of daily living					
The Individual has limited expressive and receptive language					
The Individual has low self-esteem					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual has difficulty with remembering things					
The Individual has difficulty with language					
The Individual may not understand consequences of his/her behaviour/ actions					
The Individual has difficulty with problem solving					

## MOTOR IMPAIRMENT:

Motor Impairment: This is the partial or complete loss of function of some body parts, especially limbs.

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The Individual has difficulties in movement such as sitting, use of hand or arms, standing					
The Individual has difficulties in performing two tasks at the same time					
The Individual has difficulty taking written assignments					
The Individual has difficulty in grasping or handling small objects					

Feature	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Comments
The individual has a physical disability that affects spoken language					
The Individual shows sign of extreme tiredness					
The Individual has difficulty in holding a pencil/pen					
The Individual has difficulty with problem solving					
The Individual has difficulties getting organised and may lose objects					
The individual has difficulty remaining focused on a task					



## SPINA BIFIDA

Spina Bifida: Is a condition that develops during pregnancy where the bones in the vertebral column do not fully cover the spinal cord, leaving it exposed.

Feature	Yes	No	Comments
The Individual shows weakness or paralysis in the arms and legs			
The Individual has no or limited control over the bladder. The Individual has frequent bathroom breaks throughout the day.			
The Individual lacks sensation in the skin. He/she cannot feel when he/she gets a blister or sore.			
The Individual has challenges in visual and physical coordination i.e. doing up buttons or shoe laces			
The Individual has paralysis of the lower body half			

Feature	Yes	No	Comments
The Individual needs extra assistance and time to complete tasks			
The Individual has weak muscles			
The Individual has difficulty in expressing or understanding language			
The Individual has difficulty in sequencing, problem solving and memory			
The Individual finds difficulty in paying attention			

## HYDROCEPHALUS

Hydrocephalus: Is the build-up of fluids in the cavities (ventricles) within the brain, causing enlargement in the head size.

Feature	Yes	No	Comments
The Individual has an extraordinarily large head			
The Individual has a bulging or tense soft spot on the top of the head			
The Individual finds difficulty in walking			

Feature	Yes	No	Comments
The Individual has frequent headaches			
The Individual has blurred vision or double vision			
The Individual's eyes are fixed downward (sun setting of eyes)			
The Individual may lose bladder control or may have a frequent urge to urinate			
The Individual declines in memory, concentration and other thinking skills that may affect performance			
The Individual feels sleepy or tired/fatigued			
The individual may have seizures			

**Little People:** This is a condition characterized by short stature for age, in relation to average people of a particular community. The average height of an adult is 4 feet. They experience stigmatisation, need respect, dignity and participation.

**Albinism:** Albinism is a group of disorders that are inherited where there is no creation of the pigment melanin. People with Albinism have visual problems and are at risk of developing skin cancer.

## **MULTIPLE IMPAIRMENTS**

**Multiple Impairments:** Is a situation where an individual experiences more than one condition or multiple impairments from the ones mentioned above.

## Other health-related conditions in Uganda

### **SICKLE CELL ANAEMIA**

Sickle Cell Anaemia: Is an inherited blood disorder and normally associated with decrease in the number of red blood cells.

Feature	Yes	No	Comments
The Individual has a pale skin colour			
The Individual has low energy			
The Individual has pain in the bones especially when exposed to cold or very hot temperatures, stress			
The Individual has frequent headaches			
The Individual sometimes has difficulty with memory			
Feature	Yes	No	Comments

The Individual's limbs are weak			
The Individual experiences constant dizziness			
The Individual sometimes has swelling of the feet or hands			
The Individual sometimes has difficulty breathing			
The Individual sometimes gets seizures			

Other health-related conditions may include examples like HIV/AIDSs.

**Signed by the person completing the form.....Date.....**

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