

**Read this article and fill in the Reading comprehension sheet, submit it to Odevzdávárna until Thursday 15th January, 12 a.m. at latest.**

### Multiple disabilities

When a child has several different disabilities we say that he/she has multiple disabilities. For example, a child may have difficulties in learning along with controlling her movements and/or with hearing/ visual perception. The effect of multiple disabilities can be more than the combination of two individual disabilities. Multiple disabilities vary greatly in their range and severity.

Some examples of multiple disabilities are:

- deafblind (visual impairment + hearing impairment )
- visual impairment + hearing impairment + mental retardation
- visual impairment+ mental retardation
- cerebral palsy + mental retardation/ hearing/ speech/ visual problems.

#### **Strategies and Modifications for students with MD:**

- Early intervention is necessary - as soon as the child begins school
- Involvement of the appropriate professionals, i.e. speech/language therapists, physio therapists, etc.
- A team approach at the school level involving external agency/community liaison who meet on a regular basis is essential
- The physical arrangement of the classroom will be needed to accommodate this child in the best possible way. Consideration of special equipment and assistive technology is essential.
- Integration among their peers is important to assist these students with social development. It's important to integrate multiply disabled children as much as possible. Research does indicate that when these students attend their community school and participate in the same activities as their peers, their social skills develop very much.
- Ensuring that all students demonstrate respect for the multiply disabled student becomes the teacher's responsibility and needs to be taken seriously.
- An Individual Educational Plan needs to be planned out carefully and adjusted to the child's needs. It is important that we are patient and that we set realistic goals that are small and achievable, as the child can learn only in small steps with a lot of practice and repetition. The child will be slow to make progress and will have difficulty in generalizing.
- Remember, these children are often completely dependent upon others for most/all of their daily needs.
- Because children with multiple disabilities have problems with all muscle movement, with understanding and often with seeing and hearing as well, communication is very difficult for them. Often we may not know how much is a multiply disabled child understanding, and her attempts to communicate may be unfamiliar to us and may pass unnoticed. For these reasons we may wrongly label a child as being mentally handicapped when she is not. We must try our best to assess a child's understanding and expression to ensure that she is not wrongly labelled.
- Above all these identified children should be given the same rights as non-identified school age children including screening, evaluation, an appropriate educational programme and services.

