

SLOVENIAN POLICIES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

1.1. Education of Children with Special Needs and the Legislation Covering This Area

Elementary School Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, number 12/1996)

specifies special terms that children with special needs must have during their upbringing and education.

Elementary School is obligatory for all children, including for children with special needs and free of charge.

Placement of Children with Special Needs Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, number 58/2011) puts children with special needs into the following groups:

- 1.) mentally disordered children,
- 2.) blind and visually impaired children,
- 3.) deaf and hearing- impaired children,
- 4.) speech and language impaired children,
- 5.) physically impaired children,
- 6.) children with a long-term disease,
- 7.) children with learning disabilities in certain areas,
- 8.) children with autistic disorder and
- 9.) children with behavioural and personality disorders.

Mentally disordered children differ:

- 1.) children with a mild mental disorder,
- 2.) children with a moderate mental disorder,
- 3.) children with a serious mental disorder and
- 4.) children with a heavy mental disorder.

Placement of Children with Special Needs Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, number 58/2011) specifies the types of programmes that educate children with special needs:

- 1.) a programme for preschool children with certain adjustments regarding its implementation and additional professional help,
- 2.) modified programme for preschool children,
- 3.) education programme with modified implementation and additional professional help,
- 4.) modified education programme with educational standards at an equal level,
- 5.) modified education programme with educational standards at a lower level,
- 6.) special education programme,
- 7.) tutoring programme.

On the first level, The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia is the one that directs children with special needs into one of the types of programmes.

The directing procedure for the children with special needs starts:

- 1.) with their parents' written request,
- 2.) with a request of a person older than 15 (an older minor),
- 3.) in an Educational Institution and a Social Welfare Institution, where a child is or will be included. These institutions estimate if it is necessary to check the suitability of the programme the child is included in.

On the basis of the Placement of Children with Special Needs Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, number 58/2011), the school or the institution is obliged to make an **individualized education programme** for every child with special needs but not later than 30 days after the child's inclusion.

Basic Education Features of a Special Education Programme

A Special Education Programme consists of several levels and continues even when a student turns eighteen.

A special education programme consists of several parts (Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia, 2005):

- the obligatory part which lasts 9 years (the first, second and third level of a special programme);
- the possibility of extension which lasts no more than three years (the fourth level of a special programme);
- advanced (not obligatory for students) part which lasts no more than three years (the fifth level of a special programme);
- training for life and work which lasts no more than five years.

The aims of the obligatory, advanced and non-obligatory parts of the programmes are:

to encourage child's development in cognitive, physical, emotional, mental, linguistic and social areas. The aim is also to get the pupils take care of their health and independent life, to gain basic knowledge and skills and to get them accustomed to active, partly individual inclusion into the environment.

The programme training for life and work is oriented into training for life, training for work and gradual inclusion into work. A group of people with a moderate, serious and heavy disorder is extremely heterogeneous. Working with them goes on at all levels according to individually based programmes for every student. It is also necessary that the students, based on their abilities, actively include themselves in the formation of an individualised programme. (Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia, 2005).

1.2. Legal Rights from the Area of Social Welfare

Act Concerning Social Care of Mentally and Physically Handicapped Persons (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, number 41/83) specifies that this act regulates the forms of social protection for:

- 1.) **a moderate, serious and heavy mentally** as well as
- 2.) **severely physically disabled people who cannot be trained for independent life and work.**

It is defined that their impairment appeared in childhood or youth period before they turned eighteen or in the period of regular schooling but not longer than their twenty-six years of age.

The forms of social protection based on this act are:

- 1.) **special care in general or special social institutions;** We distinguish between:
 - day-care,
 - temporary care with accommodation and care in the institution,
 - permanent care with accommodation and care in the institution,
- 2.) **care by some other family**
- 3.) **a disability benefit and**
- 4.) **a bonus for care and help of others.**

People have the right to a disability benefit when they turn eighteen or when the disability is confirmed after turning eighteen. This status (age 18) helps students with moderate, serious and severe mental disorders to get included into a Protective Work Centre – the age limit being 18.

Social Security Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, number 36/04) specifies social and day-care services which include **leading, day-care and employment on special terms**. According to the Rules on norms and standards of

social services (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, number 125/04), the right to service leading, day-care and employment on special terms have **mentally disordered adults and adults with several disorders**.

According to a mental disorder, the Rules list that these can be people with a mild, moderate, serious or heavy mental disorder. Adults with several disorders are people with a mental disorder which is accompanied by a personal disorder or a serious sensory disturbance. These can also be people with an inborn or injury caused physical disability, central or peripheral nervous system (head injuries).

The service of **leading, day-care and employment on special terms** is carried out by **Protective Work Centres**. They offer their people basic and social care. The basic care includes accommodation, food, technical care and transport, while the social care includes leading, day-care and employment on special terms.

Leading consists of preparation, implementation and control of individual programmes, help in solving personal and social distress, up keeping and care for social contacts and inclusion in the environment, keeping up and gaining independence and cognitive skills, cooperation with the protégé and his or her relatives, cooperation with other professional workers and organisations and organisation of creative activities for protégés.

Day-care consists of control and support. People get the feeling of being safe, they are offered help at maintaining personal hygiene and performing physical needs; help with motorical skills, walking, getting dressed and undressed, communication and orientation; protection at arrivals and departures and escort at potential transfers.

Employment on special terms involves such types of work, employment and creative activities which enable protégés the up keeping of gained and broadening of new

knowledge and working skills, working habits, providing conditions for safe work, induction to work, adjustment of working accessories and machines to the capabilities of users. Sale gathered assets from products or profit are meant for rewarding the beneficiaries and for a higher quality of work and living.

According to the legislation on education (Act Concerning Social Care of Mentally and Physically Handicapped Persons, Elementary School Act, Social Security Act, Rules on norms and standards of social services, further on as legislation), the students with a moderate, serious or heavy mental disorder have the following possibilities, when they finish their schooling:

- 1.) they can stay in their home environment and get included into one of the Protective Work Centres due to the implementation of leading, day-care and employment on special terms or
- 2.) they can get included into other forms of institutional day-care.

Since these are students with a moderate, serious or heavy mental disorder, the legislation gives them certain social and day-care adult rights.

Once the education is finished, the form of »social worries« and the leading of students change. When they turn eighteen they get the status of adult people, but regarding their impairment they still need a special social care. This one continues, but in a different way. It is adjusted to their changed needs. In practice this could mean that most of the former students get included into one of the Protective Work Centres.

The inclusion into a Protective Work Centre is possible when someone turns eighteen. This period still allows students to get educated, they still have this opportunity according to school legislation.