

**Some ideas to support learners who have cognitive barriers to learning:**

Various barriers are clustered here, but it is important to note that support for each condition is different and very specific. Some of these learners cannot easily be accommodated in mainstream classrooms. As with all learners who experience a barrier to learning, offer emotional support and adapt the learning and teaching so that the learner is able to experience achievement and inclusion.

ADHD learners find the classroom a very stressful place. They find it difficult to remain focused and seldom complete tasks. They are often impulsive, which is disruptive for other learners. Please note that the diagnosis for ADHD must be made by a qualified medical doctor. Here are a few tips that can help the ADHD learner:

- Provide structure. Explain well in advance of an activity what the learner must do. Repeat instructions often. Have the learner repeat them back to you. Use pictures to help them structure their day. Follow the same daily programme – for example, always begin with morning ring.
- Make frequent eye contact. Get down to the learner's level and offer lots of praise. Learn to recognise the learner's achievement and respond every time.
- Reduce distractions and seat the child close to you.

**Here are some tips to help the Down's Syndrome learner:**

- Make learning visual. In other words, model correct behaviours, attitudes, processes and outcomes. Provide lots of practical, hands-on activities.
- Many Down's Syndrome learners wear spectacles. Place them in the front of the class. Try to ensure that all print is enlarged.
- Give the learner time to process information and respond.
- Be positive and offer lots of praise.
- Up to half of learners with Down's Syndrome have hearing loss. Again, seat the learner in the front of the class, look at the learner when speaking to him or her, and repeat instructions frequently. Be aware that those learners with severe hearing loss will probably need a specialist SASL teacher.

**(d) MEDICAL BARRIERS (the child has a health problem that makes it more difficult to learn)**

These learners have chronic or acute health problems. They may live with pain, have low energy levels and require medication. Their school attendance may be erratic, with long periods of absenteeism. The following are some conditions that learners may have:

- Tuberculosis
- Asthma
- Haemophilia
- Lead poisoning
- Leukaemia
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy

**Some ideas to support learners who have medical barriers to learning:**

- Make sure that you understand what medication the learner requires, especially if you have to medicate the learner yourself. If the learner uses assistive medical interventions – such as an inhaler for asthma or insulin for diabetes – make sure you understand the signs that indicate you need to use the apparatus (and make sure you know exactly how to use it). Have the learner's doctor or hospital's numbers available at all times. Know the learner's physical limits – do not over-exert the learner in or out of the classroom. All learners take time to adjust to the classroom for the first time. The learner who is often absent experiences this continually. Be sensitive and supportive each time the learner returns to school.