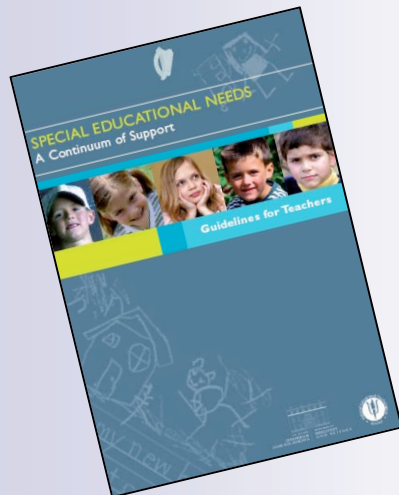


Dissemination Conference, Limassol, October 2008

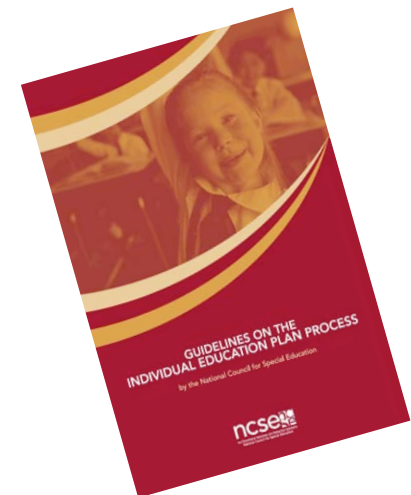
**Focussing on assessment for
intervention - *promoting a
Continuum approach in
primary schools***



Maureen Costello, National
Educational Psychological Service

Mary Byrne, National Council for
Special Education

Ireland





Overview of presentation



- The Irish education context
- Current system for providing resources for pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Introduction to the Continuum of Support Guidelines
- Introduction to the Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process



Irish Educational Context

- Population of Ireland = 4.2 million approx
- Compulsory schooling + 6 – 16 years
- Primary schooling = 4 – 12 years
- Approx 3170 mainstream schools primary
- Approx 720 post primary
- 124 special schools
- More than 1/5 of all teachers are specialist teachers to support pupils with SEN
- Approx 10,000 Special Needs Assistants support pupils with SEN who have care needs



Irish Educational Context –cont.

Legal situation:

- Inclusion is Government policy – supported in legislation
- Rights of parental choice of school – except where not in best interest of child or other pupils
- Children under 5 with Special Needs have a statutory right to an Assessment of Needs
- Legislation still to be commenced which will give a statutory right to pupils with Special Educational Needs in school – to an assessment and to an Individual Education Plan (EPSEN ACT, 2004)



Current system for providing resources for pupils with SEN

Concrete:

- Transport, teaching equipment, assistive technology, specialised seating, ramps

Personnel:

- Additional teaching support for pupils with higher incidence SEN
- Resource teaching support for pupils with low incidence SEN (according to criteria based on diagnosis)
- Special Needs Assistant support for pupils with SEN who have care needs (either physical or behavioural)



Rationale for the development of the Guidelines

Continuum of Support Guidelines:

- Teachers too reliant on “expert” assessment and diagnosis
- “Waiting list for assessment” mentality – prevented early intervention
- Shortage of psychologists – consultative role could help more pupils
- Focus on use of resources available to produce outputs - rather than on “chasing more inputs”

Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process

- To prepare teachers for the process before there was a legal requirement
- To develop best practice in preparing and implementing IEPs for pupils with significant SEN
- Required under the EPSEN Act

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

A Continuum of Support



Guidelines for Teachers





The Continuum of Support Documents



Guidelines for Teachers



Resource Pack for Teachers

A copy sent to all primary school teachers

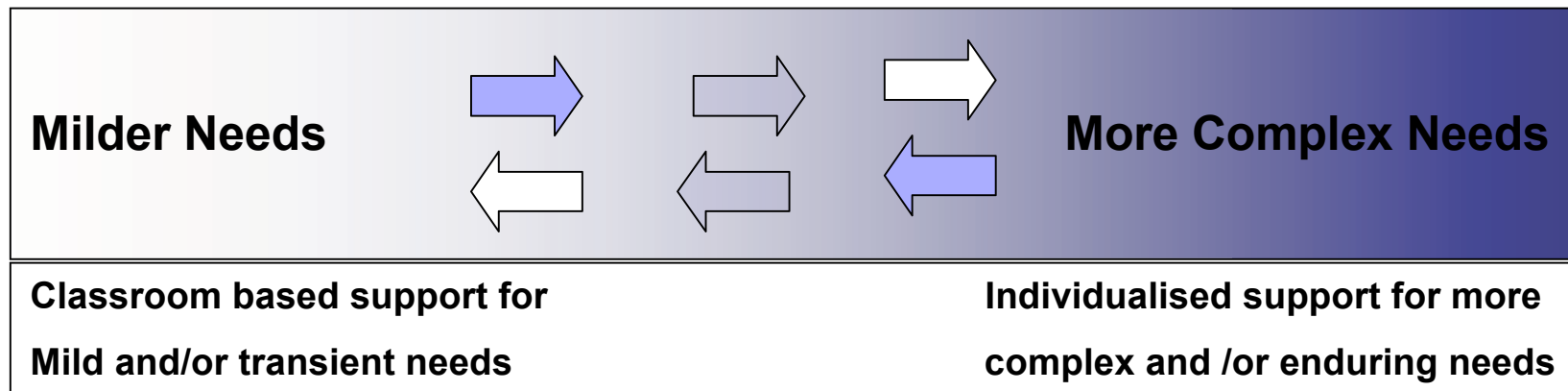
**Copies available on the Department of Education and Science (DES)
website**

www.education.ie



Why a Continuum?

- Special Educational Needs can best be thought of as occurring along a continuum which can range from:



- There should be a match between the nature and intensity of the intervention and the complexity and the severity of the child's special educational needs



Underlying Principles

- The term '*support*' is used in this document to mean both assessment and intervention, one informing the other
- All interventions are added onto a basic level of intervention within the child's classroom
- The class teacher remains the lead professional in the child's education
- Level of support provided will be that which allows the child to maximise participation in mainstream education
- Early intervention is an effective use of resources and expertise

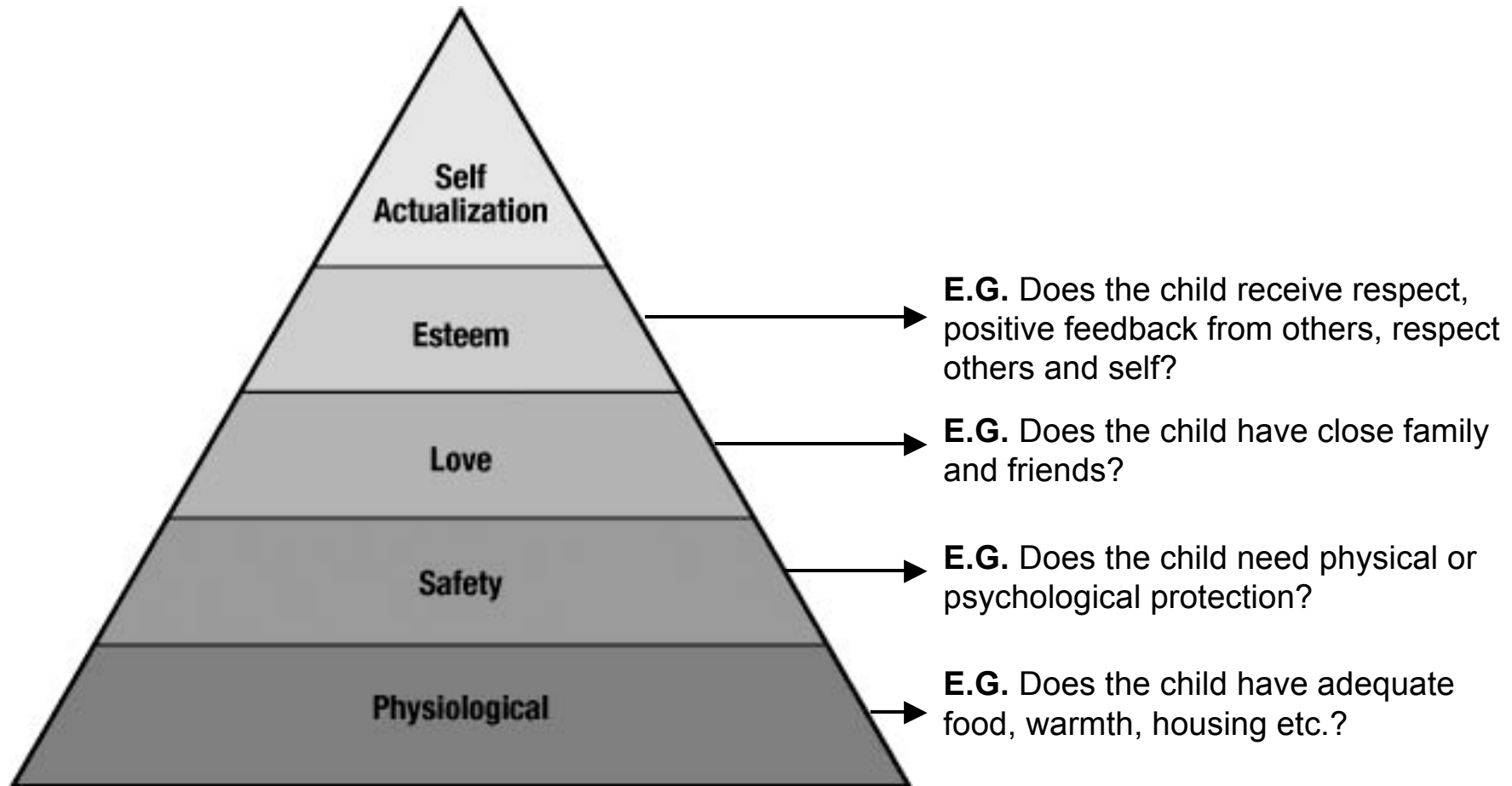
Whole School Approaches to promote Inclusion of pupils with SEN

- Considering the basic needs of children
- Creating a positive learning environment
- Differentiation





Considering the Basic Needs of children



**Hierarchy of Needs
(Maslow, 1943)**

Creating a Positive Learning Environment

- Developing teacher awareness of factors within the learning environment such as:
 - Classroom organisation
 - Teaching and learning styles
 - Playground organisation
- These can help meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs



Differentiation

“The process whereby teachers match the need for progress through the curriculum by the selection of appropriate teaching methods for an individual child within a group situation”.

(Visser, 1990)

Ideas are provided on differentiation

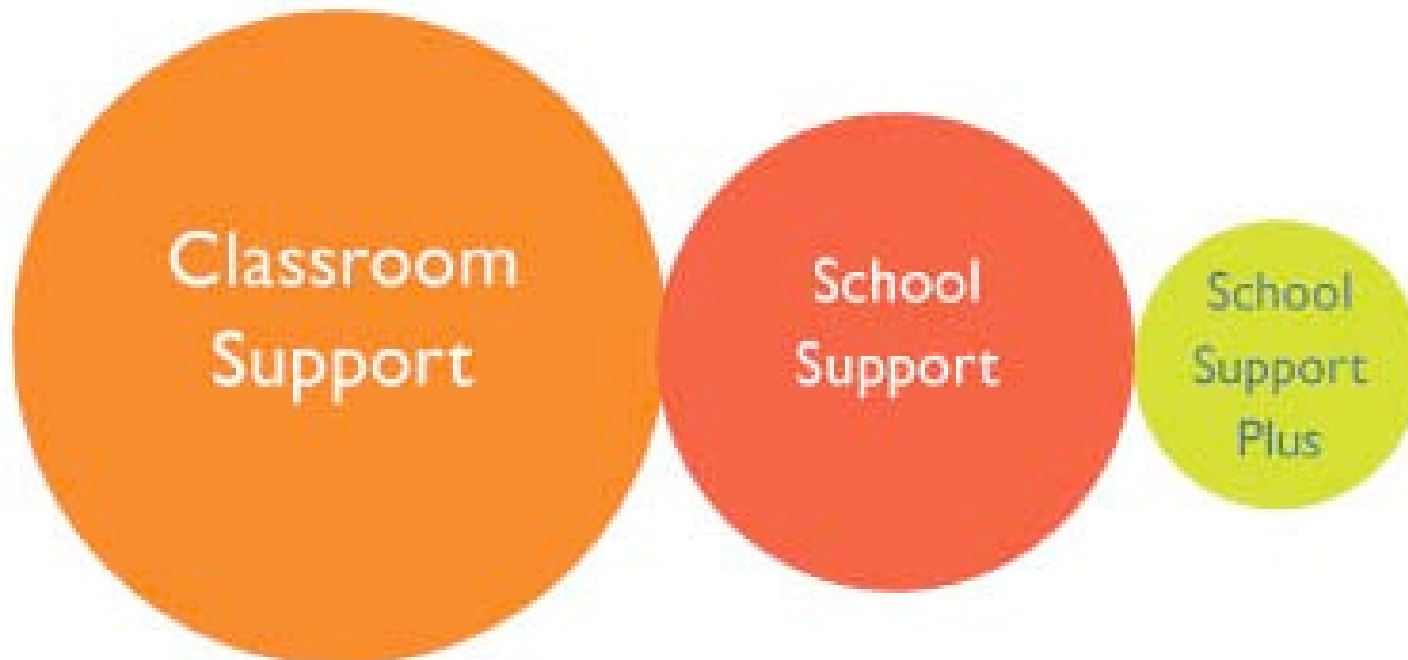
- By instructions
- Of the task
- By groupings
- By output





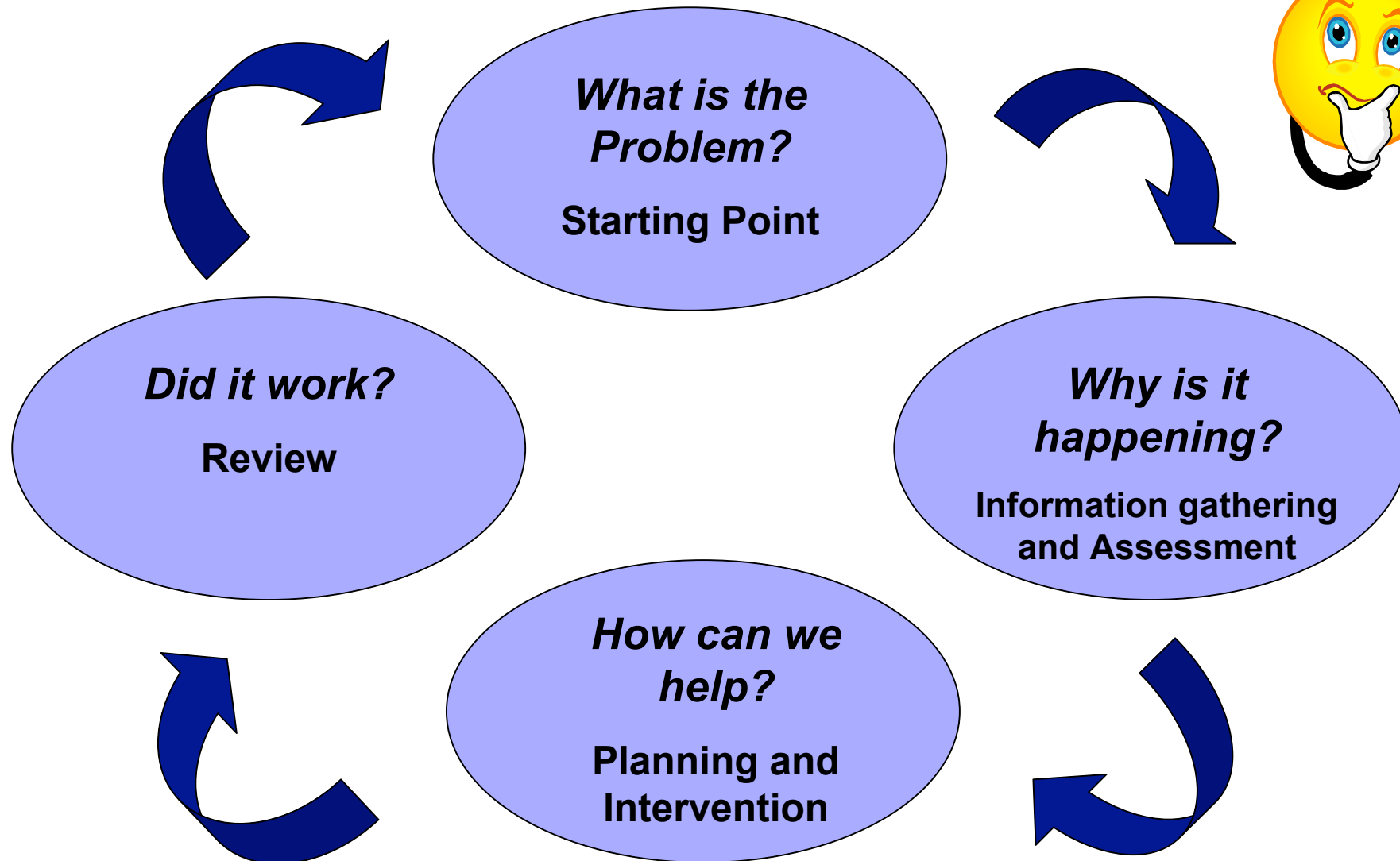
Individualised Approaches

- When concerns cannot be met through whole class teaching approaches and differentiation an individualised approach is needed...





Problem Solving Process



The Continuum of Support in Practice

Classroom Support

- **Basic components:**
 - Gather information
 - Inform parents and principal about concerns
 - Plan actions and change the environment
 - Keep a written record – *Classroom Support Plan*
 - Monitor over time involving parents and the child

- **Key person:**
 - Class teacher

The Continuum of Support in Practice

School Support

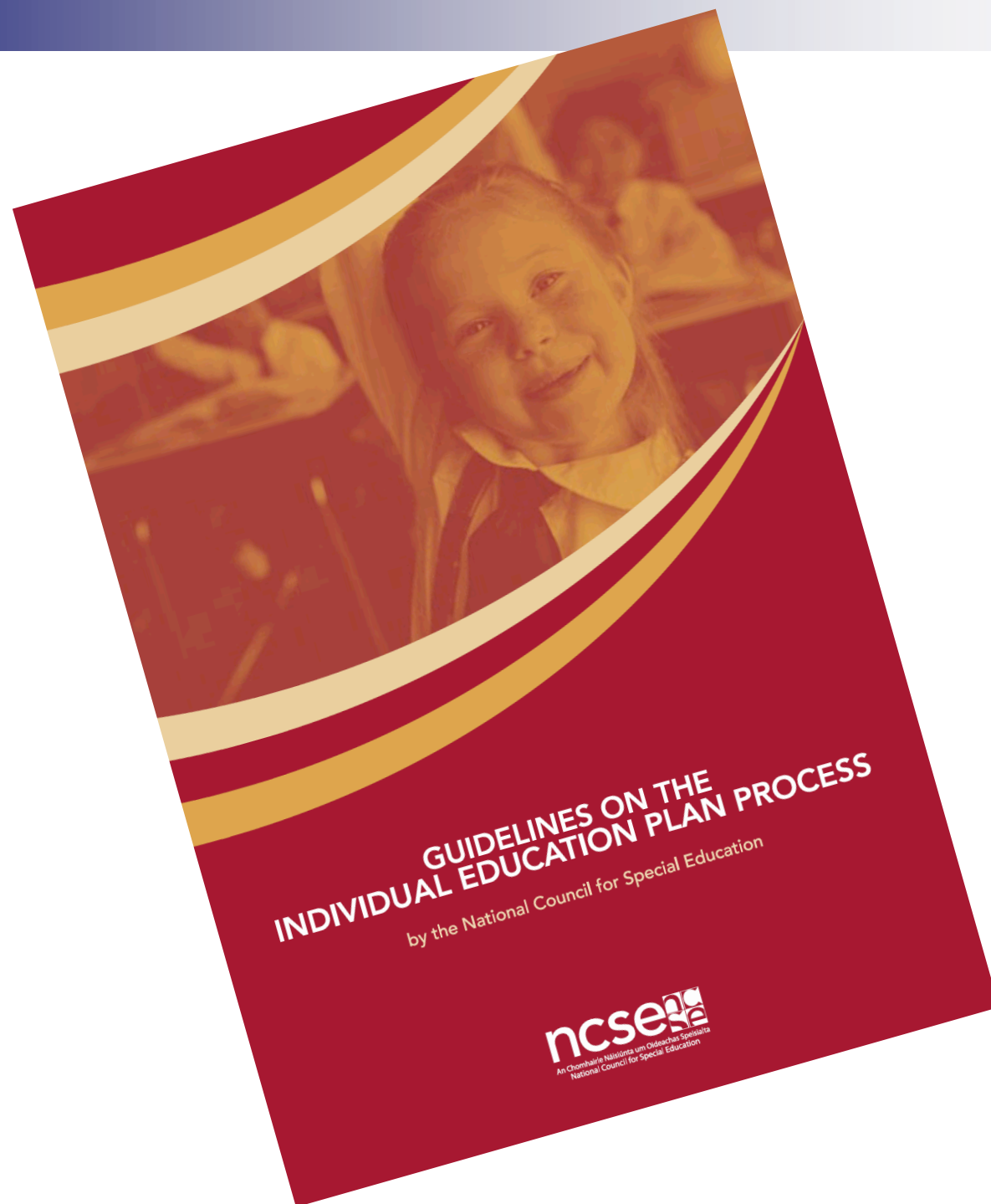
- Building on classroom support measures it includes:
 - All previous components
 - *Plus* focused teaching time, in or out of classroom
 - Develop a *School Support Plan* which records all of this
 - Monitor over time involving parents and the child
- Key person:
 - A named person co-ordinates at this level. The co-ordinator could be the class teacher, a support teacher or principal. *The class teacher still retains overall responsibility for the child's learning.*



The Continuum of Support in Practice

School Support Plus

- Building on classroom and school support measures it includes:
 - A more detailed and diagnostic assessment, intervention and evaluation process. The assessment may involve outside professionals (e.g. NEPS Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapist).
 - Intervention is characterised by more individualised approaches
 - Develop an *Individual Education Plan (NCSE Guidelines)* which records all of this
 - Monitor over time involving parents and the child
- Key person:
 - The member of staff responsible for the co-ordination of SEN in the school. *The class teacher still retains overall responsibility for the child's learning.*





Definition of Special Educational Needs – EPSEN Act 2004

“Special Educational Needs in relation to a person means a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition and cognate words shall be construed accordingly”



EPSEN Act 2004

- 'Special Educational Needs' are defined quite broadly
- Could include up to 18% of the population
- These Guidelines were drafted for teachers of pupils with ***significant*** special educational needs
- They are guidelines for the preparation, implementation and review of the Education Plan as specified in the EPSEN Act, 2004
- They emphasise that the IEP should be a practical working document, which incorporates the main areas of student need, as well as the key interventions planned
- It is a process of consultation
- It depends on whole school commitment



What is an IEP?

- The IEP is developed through a **collaborative process** involving the school, parents, the student (where appropriate), and other relevant personnel or agencies
- It refers to the **adapted or modified** aspects of the educational programme and focuses on **priority learning needs**
- Not every aspect of the curriculum and school life needs to be modified for every student with special educational needs
- The amount of adaptation and support will **vary** according to the individual learning needs of each student



Planning to Develop an IEP

- Information gathered – used to develop a comprehensive student profile – basis for IEP
- Should specify both the strengths and needs of pupil
- Sources of information might include: home, pre-school, school, other professionals, the pupil
- Written permission of parents is necessary prior to the gathering or distribution of information about a pupil
- Such information should be made available to those involved in developing the IEP in advance of an IEP planning meeting
- Check-list for the systematic gathering of information is included



Consultation and Collaboration

- Development of the IEP should be based on dialogue and collaboration with parents, teachers, the student and other appropriate professionals
- Guidelines emphasise that any approach to consultation should maximise participation and increase dialogue
- Advice is given on convening and conducting IEP planning meetings



Writing, Implementing and Reviewing the IEP

- Step 1 : Gathering information
- Step 2: Statement of level of performance including strengths, needs and impact on learning
- Step 3: Identification of priority learning needs and time frame for attainment of targets
- Step 4: Setting targets for each priority learning need
- Step 5: Identification of strategies and resources required
- Step 6: Setting date for review of IEP



Setting targets

- Targets should be SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time-bound)
- Should be clearly stated in terms of what the student will do
- Include the conditions under which the student will perform a task
- The materials and supports required to achieve a target
- Time-frame



Remaining Issues Addressed in Guidelines

- Transition Requirements in the IEP
- Parental and student involvement
- Roles and Responsibilities of all involved



Complementary Guidelines

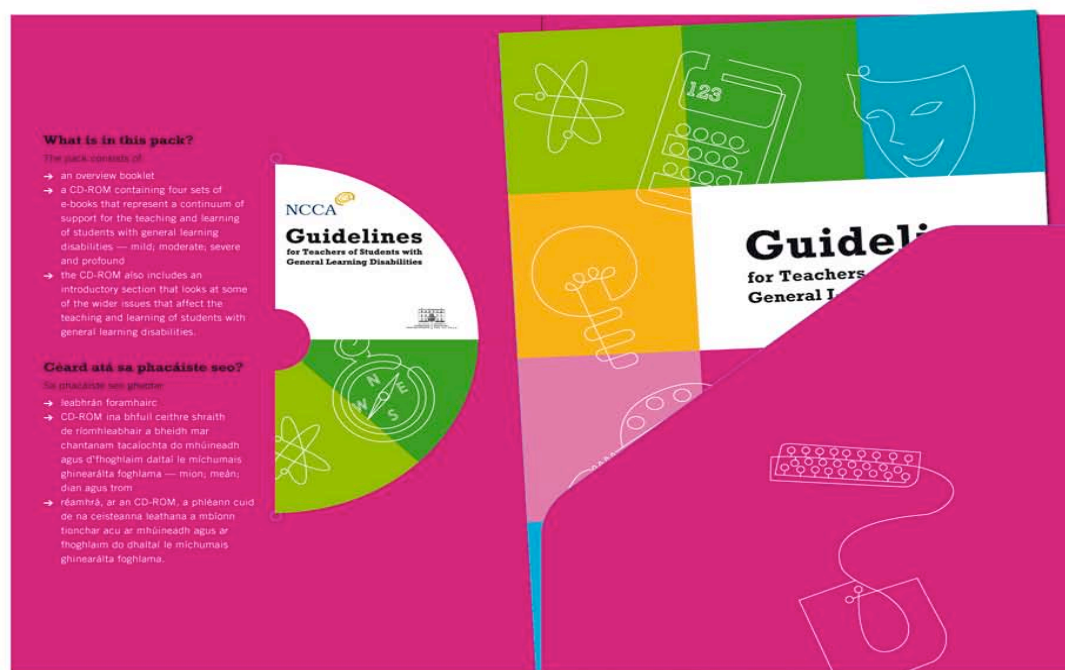
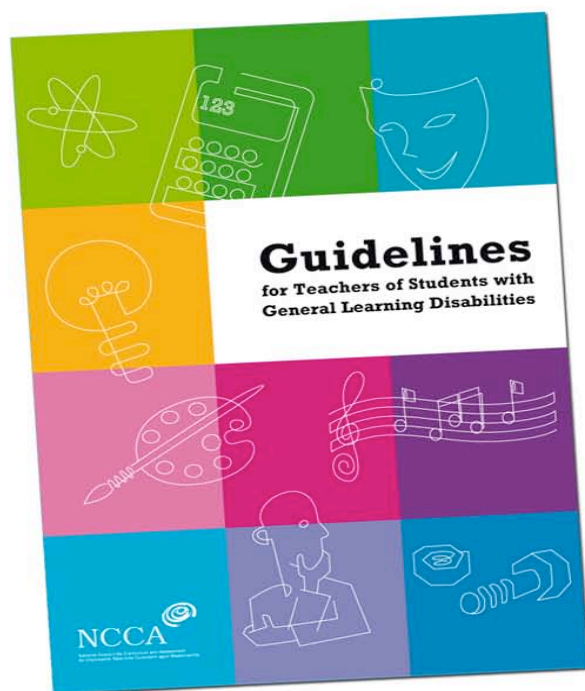
- “Assessment in the Primary School” – Guidelines for Schools” (2007)
- “Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities” (2007)

Available on the website of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

www.ncca.ie



Digipack – NCCA Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities



What is in this pack?

The pack consists of:

- an overview booklet
- a CD-ROM containing four sets of e-books that represent a continuum of support for the teaching and learning of students with general learning disabilities — mild; moderate; severe and profound
- the CD-ROM also includes an introductory section that looks at some of the wider issues that affect the teaching and learning of students with general learning disabilities.

Céard atá sa phacáiste seo?

Tá pacáiste seo comhleá:

- leabhrán foramhaic
- CD-ROM ina bhfuil ceithre shraith de ríonhleabhair a bheidh mar chomhábair tacaíochta do mhúineadh agus d'fhoghlaim daital le micthumais ghinearálta foghlama — mion, meán, dian agus trom
- réamhrá, ar an CD-ROM, a phléann cuid de na ceistanna leathana a mbíonn baint acu ar mhúineadh agus ar fhoghlaim do dhaital le micthumais ghinearálta foghlama.