

Press Release

Fourteen Cross-Disability Early Intervention Centres opened in the country

Dr Thaawarchand Gehlot, Hon'ble Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment inaugurated 14 Cross-Disability Early Intervention Centres located in 7 National Institutes and 7 Composite Regional Centres under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India on 17.06.2021 through the virtual platform in the presence of Hon'ble Union Ministers of State in the Ministry, Shri Krishan Pal Gurjar, Shri Ramdas Athawale, Shri Rattan Lal Kataria and Secretary, DEPwD, Ms Anjali Bhawra.

2. Research studies suggest that early childhood (0-6 years) is a time of remarkable brain development. It is the critical period that determines a person's ability to reach her/his lifelong health, social and economic potential. Providing quality childhood intervention early in its life helps to develop the skills needed to enable to lead an independent and dignified life.

3. Early Intervention can provide specialized support and services for infants and young children at-risk or with disability and/or developmental delay and for their families to help them in their overall development, well-being and participation in family and community life.

4. So far, each National Institute is serving a particular category of disability. For example, National Institute of Locomotor Disabilities (NILD), Kolkata and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya National Institute for Persons with Physical Disabilities (PDUNIPPD), Delhi serves for locomotor disability, National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD) Dehradun serves for visual disability. The proposed EICs in each of the NIs/CRCs will be equipped to screen and intervene in respect of all categories of disabilities covered under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

5. The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities has recently set up 14 single-window, contiguous Cross-Disability Early Intervention Centres at its 7 National Institutes and 7 Composite Regional Centres on a pilot basis in the

first phase covering the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Gradually such Centres will be extended to all its 21 Composite Regional Centres.

6. The Cross-Disability Early Intervention Centres have been equipped to provide services and facilities in a contiguous manner in an accessible and aesthetically designed environment under one roof. These services will provide facilities for screening of children to identify risk cases and refer them for appropriate rehabilitative care. Provision for therapeutic services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy have also been made in these centres. Parental counseling and training as well as peer counseling are an integral part of these centres with a view to enabling the parents to cope up with the needs of children with disabilities. School readiness facility at these centres aims at improving physical and cognitive ability including communication and language skills of the children with disabilities for enabling them to live an independent life.

7. On this occasion, Hon'ble Minister, SJ&E also released a Handbook on Early Intervention which covers extensive areas relevant for early intervention through appropriate rehabilitative therapies to help children with disabilities to have secure and independent lives. The book will serve as a tool for the States/UTs to conceive the setting up of such centres at State/District level for widening the network of Cross-Disability Early Intervention Centres across the country.

8. Principal Secretaries/Secretaries dealing with empowerment of persons with disabilities of the concerned States/UTs as well as State Commissioners for PwDs from these States or their representatives attended the inaugural function and also had the occasion to interact with Hon'ble Ministers regarding this initiative. This virtual inauguration also had walk-through video as well as glimpses of these centres shown to give an idea about the kinds of facilities and services being provided at these centres.
