



Sample Individual Transition Plan: John Doyle

Address: 1 Main Street, Dundrum, Dublin 14
Date of birth: 11th February 2004
Date of assessment: 29th July 2015

Background

John presents with a Specific Speech and Language Impairment (SSLI) and has attended a reading school since September 2013. John will re-enter mainstream primary education in St Mary's National School, Dundrum, in September 2015. John's Speech and Language Therapy Discharge Report recommends continued speech and language therapy and support, to be provided by HSE Community Services, Dublin.

John was assessed by an Educational Psychologist in 2011, the results of which indicated significantly weak reading, spelling and reading comprehension skills. A literacy review in 2013 pointed to a widening gap between ability and literacy performance, with all reading and spelling scores falling below the 10th percentile. It was recommended that progress in literacy should be monitored on an on-going basis, as John may be presenting with a Specific Learning difficulty – Dyslexia. In effect this means that John is presenting with an additional Special Educational Need.

John was provided with an Individual Education Plan in 2004, seemingly there has been no review of this plan in the intervening years. John's parents requested a transition planning consultation, to determine how he might best be assisted with managing the learning environment in his new school, given his current challenges.

Receptive Language Disorders

Students with a receptive language disorder have difficulties understanding oral language, including categorization, storage and retrieval of vocabulary. They may have difficulties processing and retaining auditory information, and in following instructions and directions particularly where these involve multi-step actions. Hesitancy and delay in answering questions may be related to a limited understanding of question forms. Language processing also impacts on remembering story sequences and detail, affecting comprehension of lengthy texts. Difficulties with sound discrimination may also be evidenced in poor spelling and written expression.

Expressive Language Disorders

Students with an expressive language disorder have difficulties with using language to describe, define and explain, and to retell stories/events. Limited vocabulary may result in the students using empty phrases and non-specific words. Expressive language difficulties may impact on the students' abilities in relation to writing, spelling, composing sentences/compositions and answering all but the most straightforward of questions. Difficulties may be noted in the formulation of complex sentences and use of multiple word meanings.

Transition Assessment

Strengths

John reports strengths in the area of gross and fine motor skills and excels in physical activities and sports. John is skilled in tasks involving perceptual reasoning, visual sequencing and visual discrimination, including identifying patterns and manipulating diagrams. John enjoys art and design activities. John benefits from the use of visual cues and prompts to reinforce language concepts, and kinaesthetic activities that reinforce sequences and steps. John uses vocabulary maps and spider diagrams to build language relationships. John presents as a happy and friendly boy, who communicates easily and appropriately with adults.

Challenges

John experiences significant challenges in processing, remembering and responding to verbal and written instructions, questions or texts, particularly where these involve multi-step sequencing. John expresses difficulty with understanding and using the language of Mathematics, particularly with problem-solving questions. John's difficulty with retrieving vocabulary means that global labels are applied to category items, for example, John refers to all meat types as 'chicken'. John experiences significant difficulty with retaining the detail and meaning of text when reading, and this is particularly the case with lengthy and complex written structures within novels and non-fiction texts.

Concerns

John's parents expressed concerns in relation to completion of classroom and homework tasks in the coming school year - particularly reading and writing - given his profile of challenges. John's reading and production of written work will be slower than that of his peers and consequently homework will take much longer. John's parents expressed concern in relation to managing the school environment, for example remembering books and equipment, and understanding and following teacher-directed instructions. John's parents acknowledge the need to allow for a settling-in period in a new school. However, prior awareness of John's strengths and challenges, potential barriers to learning, and required reasonable accommodations in the classroom, can

reduce anxiety and ensure that John is not overwhelmed in the first few weeks of school.

The following recommendations are suggested on the basis of Speech and Language reports, previous psycho-educational assessment, HSE needs assessments and IEP, together with interviews with John and his mother.

Recommendations for Transition Plan

A review of John's IEP is required in preparation for his transfer back to mainstream education. It is recommended that Mr and Mrs Doyle seek a review with the regional SENO and School Principal in accordance with EPSEN, 2004 sections 9.8 and 11.1. Provision is made for a request by parents for review where this has not occurred in the previous six months (section 11.4).

A review of eligibility for resource allocation under the category Speech and Language Disorder would be desirable given that John's current functioning in all areas of reading falls at or below the **2nd percentile** (accuracy, comprehension and pseudoword decoding). Resource teaching was recommended by the HSE Speech and Language Therapist on the 11th February 2015, given that John's performance in Receptive and Expressive language scales, Language Memory and Working Memory all fall **at or below the 1st percentile**.

Students with SEN must be provided with equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities for learning through reasonable accommodations in classroom settings. As John's current functioning in all areas of reading falls at or below the **2nd percentile** it would be reasonable to provide copies of text books in audio or digital format – similar to the principle of provision of a Reader. Digital versions of texts are available from publishers.

John would benefit from meeting his class teacher prior to the beginning of the school year. It would be beneficial for John, his teacher and John's parents to have an initial discussion in relation to homework expectations, given his very slow rate of processing and production.

John would benefit from advance knowledge of school rules, daily routines, timetables and traditions, to assist with understanding and managing his environment in the first few weeks.

John would benefit from a physical orientation of the school buildings prior to the beginning of the school year.

John would benefit from the assistance of a peer mentor or buddy for the first few weeks of school.

Recommendations for Differentiated and Inclusive Teaching

The following recommendations to enable equal access to the curriculum are based on the principle of inclusive education as set out by the NCSE, whereby inclusive practices benefit all children in the classroom.

1. Teach an understanding of words and concepts through the use of actual objects and progress from the concrete to the abstract.
2. Seat John in a position that facilitates the use of prompt cards, cues or other strategies but not in a way that draws attention to differences or difficulties.
3. Secure John's attention before initiating a conversation.
4. Use a slower speech rate if necessary as this facilitates the processing of information. However, it is important that the speech rate is not so slow as to lose the continuity of the message.
5. Poor sentence comprehension may result in difficulties with following instructions. Give simple directions in sentences and ask John to repeat instructions to check understanding.
6. Be aware of the role that misunderstanding can have in possible behaviour and/or social problems.
7. If John is withdrawn for resource or speech and language therapy sessions during classes, ensure he is provided with any information or subject matter that he may have missed.
8. Give John the opportunity to work with a partner.
9. Allow John to use / draw pictures where appropriate, for example to clarify multi-step maths problems.
10. Speak slowly not loudly. John does not have a hearing impairment.
11. Help John organise and remember information visually using colour, real objects, photographs, maps and pictures / word tags.
12. Repeat and re-phrase statements, add more or simplified words, emphasise important words.
13. One question at a time, one instruction at a time.

Prepared by: