

What provisions of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are useful for your child?

What is the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan?

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a programme of the Government of India that aims to universalize elementary education. It seeks to fulfil the Constitutional right of every Indian to education, i.e., to make free and compulsory education available to ALL children between 6 - 14 years.

Note that the Right to Education (RTE) Act provides a justiciable legal framework, so that if ANY child is denied free and compulsory education, it can be challenged in a court of law.

What does Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan offer for your child?

A major focus group under SSA are Children with Special Needs. Under SSA, it is ensured that your child with challenges (CwC) is provided with quality education irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability.

Note that under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a Disability Certificate is NOT required for admission to school.

What are the provisions under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan?

Inclusion in the context of the SSA is seen in terms of physical access, quality of access and social access. Within each of these, the SSA has the following provisions:

Physical Access

- **Mapping:** SSA is responsible to undertake a drive to detect CwC at an early age through Primary Health Centres, Integrated Child Development Services, Early Childhood Care and Education Centres and other school readiness programmes.
- **Assessment for Mapping of Needs:** Assessment of each identified CwC is to be carried out by a team to ascertain the extent and type of the disability, developmental level of the child, nature of support services required, assistive devices required and the most appropriate form of special training to be given to the child.
- **Educational Placement:** CwC are to be facilitated to acquire skills enabling them to access elementary education as envisaged in the RTE Act. For instance, they may need mobility training, training in Braille, sign language, postural training, etc. Thus, school preparedness of CwC is ensured by providing 'special training'. This training may be residential, non-residential or even home based, as per specific requirements.
- **Aids and Appliances:** All children requiring assistive devices are provided with aids and appliances. The Headmaster of the school is to be contacted in order to receive the required aids and appliances.
- **Removal of architectural barriers:** Architectural barriers in schools are to be removed for easy access and inclusion of CwC. Accessible infrastructure is achieved not only through ramps, but also through accessible classrooms, toilets, playgrounds, libraries etc.

Quality of Access

- **Support Services:** A continuum of core essential support services is to be provided for the CwC. This includes specific accommodations like availability and upgrading of aids and assistive devices according to individual needs, technological support in the form of augmentative and alternative communication tools, audio-visual materials, communication boards, computer access etc.
- **Teacher Training:** Intensive teacher training is to be undertaken to sensitise regular teachers on effective classroom management of CwC.
- **Resource Support:** For resource support, specially trained special educators are appointed, particularly for teaching special skills to your child.
- **Curricular Access:** The curriculum is inclusive and it is ensured that the same curriculum be followed for children with and without special needs, but with adaptations such as small changes to learning content, learning friendly environment, appropriate learning approach, adaptation in learning aids, flexibility in evaluation, etc.
- **Individualized Educational Plan:** An Individualized Educational Plan or IEP is to be prepared for every child with special needs in consultation with parents and experts. Its implementation is monitored from time to time. The IEP reviews the effectiveness of various strategies and support services used by CwC.
- **Building synergy with Special Schools:** Special schools are to serve as resource centres for inclusive education and provide support to the same.

Social Access

- **Parental Training and Community Mobilisation:** Parents of CwC are to receive counselling and training on how to bring them up and teach them basic survival skills. Strong advocacy and awareness programmes are a part of the strategy to educate every CwC.
- **Peer Sensitization:** Various programmes and curricular and cocurricular activities are designed for peer sensitisation like inclusive sports, tournaments, cultural programmes, inclusive exposure visits, etc

Note that under the SSA, an amount of Rs. 3000/- per annum is allocated for interventions related to education of a child with special needs. It should be borne in mind that the amount available is not for the use of the CwC, but is to be utilized for ensuring Inclusive Education activities.