

International Journal Research Publication Analysis

Page: 01-13

EDUCATIONAL AND AGE-RELATED PROFILE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AT SIRTAR, ROHTAK: A DESCRIPTIVE INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

***Dr. Rajvir**

Assistant Professor, State Institute for Rehabilitation, Training and Research (SIRTAR),
Rohtak, Haryana, India.

Article Received: 14 August 2026

***Corresponding Author: Dr. Rajvir**

Article Revised: 04 September 2026

Assistant Professor, State Institute for Rehabilitation, Training and Research (SIRTAR),
Rohtak, Haryana, India.

Published on: 24 September 2026

DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.5357>

ABSTRACT

Background: Educational and rehabilitation systems for children and young persons with disabilities need to respond to changing developmental, functional and vocational needs across the life course. Institutional databases can provide a practical evidence base for identifying patterns that may otherwise remain invisible in routine administration.

Objective: The present study describes the distribution and reported age ranges of learners with special needs enrolled across educational and vocational groups at SIRTAR, Rohtak, and examines the implications of these patterns for age-responsive educational and transition planning.

Methods: A descriptive institutional-data design was used. Aggregate data supplied from the SIRTAR CWSN database were analysed. The dataset comprised 110 learners distributed across 11 educational/vocational groups. Frequencies and percentages were calculated; no individual identifiers or unreported characteristics were inferred.

Results: Vocational-B had the largest enrolment (14; 12.7%), followed by Vocational-II-B (13; 11.8%) and Pre-vocational-II-C (11; 10.0%). Three vocational groups containing learners aged 18 years or above accounted for 36 learners (32.7%) of the institutional total. Several school-age groups also contained wide age ranges.

Conclusion: The institutional profile highlights the need for systematic transition planning, functional and life-skills education, individualized vocational assessment, work exposure and multidisciplinary support. The findings are descriptive and institution-specific; they should not be generalized to all CWSN in Haryana.

KEYWORDS: Children With Special Needs; Disability; Special Education; Transition Planning; Vocational Education; Intellectual Disability; Rehabilitation; Institutional Data.

1. INTRODUCTION

Disability-inclusive education is increasingly understood as a matter of rights, participation and meaningful learning rather than simple access to a classroom. The WHO–UNICEF Global Report on Children with Developmental Disabilities emphasizes that children and young people with developmental disabilities frequently experience barriers to health, education and participation and calls for responsive, multisectoral systems and stronger use of data for planning. (World Health Organization [WHO] & UNICEF, 2023).

In India, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 provides a national legal framework for equality, non-discrimination, education, skill development and rehabilitation. The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities continues to list the RPwD Act, its Rules and associated accessibility standards as key instruments governing disability-related services. (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities [DEPwD], 2016/2017/2024).

The educational pathway of a learner with disability is not necessarily linear. Some learners may remain in school-oriented programmes into adolescence because their learning needs require continued foundational instruction, while others may progress toward pre-vocational and vocational activities. Consequently, chronological age, educational level, functional skills and support needs should be considered together rather than using age as the sole basis for placement.

National evidence also demonstrates continuing educational barriers. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation reported, using Census 2011 data, that 61% of disabled children aged 5–19 years were attending an educational institution, while 27% had never attended one. (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation [MoSPI], 2021). UNICEF has likewise emphasized that disability-related barriers, including inaccessible facilities, inadequate support and limited teacher preparation, can affect school participation and learning outcomes. (UNICEF, n.d.).

For older adolescents and young adults, the issue extends beyond school attendance. Transition planning needs to connect education with adult life, employment, independent living and community participation. Recent systematic reviews identify career planning, work exposure, post-secondary preparation, competency development and on-the-job training as

important components of school-to-work transition for young people with intellectual disability. (Coñoman et al., 2024; Enticott & Dew, 2026).

The present study therefore uses the SIRTAR institutional CWSN database as a starting point for a structured descriptive analysis. It does not attempt to diagnose, compare or rank learners. Instead, it asks a practical institutional question: what does the age and educational distribution of the current learner population suggest about programme planning, particularly as learners move toward adulthood?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Disability-inclusive education and participation

UNICEF describes inclusive education as a system in which learners can participate and learn without disability-related exclusion. Current international evidence stresses that inclusion requires more than physical enrolment; it requires accessible environments, appropriate teaching, learning materials, trained personnel and mechanisms for identifying and reducing barriers. (UNICEF, n.d.; UNICEF Innocenti, 2026).

The 2026 UNICEF Learning is for Everyone global report draws on multi-country evidence and argues that exclusion is not inevitable when education systems recognize learner diversity, reform practices and allocate resources appropriately. (UNICEF Innocenti, 2026). This is relevant to institutional settings because the quality of a programme depends partly on whether its structure reflects the actual characteristics of the population being served.

2.2 Age, developmental needs and individualized programming

Age is an important planning variable, but it is not a proxy for ability. Learners of the same chronological age can have substantially different communication, adaptive, academic, social and vocational profiles. Person-centred planning literature suggests that individualized approaches may support participation and choice, although the evidence base is mixed and implementation quality matters. (Ratti et al., 2016).

The WHO–UNICEF framework similarly recommends a life-course perspective and stronger coordination across education, health and social systems. It also identifies disaggregated data, age-appropriate services and a competent workforce as important elements of responsive systems. (WHO & UNICEF, 2023).

2.3 Transition from school to adulthood

Transition to adulthood can be particularly complex for young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. A systematic review by Jacobs et al. (2018) found that transition involves interconnected environmental and personal factors, while a literature review framed

around the International Classification of Functioning highlighted the influence of family systems, post-school services and transport on transition outcomes. (Biswas et al., 2017; Jacobs et al., 2018).

More recent evidence is consistent with this broader perspective. Coñoman et al. (2024) identified four broad types of school-to-work initiatives: career and vocational guidance, competency development, school-based transition programmes and work-based learning. Enticott and Dew (2026) similarly highlighted early career planning, work exposure, post-secondary education/certification and on-the-job training as characteristics of programmes associated with competitive employment outcomes.

2.4 Vocational preparation and employment

Employment is an important adult outcome, but employment support cannot be reduced to placement alone. Rehabilitation research identifies both individual and environmental barriers and facilitators, and emphasizes the importance of structured interventions that address functioning as well as employment. (Lysaght et al., 2019). Research on employment sustainability also shows that long-term employment is influenced by multiple factors and that definitions and measurement approaches vary across studies. (Holwerda et al., 2022).

The literature therefore supports an institutional approach in which vocational education includes assessment, skill development, workplace exposure, social communication, safety, employer linkage and follow-up rather than relying exclusively on classroom-based occupational training.

3. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study integrates three complementary perspectives: a rights-based approach, an ecological/life-course approach and a transition-to-adulthood approach. The framework assumes that educational participation and adult outcomes are influenced by the interaction of learner characteristics, educational supports, family/community context and institutional resources.

At the learner level, relevant characteristics include age, communication, functional academics, adaptive skills, interests and support requirements. At the programme level, curriculum, special education, therapies, vocational training, assistive technology and individualized planning influence opportunities for participation. At the environmental level, family expectations, accessibility, transportation, community attitudes and employment opportunities may facilitate or constrain outcomes.

Accordingly, the proposed pathway is: Institutional profile → needs identification → individualized educational planning → functional/vocational preparation → transition planning → community participation and adult outcomes. The present study addresses only the first component directly—the institutional profile—while the remaining components provide an interpretive framework for future research.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework: Data profile → learner-centred assessment → individualized educational/vocational planning → transition supports → participation and adult outcomes.

Level	Key elements	Planning implication
Learner	Age; functional learning; communication; adaptive skills; interests	Individualized goals
Programme	Curriculum; special education; therapy; vocational training; AT	Age- and needs-responsive services
Environment	Family; accessibility; transport; community; employers	Reduce contextual barriers
Transition	Career planning; work exposure; self-advocacy; follow-up	Prepare for adult life
Outcome	Participation; independence; meaningful activity; employment	Monitor beyond enrolment

4. OBJECTIVES

1. To describe the distribution of learners across educational and vocational groups at SIRTAR, Rohtak.
2. To examine the reported age ranges represented within those groups.
3. To calculate the proportional representation of each group within the institutional dataset.
4. To examine the implications of the observed profile for age-responsive education and transition planning.
5. To identify priorities for future individual-level and longitudinal research.

5. Research Questions

6. How are the 110 learners distributed across the 11 educational/vocational groups?
7. What age ranges are represented within the different groups?
8. How large is the institutional population represented in vocational groups that include learners aged 18 years or above?
9. What programme-planning implications arise from the observed distribution?

6. METHOD

6.1 Design and setting

A descriptive institutional-data design was adopted. The setting was the State Institute for Rehabilitation, Training and Research (SIRTAR), Rohtak, Haryana. The analysis was designed as a programme-planning study rather than an experimental or clinical investigation.

6.2 Data source and sample

The analysis used the aggregate CWSN information supplied for the SIRTAR learner population. The dataset contained 110 learners distributed across 11 educational and vocational groups. The unit of analysis was the educational/vocational group, not the individual learner.

6.3 Variables and analysis

Available variables were group name, number of learners and reported age range. Percentages were calculated as the number in each group divided by 110 and multiplied by 100. Because some age categories were open-ended (for example, 18+ and 15+), exact age means, medians and standard deviations were not calculated. This avoids creating false precision.

6.4 Data protection and ethics

No names, identification numbers or individual clinical information were used in the analysis. The study reports aggregate counts only. If the manuscript is submitted to a journal, the author should document the relevant institutional permission/ethics determination according to the journal and SIRTAR requirements, particularly if additional individual-level variables are incorporated.

7. RESULTS

Table 1. Distribution of the SIRTAR CWSN population by educational/vocational group.

Educational/vocational group	n	%	Reported age range
Pre-Primary	6	5.5%	8–10
Primary-I	10	9.1%	8–14
Primary-II-A	10	9.1%	10–18
Primary-II-B	10	9.1%	11–15
Primary-II-C	10	9.1%	14–16
Secondary	9	8.2%	14–16
Vocational-II-D	9	8.2%	18–26
Pre-vocational-I	8	7.3%	16–18
Vocational-II-B	13	11.8%	18+
Pre-vocational-II-C	11	10.0%	15+
Vocational-B	14	12.7%	18+

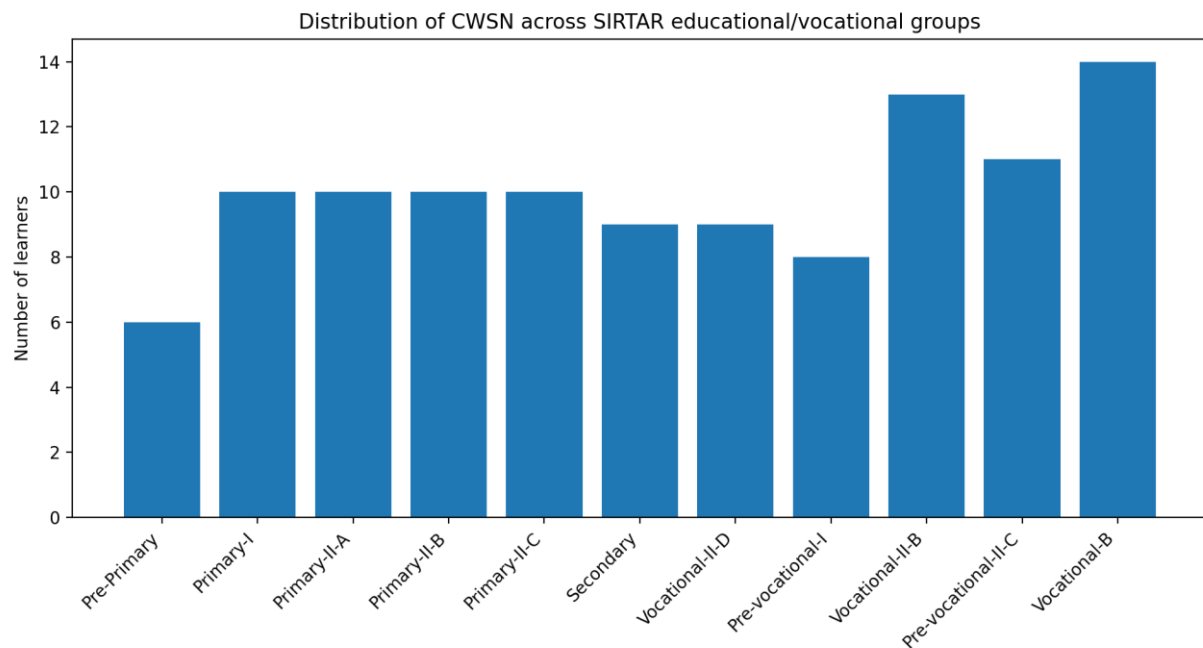


Figure 2. Distribution of learners across educational and vocational groups.

The largest single group was Vocational-B (14 learners, 12.7%), followed by Vocational-II-B (13, 11.8%) and Pre-vocational-II-C (11, 10.0%). Four groups contained 10 learners each: Primary-I, Primary-II-A, Primary-II-B and Primary-II-C. The smallest group was Pre-Primary, with six learners (5.5%).

The reported age ranges demonstrate that several educational groups include learners spanning multiple developmental stages. Primary-II-A, for example, spans 10–18 years, while Pre-vocational-I spans 16–18 years. Vocational-II-D includes learners aged 18–26 years, and both Vocational-II-B and Vocational-B include learners aged 18 years and above.

The three vocational groups explicitly including learners aged 18 years or above—Vocational-II-D, Vocational-II-B and Vocational-B—contain 9, 13 and 14 learners respectively, giving a combined count of 36 learners, or 32.7% of the total institutional dataset. This statistic should be interpreted carefully: it indicates that these groups include learners aged 18+, not that every learner in each group is necessarily 18 or older.

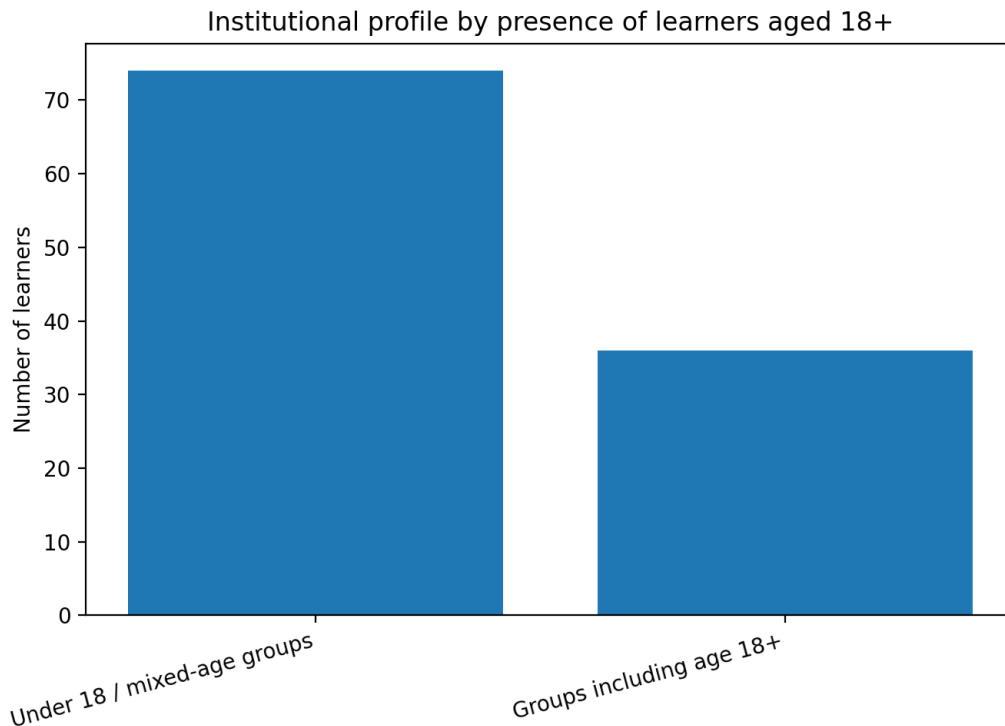


Figure 3. Learners in vocational groups that include age 18+ compared with the remainder of the dataset.

8. DISCUSSION

The principal finding is not simply the size of any one class; it is the coexistence of broad age ranges and different educational/vocational pathways within the same institutional population. This pattern supports the use of differentiated planning rather than a single model of progression.

The presence of 36 learners in vocational groups that include people aged 18 years or above is particularly relevant to transition planning. At this stage, the educational question increasingly shifts from what curriculum content can be taught to how learning can be translated into functional participation, meaningful occupation and adult life. This does not imply that all adults should be employed or that employment is the only outcome. Rather, adult planning should be individualized and may include supported work, community participation, further training, independent living, family-supported roles or other meaningful activities.

The findings are consistent with international literature emphasizing early career planning, work exposure, competency development and on-the-job training for young people with intellectual disability. (Coñoman et al., 2024; Enticott & Dew, 2026). The institutional data

therefore provide a reasonable basis for strengthening transition-oriented programming, while the present study cannot establish whether current services are sufficient or effective.

Another important observation is the age spread in school-oriented groups. Such variation should not automatically be interpreted as inappropriate placement. Learners with significant support needs may require continued instruction in communication, functional academics, self-care and social participation. The appropriate question is whether the programme is individualized, purposeful and linked to measurable outcomes. Person-centred planning can support participation and choice, although evidence on its effects is not uniformly strong. (Ratti et al., 2016).

The results also have implications for institutional data systems. The present dataset permits analysis of group size and age ranges, but it cannot answer questions about gender, disability category, functional level, communication, adaptive behaviour, therapy needs, vocational interests or post-programme outcomes. WHO and UNICEF emphasize the importance of better data and research for disability-inclusive policy and service planning. (WHO & UNICEF, 2023). A more detailed, anonymized database would therefore be a logical next step.

In the Indian context, this approach is consistent with the rights-based direction of the RPwD framework, which includes education, skill development, accessibility and rehabilitation within the broader architecture of disability rights. The Government of India also identifies accessibility codes and standards for educational institutions among the standards notified under the disability rules. (DEPwD, 2024).

9. Implications for SIRTAR Programme Development

9.1 Individual transition plans

For learners approaching adolescence and adulthood, transition plans could document strengths, communication needs, functional academics, daily living skills, vocational interests, work goals, family preferences and post-programme supports.

9.2 Functional and life-skills curriculum

Where appropriate, educational planning could integrate functional literacy, numeracy, communication, self-care, community safety, money use, time concepts and technology skills with academic content.

9.3 Structured vocational assessment

A standardized vocational profile could examine interests, task performance, work tolerance, motor demands, communication, safety awareness, preferred work environments and required supports.

9.4 Work-based learning

Institutional partnerships with community organizations and employers could provide graded exposure to real work settings. Work-based learning should include preparation, supervision, feedback and follow-up.

9.5 Multidisciplinary planning

Special educators, psychologists, therapists, vocational professionals, families and other relevant personnel can contribute complementary perspectives to individualized planning.

9.6 Outcome monitoring

Institutional monitoring should extend beyond attendance and enrolment. Potential indicators include functional skill attainment, participation, vocational certification, internship completion, employment or meaningful activity, independent living skills and family satisfaction.

10. Strengths of the Study

A strength of this study is its direct use of institutional data rather than hypothetical examples. The analysis also preserves an important methodological distinction between what the database demonstrates and what would require additional information. In particular, open-ended age categories were not converted into artificial averages, and no clinical or demographic characteristics were inferred.

A second strength is its practical orientation. The study connects descriptive statistics to programme planning without claiming causal effects. This makes it potentially useful as a baseline for institutional quality improvement and future longitudinal research.

11. LIMITATIONS

- The dataset represents one institution and therefore cannot be generalized to the CWSN population of Haryana or India.
- Only aggregate group counts and reported age ranges were available for the present analysis.
- Open-ended age categories such as 18+ and 15+ prevent calculation of exact mean age or age dispersion.

- No individual-level information on gender, disability type, severity, functional level, adaptive behaviour, communication or socioeconomic characteristics was available.
- The study is descriptive and cannot determine whether a particular educational placement is appropriate for an individual learner.
- Post-school outcomes were not available, so the analysis cannot evaluate the effectiveness of vocational programmes.

12. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should move from cross-sectional group description toward an anonymized longitudinal institutional database. Recommended variables include age, sex, disability category, support needs, functional academics, adaptive behaviour, communication profile, assistive technology, therapy requirements, vocational interests, internships, certification, employment/meaningful activity and post-programme follow-up.

A future cohort study could examine whether learners with individualized transition plans demonstrate different post-school participation outcomes than learners without documented transition planning. Such a study would require appropriate ethical approval, standardized outcome measures and careful control of confounding variables.

A mixed-methods study involving learners, parents/caregivers, special educators, vocational instructors and employers could complement the quantitative database and identify barriers and facilitators that numbers alone cannot explain.

13. CONCLUSION

This study provides a structured descriptive analysis of 110 learners recorded across 11 educational and vocational groups at SIRTAR, Rohtak. The profile shows meaningful variation in both group size and reported age range. Most importantly for institutional planning, 36 learners (32.7%) are located in vocational groups that include learners aged 18 years or above.

The finding should not be treated as a judgment about the adequacy or inadequacy of any programme. Instead, it identifies an important planning dimension: as learners move toward adulthood, educational systems need mechanisms that connect learning with functional independence, vocational preparation, participation and individualized adult-life goals.

The study also demonstrates the value of routinely analysing institutional data. A stronger anonymized database, combined with transition plans and longitudinal outcome monitoring, could help SIRTAR develop an evidence-informed model of educational and rehabilitation

planning across the life course. Such work would contribute not only to institutional quality improvement but also to the broader evidence base on disability-inclusive education and transition services in India.

REFERENCES

1. Biswas, S., Tickle, A., Golijani-Moghaddam, N., & Almack, K. (2017). The transition into adulthood for children with a severe intellectual disability: Parents' views. **Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 30*(5), 817–829.
2. Coñoman, G. I., Ávila, V., & Carmona, C. (2024). Initiatives to support the school-to-work transition of people with intellectual disabilities: A systematic review. **Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 49*(4), 488–500.
3. <https://doi.org/10.3109/13668250.2024.2317799>
4. Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. (2016). **The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**. Government of India.
5. Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. (2017). **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017**. Government of India.
6. Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. (2024). **Standards/guidelines notified under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017**. Government of India.
7. Enticott, A., & Dew, A. (2026). A systematic review of the characteristics of programs and services resulting in competitive employment outcomes for young people with an intellectual disability. **Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 51*(1), 27–38. <https://doi.org/10.3109/13668250.2025.2499674>
8. Holwerda, A., van der Klink, J. J. L., de Boer, M. R., Groothoff, J. W., & Brouwer, S. (2022). Employment sustainability for people with intellectual disability: A systematic review. **Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 32*, 327–342.
9. Jacobs, P., MacMahon, K., & Quayle, E. (2018). Transition from school to adult services for young people with severe or profound intellectual disability: A systematic review utilizing framework synthesis. **Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 31*(6), 962–982. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12466>
10. Lysaght, R., Cobigo, V., & Hamilton, K. (2019). The effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions on the employment and functioning of people with intellectual disabilities: A systematic review. **Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 29*, 53–65.

11. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. (2021). *Persons with disabilities in India: NSS 76th round (July–December 2018)*. Government of India.
12. Ratti, V., Hassiotis, A., Crabtree, J., Deb, S., Gallagher, P., & Unwin, G. (2016). The effectiveness of person-centred planning for people with intellectual disabilities: A systematic review. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 57*, 185–200.
13. UNICEF. (n.d.). *Children with disabilities: Education*. UNICEF Data.
14. UNICEF Innocenti. (2026). *Learning is for everyone: Global report—Paving the pathway for inclusive education for children with disabilities*. UNICEF Office of Strategy and Evidence Innocenti.
15. World Health Organization & UNICEF. (2023). *Global report on children with developmental disabilities: From the margins to the mainstream*. World Health Organization. <https://doi.org/10.2471/9789240080232>

Author Note and Data Statement

The institutional CWSN figures used in this manuscript were supplied for research drafting from the SIRTAR learner database. Before journal submission, the author should verify the counts and age ranges against the current official institutional register, document the data extraction date, and obtain any required institutional/ethical clearance.

This manuscript intentionally avoids reporting personally identifiable information and does not infer clinical characteristics that were not contained in the supplied aggregate dataset.