

CHINA

Education to Multiple Disabilities in China

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Educational Supports for Children with Multiple Disability with Sensory Impairment,
Including Deafblindness

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Multiple disabilities is one of the six major disability categories entitled for special attention and protection in the Act of Protection of the Disabilities. By reviewing the current documents and practices of educating the multiple disabilities in China , this paper intended to describe the definition , legal and status of the multiple disabilities, and to share three cases of educating the multiple disabilities reported from different cities of China, i.e. Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, etc..

The definition of Multiple Disabilities

Multiple disabilities is defined as an individual having two types or more than two types of disabilities which required more attention and support in education programming. It is also called double disabilities or complex disability in various occasions. There are four types of special schools in China, namely, center special school (a school for different types of disability); special school for the blind; special school for the deaf; and special school for the mental retardation. Till today, few papers about multiple disabilities reported either from special school for the blind or special school for the deaf. Although multiple disabilities is not seen as one major issue in the center special school and special school for the mental retardation, children with multiple disabilities or have more than one area of special needs is often and also in regular practices of teaching such children in these school.

Legal Protection of the multiple Disabilities

The multiple disabilities is one of the six categories of disabilities mandated for special education in the Act of Protection of Disabilities of China. The first line of the Act of Protection of Disabilities (the APD) explains the importance of such a law “In order to protect the legal right of the disabilities, to develop program for the disabilities, to enable the disabilities in equal participation of mainstream social life, to entitle to the wealth and culture of the society, under the constitution, this law is mandated” In 1990, the APD was issued by the People Congress and since then it has been the major and important legal stand for the people of disabilities in China. The APD in it’s statements, by the nation, regulates

areas of right for the disabilities in rehabilitation, education, employment, culture, welfare, environment and legal pursuit. Back to 1986 when the Compulsory Act put into effect, special education is part of compulsory education. Chinese education belief supports thinking in catering for the individual differences in education, at mean time the major thrust was to be equally treated in all areas of development in concerning the needs of the different type of disabilities. Therefore, all children with special needs received education in regular class, regular school and special school for various curriculum and program. This would be some what similar arrangements to the multiple disabilities. For the purpose of implementing the requirements of the APD, Education Regulation of the Disabilities (the ERD) also made in effect in 1994. In the ERD everyone with a disabilities in China may have education services including preschool education, 9 years compulsory education, vocational education, higher education and adult education. All these educational program should have a place for the multiple disabilities by the official statements. However, because the complex of multiple disabilities is not well studied, let us bare in mind that reading the official document is one thing and putting it into good practices is another.

Status of Multiple Disabilities

According to the national survey of disabilities in China of 1987, It was estimated that among children age 0-18, 2.58% of them had a disability condition that was more than 10 million at that time, and the multiple disabilities was 0.26% of the children population, about 1 million of children had multiple disabilities. This number should have changed for 15 years has passed. However, the estimation of the proportion of children have multiple disabilities may still make sense and because of the improvement of living and health care, children have multiple disabilities survived from medical difficulties and that means the proportion of children have multiple disabilities may be up to 0.3% of the children population. Now a day China has 350million children at the age of 0-17 , the estimation of children have multiple disabilities is approximately 1 million.

Age 0-18	%of total	Age 0-6	Age 7-15	Age 16-18
<u>Total</u> 417,099,200	100	144,282,900	192,985,100	79,831,200
<u>All Dis.</u> 10,747,400	2.58%	2,465,500	6,520,700	1,761,200
<u>Mul. D.</u> 1,080,300	0.26%	320,300	552,200	207,800
<u>Visual D.</u> 256,000	0.06%	64,800	133,100	58,100
<u>H.& Lan. D.</u> 1,685,300	0.4%	442,100	851,600	391,600
<u>MR</u> 6,605,800	1.59%	1,447,900	4,428,200	729,700
<u>Phy. D.</u> 1,055,800	0.25%	187,000	541,000	327,800
<u>Em. D.</u> 64,200	0.015%	3,400	14,600	46,200

Another report showed among the visually impaired children age 0-14, about 35% of them have secondary disability, including mental retardation, hearing impairment, language disorder, and physical disability (Peng, 1997). Other types of disability with secondary disability also regularly discussed in the field of special education. If this is true story then the number of multiple disabilities may be much more than a million children while accurate statistic is difficult to obtain in China.

Cases of educating multiple disabilities

Case I , Beijing First Special School for the Deaf (BFSSF) reported in 1996 (Wu & Zhao, 1996) that a special class for a group of multiple disabilities was studied. In the study children with multiple disabilities were in three groups including deaf with mental retardation, deaf with mental retardation and visual impairment, as well as visual impairment with mental retardation. As the result of 2 years effective teaching , 6 children out of 12 were replaced to regular class in BFSSF. A summery of this study found the characteristics of children with multiple disabilities were learning difficulties in a) slow and narrow in perception, b) passiveness in motivation of learning, c) delayed language development, especially in learning syntax and phrases, d) simple and un differential affective development, e) memory deficit, f) attention deficit, g) low self-concept and h) impulsive behavior, ect. The education program emphasis education as parenting, education as rehabilitating , and education as teaching.

1. Education as parenting, education program involved :

- *Various daily living care, i.e. eating, cleaning, and clothing for whether change, etc.;*

- *behavior modification for disruptive behavior;*
- *loving and caring for children affection.*

2. Education as rehabilitating, education program provided

- *assessment of the child's basic strength and needs in hearing, vision, intelligence, physical wellness;*
- *recoding and filing of general development, i.e. motor and coordination development;*
- *careful observation of illness of the child;*
- *meeting and guidance to parent for giving attention and care in rehabilitation and education.*

3. Education as teaching, education applied teaching principle in

- *individualized teaching approach and content for learning*
- *modeling appropriate behavior by teacher and student*
- *consistence in behavior discipline at home and in school*

Case II, Shanghai Fourth Special School for the Deaf (Zeng & Zhang, 2003) reported a special class for multiple disabilities and a case of seven year's study on a child with hearing disability who was diagnosed 100db hearing lost and as the result of Danvor Development Screening Test at age of 4, the child showed delayed development in motor of age 3, fine motor of age 2.5, language age of 1. In addition, the child also had attention disorder and disruptive behavior.

In education intervention, the child received individualized education which was designed for emotional and behavior intervention, self care and social skills training, and language training. A brief description of the program was as follows:

1. Emotional and behavior intervention.

The education program intended for emotional and behavior change was planed in application of play in learning activities, behavior punishment and behavior regression of disruptive and violent behavior, and medical prescription of behavior control

2. Self care and social skills training.

Repeating and continuing practices on self care skills in four domains including food taking, bowling, changing clothes, and individual hygiene. Social skills training involved self behavior management, money management, etc. in ecological teaching environment.

3. Language training.

Lip reading and speech training was not possible for the child. Word card combining play and life episode was the first language approach for the child and

signing program and written material was found useful in helping the child in language acquisition.

Case III, Shanghai Special School for the Blind (Guo , 2001) reported theme- based curriculum development for multiple disabilities. This study was unique in a way that they paid attention to curriculum design much more than the disabilities issues of multiple disabilities. The author, on one hand, understand the complex condition of multiple disabilities, the diverse needs among children with multiple disabilities, and may be severer than most cases of disabilities; on the other hand the study was focus on the development of curriculum in meeting the diverse needs of children with multiple disabilities.

Based on the concept of the self is closely related to family, school, community and society at different degree. The curriculum development was planed in a way of meeting the child most needed area and theme.

Themes selected for the child education program were in priority order of

1. *The child as the focal point, thus topic such as, my hand, my body, my bath, then extended to the child's family, such as, my mother , my father, my dog, the extension went on to school community and society.*
2. *Time specific topics was a major curriculum issue in the study that in each day timing, day , season, holiday, special knowledge etc. was included for the child to feel and observe when time change and the difference of the change.*

Conclusion

All children entitled to provision of education and their education right of children with special needs including who has multiple disability is protected by the constitution, by the act and several education regulations. Children with special needs received education in regular class, regular school and special school for various curriculum and program. Children with multiple disabilities may require special support in educational services and special arrangements of education placement and curriculum design. It is in common practice of educating children with multiple disabilities in four types of special schools of China. However, sound study in this area were few and deserve further attention and support for research and development in this area.

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