

**CHM Leadership Certification
Level III, Course #6**

**Ministry to Children with Special Needs
Linda Koh, GC Children's Ministries
(Handouts)**

Children are like a box of colored pencils:

- Some are sharp
- Some are pretty
- Some are dull
- Some have short
- Some are broken
- And all are different colors

What is a Special Need?

- Special = peculiar to a specific person
- Need = Lack of something required
- A child with special needs requires individualized attention

Children with Special Needs Are Valuable to God

- They remind us that **God is good** –
- They remind us that **God is faithful** –
- They remind us that the image of **God is within us**, not outside us.

"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28.

The Problem with Labels

- Man-made labels create negative effects on the child.
- Derogative labels can obscure the vision of God's words for the child.
- Labels limit, degrade, and hurt, and is offensive to God.
- Every child, whether handicapped or not, is God's workmanship, created in His image (Eph 2:10).

Peel Away the Negative Labels Associated with Disabilities

- Focus on children's *gifts*
- Give *all* children an honored place in your church community

<u>People may see</u>	<u>God sees</u>
Cerebral Palsy Cindy	Cindy, handcrafted by Himself before she was even born. Part of her unique knitting pattern is her love for animals and gifted singing voice. She also happens to have cerebral palsy.
Down Syndrome Adam	Adam, image-bearer of Himself, who displays passion for prayer and care for the people in his life. He also happens to have Down syndrome.
Autistic Sam	Sam, honored and significant member of the Body of Christ, who is a gifted servant as he joyfully organizes the toy shelves at church. He also happens to have autism.

Myths About Special Needs

- I can't serve children with disabilities—I've no training.
- Aren't children with mental retardation spiritually innocent before God?
- We don't need a special ministry—there's one in the church downtown
- Guess I should volunteer –God sent these children to teach me
- Aren't parents the best caregivers? Can't they take turns?
- Afraid of legal responsibility of caring for a child with disability

*Dennis D. Schurter, D. Min., *A Ministry Manual* (Denton, TX, 2003), p. 16.

Unique Family Challenges

- Impact on Parents
 - *need to feel welcome
 - *look for a break
 - *seek religious education for disabled child
 - *need friendship
- Impact on Siblings
 - *some accept handicapped
 - * some are frustrated and embarrassed
- Impact on Grandparents
 - *most do not have training & strength to care for child

Church-Family Supports

1. Provide Financial Aid
2. Supplement Needed Care
3. Show Unconditional Love
4. Share Grief
5. Promise Hope

Some Special Needs

- Visually Impaired Children
- Deaf Children
- A child who uses a Wheelchair
- A child with Chronic Illnesses
- Bright Children
- Gifted Children
- High Energy Level Children

Types of Disabilities

- Autism
- Learning disabilities
- Physical disabilities
- Developmental disabilities
- Visual and hearing impairments
- Speech and language impairments
- Emotional and behavioral disorders

U. S. Children (Ages 3-17) Need a Hand Because . . .

- 1 in 800 children born with Down syndrome
- 2 or 3 children per 1,000 have cerebral palsy
- 3.4 children out of 1,000 have autism
- 55,200 children are legally blind
- 4.7 million children have learning disabilities
- 21% children have emotional and behavioral difficulties
- 5.4 million children receive special education
- 4.7 million children have AD/HD

Resources:

Autism: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

Down syndrome: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development,
<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/downsyndrome.cfm>

ADHD: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats>

Emotional and behavioral difficulties: <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/glance.asp>

Learning disabilities: Summary Health Statistics for U. S. Children

Cerebral palsy: <http://www.cerebralpalsy.org/what-is-cerebral-palsy/statistics>

Blindness: <http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=15+DocumentID=4398>

Special education: National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

What Are Our Responsibilities?

- To Remember Each Person is Special
- To Share God's Love
- To Be Prepared

- To Create A Nurturing Environment

Many have learned that . . .

- A Person who hears less may see more.
- One who sees less may perceive more.
- One who speaks slowly may have more to say.
- A Person who moves with difficulty may have a clearer sense of direction.

A Prepared Teacher will

- Know All of Her Students
- Plan with Each Student in Mind
- Ask for Assistance
- Pray for the Out-Pouring of the Holy Spirit
- Know His Own Weaknesses

It's You I Like (Poem)

It's You I Like,
It's not the things you wear,
It's not the way you do your
hair – But it's you I like
The way you are right now,
The way down deep inside of you –
Not the things that hide you,
Not your toys –
They're just beside you.

But its You I like,
Every part of you,
Your skin, your eyes, your feelings
Whether old or new
I hope that you remember
Even when you're feeling blue
That it's you I like,
It's You yourself
It's You, it's You I like.

Resource: Joni and Friends. *Special Needs Smart Pages*. Gospel Light, 2009.

