

## UNICEF and Disability

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A major focus of UNICEF in its work on behalf of children with disabilities is to address the discrimination that interferes with their development and inclusion in society. To address discrimination, UNICEF carries out activities such as:

- Working to keep children out of institutions, and with their families, wherever possible.
- Developing support systems for families to enable them to care for a child with disabilities in the home. This can include building ramps, providing wheel chairs and other supplies and teaching parents to provide for a child's special needs.
- Promoting inclusive education which enables children with disabilities to learn in schools with non-disabled children. This allows children with disabilities to get a better quality education, and to develop friendships.
- Encouraging governments to pass laws that eliminate discrimination against children with disabilities and allow their voices to be heard in creating policies.
- Promoting community-based health care and other services for children with disabilities and their families; when these services aren't available, children with disabilities are more likely to be sent away to an institution.
- Creating information and raising awareness of the rights of children with disabilities, particularly the right to non-discrimination.

UNICEF also carries out programs to prevent childhood disabilities. These include:

- Nutrition programs for pregnant women and children that prevent disabilities caused by malnutrition. For example, vitamin A supplements for children can help prevent blindness.
- Ensuring access to safe water and sanitation which can help prevent the spread of disease.
- Immunization campaigns against diseases such as polio, once a major cause of childhood disability in many countries.
- Landmine awareness education, which can help prevent disabling injuries from landmines in conflict zones.
- Combating hazardous child labor, which can cause injuries that result in lifelong disabilities.