



Community Special School

Learning Together for Personal Success

PMLD

Pre-Formal Curriculum

References

Castle Woods School PMLD Curriculum

Vale of Eavesham School PMLD Curriculum

Routes for Learning: Qualifications and Curriculum Group, Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Wales (2006).

Quest for Learning: The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), Northern Ireland (updated 2014).

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PMLD Progression Pathways:

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Introduction and Rationale

Most curriculum frameworks, even those focusing on early development or designed for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, assume that children will follow a 'normal' pattern of development. There are few frameworks that have considered the complex needs of learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties and the interaction between the sensory impairments, motor disabilities and medical problems that many of them experience.

In addition, many linear or hierarchical assessments will be unable to detect the very subtle changes in behaviour shown by these learners, regardless of how many 'small steps' are provided. In real life, children's development and learning is not compartmentalised. A fit-for-purpose PMLD curriculum must take a more holistic view of learners and focus on how they learn.

Pupils with PMLD are at very early stages of development and it is more appropriate for them to access a more focused curriculum starting at their individual needs rather than a curriculum written for typically developing children.

Definition

There are a number of definitions of PMLD but the official DfE definition of children with PMLD is:

"Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have complex learning needs. In addition to very severe learning difficulties, pupils have other significant difficulties, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition. Pupils require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care. They are likely to need sensory stimulation and a curriculum broken down into very small steps. Some pupils communicate by gesture, eye pointing or symbols, others by very simple language. Their attainments are likely to remain in the early P scale range (P1-P4) throughout their school."

Department of Education (2005) later adopted by Department for Education (2012)

Within this group we include all pupils with profound learning disabilities, whether or not they are wheelchair users or have sensory impairments. It is possible that there are other pupils who do not have their 'primary need' defined as PMLD and will require teaching and learning environments and approaches suited to pupils with PMLD (Hobbs, 2012). It does not include pupils who are wheelchair users who have severe or moderate learning difficulties. We consider our PMLD pupils to be operating within a *pre-formal* phase of learning.

Although the philosophy across the whole school is one that applies just as much to pupils with PMLD as to their more able peers, we felt it was helpful to identify some of the issues specific to this group to ensure that everyone is knowledgeable about how to meet their needs. This is a group whose needs are often unfamiliar to staff beginning their career in special education.

Guiding Principles

The principles guiding our approach to the PMLD curriculum align with both the 'Routes for Learning' and 'Quest for Learning' frameworks which are:

- Provide a whole picture of the learner and the learning process;
- Focus on the learner's abilities, not disabilities;
- Provide a process-based assessment and look at the relationship between the learner and the learner's environment;
- Enable the learner, family and allied services to participate in the assessment process;
- Ensure that staff undertaking the assessment have a high regard for relationships and support interactive approaches;
- Ensure that the main purpose of assessing a learner is to enable them to make the best possible progress in developing skills, knowledge and understanding;
- Empower staff and parents/carers, value all sources of knowledge about the learner, and share and feedback information in a clear and helpful format (this allows accurate judgements and promotes consistency between staff and others assessing the learner);

- Support teachers and others to seek evidence of understanding and help them to focus on priorities for future learning; and
- Identify and support emerging skills, knowledge and understanding.

Planned Progression

We passionately believe that the progress of our pupils should not be left to chance. Although progress may look different for our PMLD pupils there are still some key considerations as pupils progress through the chronological key stages of the education system.

1. Introducing new skills, knowledge, understanding and increasing the breadth of curriculum content
2. Creating opportunities to consolidate, maintain and generalise skills/concepts
3. Providing greater opportunities for creativity/experiential learning and experience of a wider range of teaching/learning styles and methods
4. Increasing learner participation in the learning process by including opportunities for control over the environment
5. Extending learning contexts to include more age appropriate situations, wider range of people and environments
6. Providing opportunities to practise skills and apply knowledge in practical situations with increasing independence, in preparation for adulthood

Curriculum Areas

Pupils with PMLD will have a curriculum with the four main areas: *Communication, Cognition, Physical Development and Personal Care and Independence Skills (Self-Help)*

Each area will have its own Programme for Learning within which pupils will have a range of opportunities.

Progression Pathways

Each Programme for Learning is supported by our PMLD Progression Pathways. Whilst we recognise that for pupils with PMLD working with the pre-formal phase of learning progress may look very different to that of pupils working in the semi-formal (P4 to P8) or formal (NC1 and above) of learning, we do acknowledge the need to support their transition between chronologically organised key stages in their education. Our PMLD Progression Pathways provide the necessary structure within which to support pupils' progress to adulthood:

Assessment

This summary of the PMLD assessment strategy forms part of the school's overall assessment strategy (please refer to the Assessment Overview, Assessment Cycle and Assessment and Attainment Continuum).

"For those individuals who consistently fail to show progress on conventional assessments, a different model of progress is required. It is not that these individuals cannot make progress, but we would argue that the instruments by which progress is measured do not suit the people whose abilities are being measured,"

Barber and Goldbart (1998)

Our PMLD assessment is multi-faceted such is the complexity of PMLD progress. In addition, all pupils have an agreed *Individual Learning Plan* that is compiled in collaboration with pupils, parents and teachers, as well as other allied professionals where appropriate. This is a fluid plan that changes as the needs of the pupils change. It is reviewed and amended on at least 3 occasions every year.

Linear Progress

Pupils' linear progress is assessed using the *B-Squared* assessment tool which enables us to record and assess pupils' small steps across the curriculum for P Levels. Pupils are set annual targets in key National Curriculum subjects (English, mathematics, science and PSHE). Progress in relation to these targets is analysed on a termly basis to determine whether pupils are making below expected progress, expected progress or above expected progress.

Lateral Progress

We aspire to meet the great challenge of 'quantifying the unquantifiable' in relation to the progress of PMLD pupils. We use the '*Quest for Learning*' assessment tool, which we have adapted to meet our specific requirements, to monitor pupils' lateral progress.

Communication Programme for Learning

Children at a very early stage of developing communication require people around them to be responsive to any attempts at communication. Interpreting behaviour as potentially meaningful is one important adult response. For example, a child might smile in during an activity and the adult interprets this response as meaning 'more, please', even if the child is not intentionally smiling to get 'more'. The child begins to get the idea that smiling results in getting more pleasurable experiences and eventually s/he will produce the smile to communicate 'more' intentionally. To be responsive, adults need to attend very carefully to each child and treat all behaviour as potentially communicative. This response may be to echo that behaviour back to the child, indicating that the 'communication' has been heard. For example, the child may bang the table. The adult bangs back 'saying' 'I hear you' and hopefully this will start a 'banging the table' conversation.

Some children will be more intentional in their communication but not yet able to use conventional language. At this level, children will be developing ways of indicating what they like and dislike. For example, the smile is now used intentionally to 'ask' for an activity to be repeated. Gestures might be used to request objects or just to 'comment' on something that can be seen. A responsive environment provided by staff should include a widening range of motivating activities upon which children can 'comment'.

Some children will be beginning to use conventional communication, understanding or even using a few single words such as 'more', 'finished' and perhaps names of familiar people and objects. Staff should encourage new words and meanings through a range of stimulating activities and providing the example of new words and phrases. Using single words or short phrases is important at this stage.

The programme of learning is divided into three areas:

1. Responding
2. Interacting
3. Communicating

The opportunities suggested are roughly in developmental order but should not be treated as steps to be mastered one after another.

1. Responding (to social events and activities, eg everyday activities, care routines, sensory stimuli)

Children should have opportunities to:

- Respond when basic needs and desires are met (eg: stop crying when discomfort is removed or relax when gently rocked)
- Respond to stimuli presented in on/off pattern (burst-pause) (eg: still, widen eyes, increased movement)
- Respond to nearby person (eg: still to sound of voice or search with eyes or increased movement)
- Respond to consistent and predictable social routines (offered in the same order in the same environment on a daily basis) (eg: by relaxing, stilling, widening eyes or mouth, increased movement)
- Respond to their own names (eg: stilling, turning, increased movement)
- Respond with consistent positive and negative reactions to a range of social activities (eg: smiling or turning head away)
- Respond to people talking around them (eg: by looking at the speaker or making sounds)
- Respond in different ways to familiar and unfamiliar adults
- Respond to familiar sounds and early words such as brrrm/ woof/ mum (eg: smile and locate sound)
- Respond to familiar sounds and words, showing understanding of their meaning (eg: look at 'mum' or the dog)

2. Interacting (with others)

Children should have opportunities to:

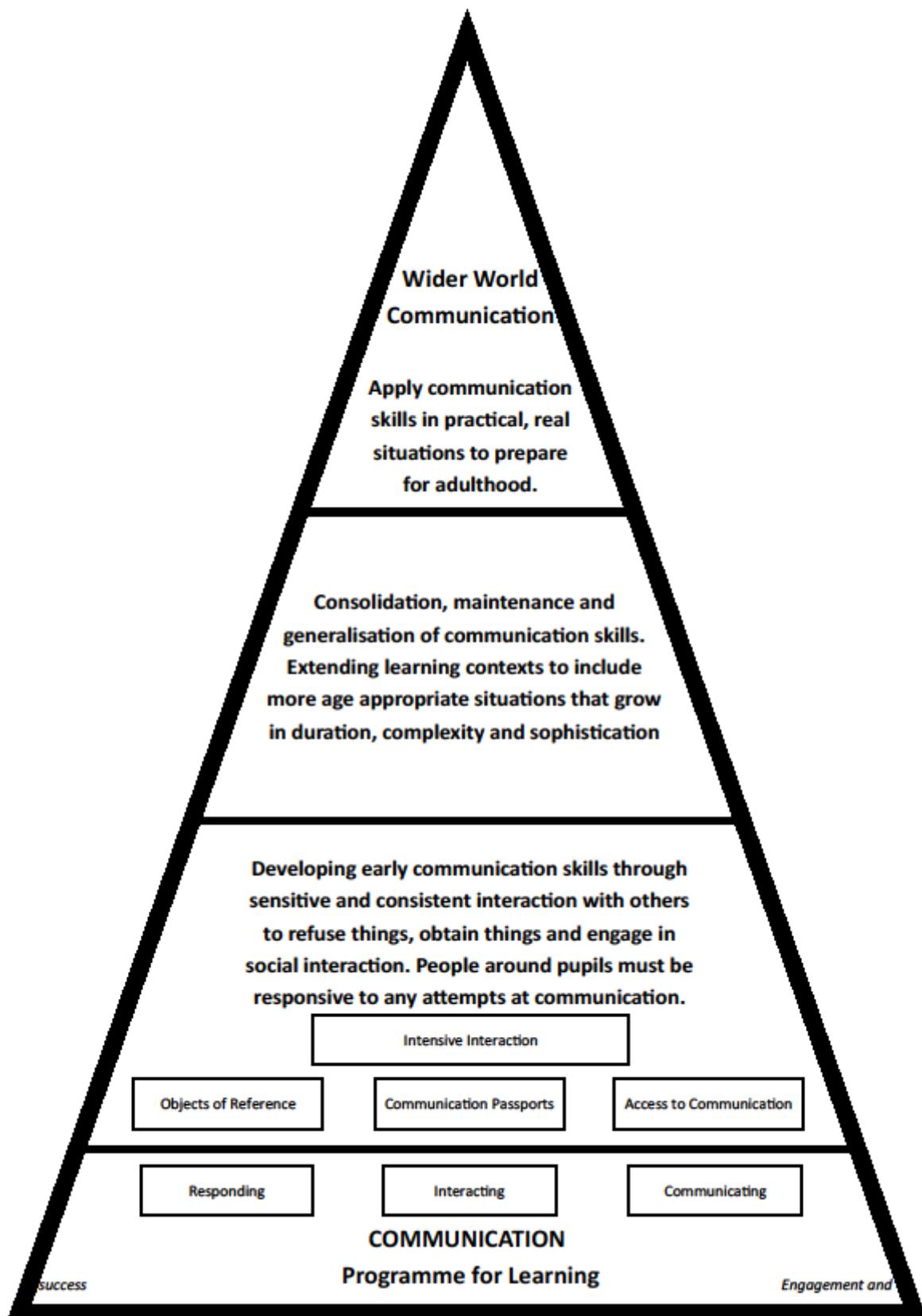
- Interact with familiar people (eg: smiling, turning, giving eye contact)
- Show they can work co-actively with familiar people (e.g.: join in 'row the boat' or allow their hands to be used for eating)
- Show anticipation of familiar social activities and events (eg: start to rock for 'row the boat' or lean forward to be lifted up)
- Show they have had enough of a social interaction (eg: by turning away or looking down)
- Show preference for particular people, objects and activities
- Respond with interest in the actions of others close by (eg: make eye contact, turn towards, reaching out, vocalising)
- Engage actively in familiar social activities and events (eg: join in action songs or hold up arms for coat)
- Share joint attention in an object or activity (eg: looks at object and at person or looks where person is pointing if object close by)
- Actively seek out attention from others (eg: vocalise or reach out)
- Actively play with another person (eg: hand person a toy or pull at the person's hands)
- Lead an interaction game (eg: start 'Row the boat' or rolling a ball backwards and forwards)

3. Communicating

Children should have opportunities to:

- Show preferences for objects, activities and events (eg: responding with interest to those they like and turning away from those they don't)
- Indicate 'more' and 'no more' consistently through their responses to objects, activities and events (eg: looking expectant or smiling to indicate 'more' and pushing away or moving away to indicate 'no more')
- Communicate a choice of object or activity (eg: by making sounds, gestures or pointing, giving picture as in PECS)
- Attract someone's attention (eg: by making sounds or gestures)
- Make simple meaningful gestures (eg: pointing or using simple signs, photographs)
- Use their voices to join in a 'conversation' (eg: babbling)
- Attempt simple words and phrases in imitation (eg: mumma, woof, all gone, bye bye, more)
- Use a few words appropriately (eg: more, names, yes, no, mumma – whatever is appropriate for that child)

Communication Progression Pathway



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Cognition Programme for Learning

Children at a very early stage of development need people around them who can help them to explore and interpret the world. They have difficulty in making sense of that world and need many opportunities to handle and test out objects, look for patterns and sequences in experiences and generally extend their focus from the immediate to things further away. Many children with PMLD have physical or sensory impairments that undermine their ability to discover things for themselves and have even more need for other people to assist them to explore and develop understanding. Staff need to be very inventive in providing alternative ways of exploring. For example, a child who is blind and physically disabled may need whole body experiences such as rolling on autumn leaves or being swung in a blanket rather than having toys placed in the hand or experiencing hand over hand painting. Hand UNDER hand can be useful as well. The adult does the activity with the child's hand lying on top so the activity can be felt.

Children at this very early stage need to experience the same activities over and over again if they are going to be able to learn from them. It may be helpful to find a dozen activities that the child responds to and repeat those on a daily basis, in the same order every day. Using an on-off or burst-pause pattern with each activity can help the child begin to anticipate what will happen next.

As children begin to develop the understanding that they can have an effect on their world, they can be offered a much wider range of activities and objects to explore. They are still likely to require plenty of repetition but may be able to cope with different examples of a similar activity. For example a child who is learning how to take objects out of containers could learn from removing a range of different objects from a range of different containers from the top, the side or the bottom.

When cause and effect has been established, early problem solving can begin. For example favourite objects can be hidden or containers can have fasteners to be opened or two steps may need to be completed to find the object. Enabling problem solving for children with physical and sensory impairments can be difficult and is likely to involve technology. Again staff will need to be inventive to provide activities that get children to think.

The programme of learning is divided into 4 areas:

1. Awareness,
2. Exploration,
3. Control and Early Problem Solving
4. Sequence and Pattern

The opportunities suggested are roughly in developmental order but should not be treated as steps to be mastered one after another.

1. Awareness (of stimuli - people, objects and activities - All functional senses should be used)

Children should have opportunities to:

- Recognise an obvious change happening very close to self (eg: stills when hand is massaged or when sees a bright flashing light)
- Recognise when a stimulus starts and stops (eg: stills, moves limbs, turns after the stimuli start or stop)
- Accept stimuli for an increasing amount of time (eg: will hold objects or allow feet to be in the foot spa)
- Respond to a widening range of stimuli (eg: turns to a range of flashing objects)
- Anticipate stimuli that occur over and over again (eg: smile before being pushed on the swing after several pushes)
- Respond to a range of stimuli that are quieter/ less obvious (eg: smile at quiet singing)
- Attend to stimuli further away (eg: hears music a few feet away or smells lunch as the trolley comes in)
- Transfer attention from one stimulus to another (eg: look at jumping dog and when it finishes look at moving car)
- Attend to stimuli in a busy classroom (eg: watch another child moving around)
- Locate a specific stimulus against a busy background (eg: find favourite toy in a box of several toys or turn to name in a noisy room)

2. Exploration (of objects, materials and substances - all parts of the body should be used)

Children should have opportunities to:

- Use their senses to register interesting events around them (eg: listen to drum, watch moving toy, touch gloop)
- Locate moving stimuli (eg: track a florescent ball or moves head to sniff perfume as it passes from one side to the other)
- Turns to objects and sounds that are activated but in one place (eg: turns head to locate flashing light)
- Make things happen when they move randomly (eg: the space blanket crackles when the child wriggles or arm movement activates a hanging bell)
- Activate toys that provide an interesting effect randomly and without connecting the cause to the effect (eg: pats a BigMac switch and something motivating happens or kicks the keyboard and sounds happen)

3. Control (of objects and materials)

Children should have opportunities to:

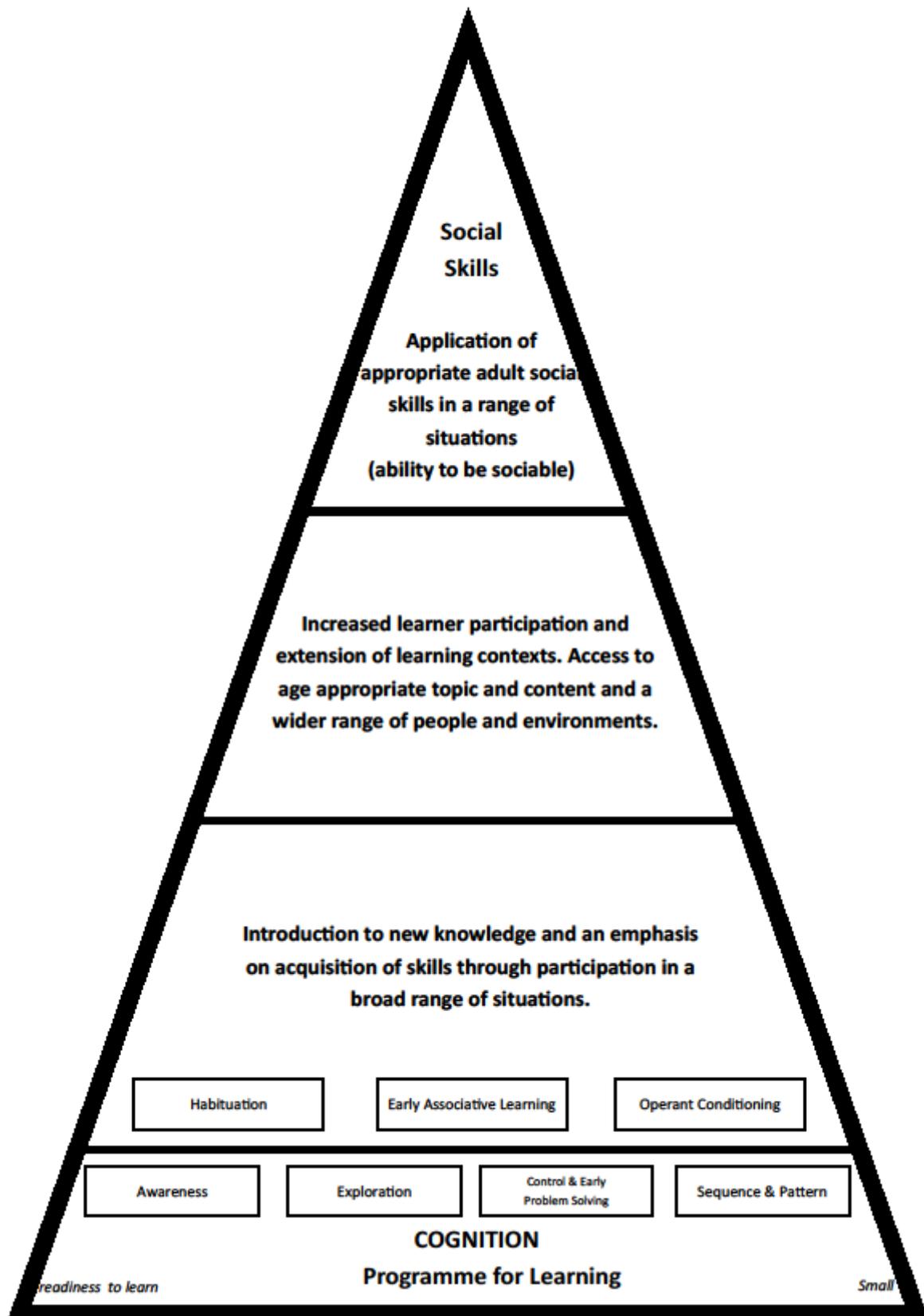
- Make things move deliberately with gross movement (eg: knock mobile, kick bells swish water)
- Make things move deliberately with finer movements (eg whole hand or head to activate switch or swipe objects that give a strong reward)
- Persist in making simple toys do something (eg: keep swiping wobble toys or pressing a switch to keep the toy active)
- Operate a toy that requires a single action (eg: button on Jack-in-the-box, switch for bubble tube)
- Activate toys deliberately, using different movements for different toys (eg: shaking bells and banging drum)
- Shift attention between different objects/ actions (eg: different actions on an activity centre)
- Manipulate objects purposely (eg: empty and fill containers, stacking and building blocks)
- Press buttons to make toy work (eg: keyboard, musical toys)
- Look for favourite objects when sees them hidden (eg: toy in box, under material)
- Look for favourite objects in a box of similar items (not deliberately hidden)
- Open containers to find objects (eg: lift lid, press buttons, pull top off)
- Use objects and materials according to their function (eg: brush for hair, shoes on feet, paint on paper)

4. Sequence and Pattern

Children should have opportunities to:

- Take turns in repetitive games where adult stops to wait for a response (eg: Intensive Interaction, action songs)
- Anticipate routine events – that is see a pattern in the event (eg: action songs, eating, being hoisted)
- Recognise familiar places (eg: look up at the lights in sensory room, go straight to a favourite object in the hall)
- Explore objects that are used in familiar routines (eg: spoon, cup, hair brush, drum)
- Take turns actively (eg: rolling ball to partner, passing objects backwards and forwards)
- Choose between two or more motivating toys
- Respond to object cue (eg: sits down for a drink when sees the cup)
- Select appropriate resources for a familiar routine (eg: spoon for eating, ball for game, shoe after soft play)
- Assist in putting away resources used in a familiar routine
- Operate toys that require more than one action to complete (eg: bubble tube controlled by latched switch, CD player knobs)
- Operate toys that need to be pulled apart and put together (eg: stickle bricks, Duplo)
- Follow objects that move within the toy (eg: cars down a slope, balls in a tube)
- Put objects into a container one at a time (eg: balls down a tube or helter skelter)
- Select preferred objects from a mixture of objects (eg: in a box)
- Look at the bottom of a sliding/ tumbling toy for the object to appear when it can't be seen travelling down)
- Use objects that require two or more actions to complete (eg: posting shapes or simple form boards)
- Use early problem solving for a familiar event (eg: selecting a car or ball to roll down the slope rather than a piece of material or paper)
- Solve simple problems where understanding the pattern is important (eg: when there are 4 pegs to a toy and 3 are in place, look for the fourth if out of sight)

Cognition Progression Pathway



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Physical Programme for Learning

Children who are physically impaired or who are still learning to move need lots of opportunities to move around both supported and freely. They may require a range of equipment for lying, sitting, standing, walking. They may be having active treatment from a physiotherapist and/ or an occupational therapy and/or be on an ongoing treatment programme. Always consult with therapists and ensure that you have physical/ health targets that have been agreed between all the people who work with each child.

The programme is based on the principles and practice of MOVE, functional therapy, Halliwick Swimming and generally learning to achieve as much physical independence as possible.

The programme of learning is divided into four main areas:

1. Body awareness
2. Fine motor movement
3. Gross motor movement
4. Mobility

1. Body Awareness

Progress within body awareness should begin with children allowing a range of different things to happen to their bodies. It is hoped that passive 'allowing' will become more active 'enjoying'. The ultimate aim is that they will be able to move their bodies voluntarily and with control. Remember that in this programme, the emphasis is on the physical movement, not on the understanding of the use of that movement.

As part of the physical programme, children should have a range of different positions in which they can comfortably work. Consult with the physiotherapists on the positions suitable for individual children and the length of time they should be in that position.

In the programme the phrase 'show awareness of...' requires a record of what the child actually does to indicate they are aware that something is happening to them as this will vary from child to child. Some might move their eyes, some their limbs, others might stiffen or become more relaxed. Please make a record of what each child does to show that they are aware of being moved.

Children should have opportunities to:

- Show awareness of massage of hands/ feet/ arms/ legs (maybe with aromatherapy oils), and various sensory stimulation on different parts of the body (eg: foot spa, silk material, fan)
- Show awareness of a range of total body movements (eg: swinging, floating, rolling)
- Show awareness of a range of different body orientations (eg: flat, bunched up, upside down)
- Show awareness of a range of pace of movement (eg: slow, quick, jerky, smooth)
- Show awareness of their limbs to be moved passively (eg: stretching in exercises or as part of action songs)
- Show awareness objects in designated spaces to touch different parts of the body when moving even if only slightly (eg: Lillie Neilson Little Room)
- Move their hands and arms with hand-under-hand support/ hand-over-hand support and/ or co-actively
- Show awareness of body awareness songs and games (eg: Heads, Shoulders Knees and Toes or Round and round the Garden)
- Actively move as part of body awareness activities

2. Fine Motor Movement

This part of the programme can be divided into 4 areas: *reaching, grasping, releasing and manipulating*.

The programme is about physical development only (in relation to arms and hands) and not about how and when to use these movement, although the child's developing cognition and communication will enable them to use their movements intentionally to achieve specific ends.

Reaching

Children should have opportunities to:

- Bring their hands into midline (this might be easier initially when children are lying on their sides where gravity can help to bring the top hand down to meet the lower hand)
- Have objects of various kinds placed in their hands
- Touch objects of various kinds with their hands
- Touch objects in midline/ on left/ on right
- Touch objects with one hand/ with two hands
- Bend and straighten their arms
- Reach for objects just out of reach – midline/ right/left – one hand/ both hands
- Reach for objects and bring them close (not necessarily grasping them) – one hand/ both hands/ midline/ left/ right
- Reach for objects and grasp them (whole hand)
- Reach for objects and grasp them (pincer grasp)

Grasping

Children should have opportunities to:

- Swipe objects (eg: hanging on activity arch)
- Open and close their hands
- Close their hands round an object
- Locate a hand-sized object and try to grasp it
- Hold hand-sized objects with palmer grip (increasing amount of time)
- Squeeze objects in the whole hand
- Use whole hand to press switch
- Pick up objects using a whole hand grasp
- Pick up and put down objects with several fingers and thumb
- Locate small objects and try to grasp them
- Hold objects using a pincer grip (increasing amount of time)
- Move at the wrist whilst holding objects
- Rotate arms (hands up and hands down) while holding objects
- Hold onto a bar (eg: to hold themselves up) (increasing amount of time)
- Hold objects and put them in contact with another (eg: bang two objects together, put objects in a box, bang drum with stick)

Releasing

Children should have opportunities to:

- Allow people to take objects from their hands
- Let go of hand-sized objects
- Put down objects using a whole hand grasp
- Pass objects from hand to hand
- Hold objects with two hands, stabilise them in one and take other hand away
- Rotate arms and drop objects

Manipulating

Children should have opportunities to:

- Take objects to their mouths
- Use their hands to manipulate objects (eg: shaking, banging, pushing, throwing)
- Use whole hand/ several fingers at once to press switches/ buttons/ keys on keyboard
- Use index finger to press buttons or poke objects
- Grasp felt tips/ brushes etc (eg: to make marks)
- Raise arms and drop objects into containers
- Post objects into containers (eg: posting box)
- Place objects in specific places (eg: simple formboard/ jigsaw) (increasing precision)

3. Gross Motor Movement

This part of the programme can be divided into 3 areas: *sitting, standing and walking*.

Sitting

Children should have opportunities to:

- Maintain head control
- Move their heads in all directions
- Sit in a fully supported position
- Sit in a chair with sides
- Sit on a classroom chair (no sides)
- Sit on a range of different kinds of chairs
- Sit on a stool, edge of the bed, PE form (no back or sides)
- Move their limbs in a sitting position
- Move their trunks in a sitting position
- Pivot round sideways in a sitting position
- Push or pull themselves to sitting from lying

Standing

Children should have opportunities to:

- Stand fully supported
- Stand with hands held or holding on
- Stand unsupported
- Moves their limbs whilst standing
- Pivot whilst standing (with less and less support)
- Pull themselves to standing
- Stand up from a chair or stool
- Stand up from the floor
- Sit down with hands being held or holding on
- Sit down on chair or stool
- Lower themselves to the floor from standing

Walking

Children should have opportunities to:

- Walk full supported (in gait trainer)
- Walk with two hands held
- Walk with one hand held
- Walk unsupported
- Take steps backwards (eg: to sit on a chair or toilet)
- Change directions when walking (supported)
- Change directions when walking (unsupported)
- Walk on different surfaces
- Walk up and down slopes
- Walk up and down steps

4. Mobility

This part of the programme can be divided into:

Indoor Mobility

Children should have opportunities to:

- Crawl or hotch
- Slide on back/ tummy (maybe in a blanket)
- Roll (eg: across a mat)
- Rock/ row backwards and forwards (eg; Row Your Boat)
- Push and pull (people and objects)
- Bounce (on trampoline)
- Throw and roll objects (balls, beanbags)
- Catch objects (from bigger to smaller)
- Move forwards and backwards
- Move in and out of objects (eg: tunnel, den, tent)
- Move slowly and quickly (maybe being pulled in a blanket at different speeds)
- Move over and under objects/ onto and off objects

Outdoor Mobility

Many of the indoor mobility opportunities can be offered outdoors as well so this section includes the sorts of opportunities usually experienced outdoors. Again consult with physiotherapists when working with children with physical disabilities. Some children will need full support to be able to join in the activities.

Even though children with PMLD may not be able to engage fully in outdoor and adventurous experiences, there is usually a way in which they can be supported to be involved (eg: wheelchair abseiling, sailing, horse riding, pony trap, canoeing, zip wire)

Children should have opportunities to:

- Use playground/ adventure equipment to swing, slide, rotate, climb, ride
- Ride bikes (eventually pushing the pedals themselves)
- Move over a range of different outdoor surfaces (eg: woodland trail, shopping precinct, grass, shingle, cobbles)

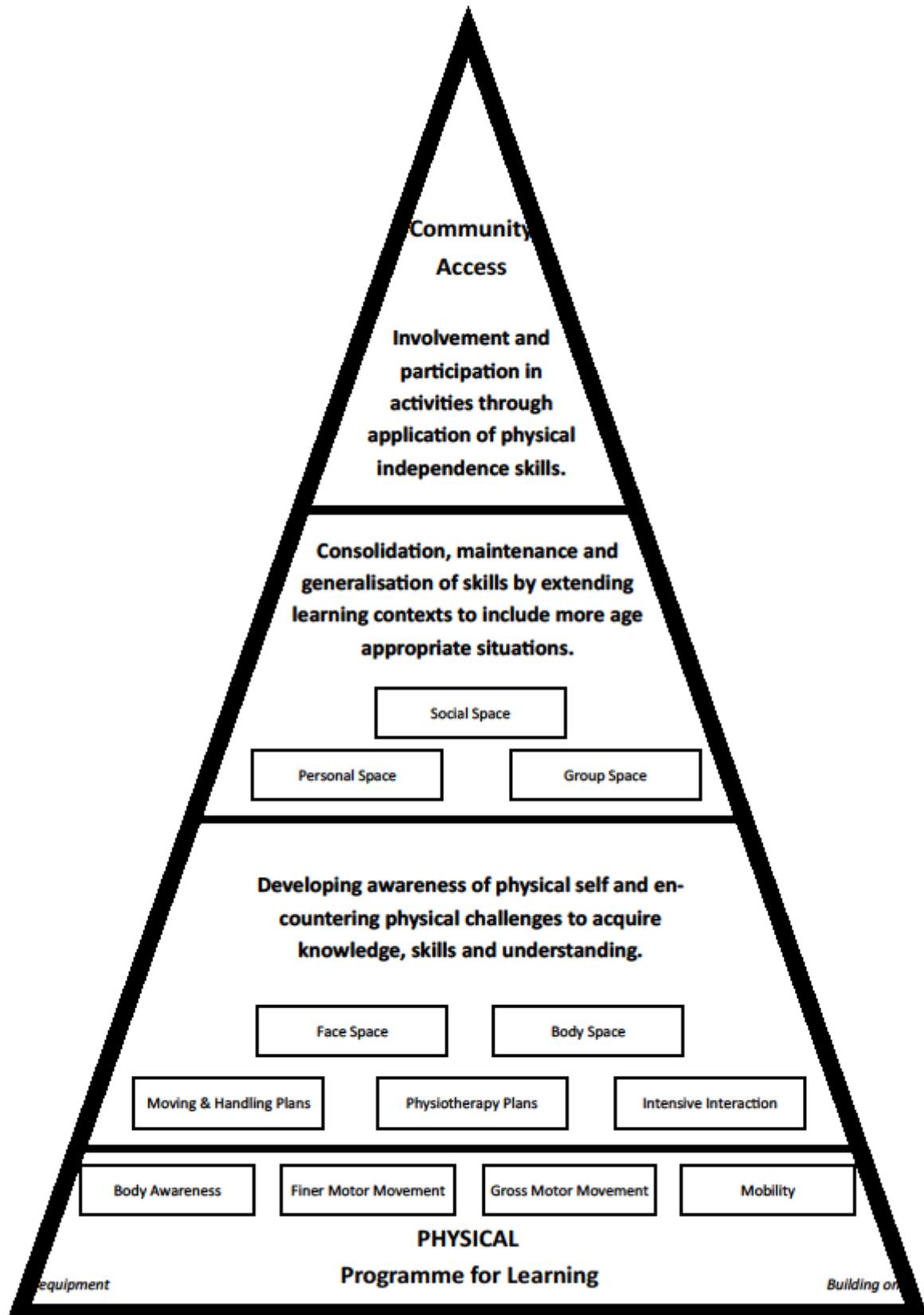
Water Mobility

Many children with PMLD benefit from the weightlessness experienced in water and can move more freely than they can on land. Many of the movements in standing and walking can be practised in the water. The programme is mainly about the specifics of water mobility.

Children should have opportunities to:

- Enter the pool as independently as possible
- Get out of the pool as independently as possible
- Achieve vertical balance in the water
- Back float
- Move from back to vertical
- Rotate in the water – from back to front and front to back
- Control unwanted rotations
- Move arms in the water
- Move legs in the water
- Jump when in the water
- Crawl in shallow water
- Walk in deep water
- Propel themselves in the water

Physical Progression Pathway



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Personal Care & Independence Programme for Learning

In this area of the curriculum, children with PMLD need to learn the skills that typical children learn at home before starting school. Learning to use the toilet, clean your teeth, get dressed and undressed, eat with a spoon are all vitally important areas and not be considered as activities to be completed as quickly as possible between lessons. Children should be given sufficient time to learn to become as independent as possible in all these personal care areas. For example, going swimming has excellent opportunities to practice skills in undressing and dressing and showering as well as swimming skills. The lesson should encompass all of these and sufficient time should be allowed for them all to take place.

Although the skills in this programme can be performed without understanding, it is only with understanding that independence is achieved. Some children will always need to be prompted and supported, not just because of a physical disability but because their understanding of the purpose of the activity is limited.

The skills are listed roughly developmentally but when they are being taught, each (eg: drinking from a cup) needs to be task analysed and then taught step by step. It is helpful to use 'forward chaining' or 'backward chaining' as a teaching approach. 'Forward chaining' implies starting from step 1 and continuing to step 2 etc. 'Backward chaining' implies starting with the last step then the last but one step so that the child completes the task every time.

The Programme of Learning is divided into 6 areas:

1. Eating and drinking
2. Dressing and undressing
3. Using the toilet
4. Cleaning teeth
5. Brushing hair
6. Washing and showering

1. Eating and Drinking

Some children will be tube fed and this section will not apply to them. Please refer to the speech and language therapist for advice on eating and drinking/ swallowing and the occupational therapist for advice on eating and drinking implements.

Children should have opportunities to:

- Show awareness of food and drink (eg: by moving the food around the mouth and swallowing)
- Being helpful when being supported to eat and drink (eg: by opening the mouth for the spoon/ cup or turning to spoon/ cup)
- Eat and drink pureed food/ thickened drink
- Drink a variety of drinks (eg: milk, squash, tea)
- Eat mashed food (usually each food mashed separately)
- Eat chopped food
- Eat finger food
- Use a spoon to eat (maybe move on to using a fork)
- Use a two handled cup to drink (probably first with a lid, then perhaps a slanted cup before progressing to a conventional open cup)
- Use a single handled cup to drink
- Use a beaker (with no handles) to drink

2. Dressing and Undressing

Physically disabled children are likely always to need physical support with undressing and dressing.

Children should have opportunities to:

- Show awareness of being dressed and undressed (eg: by eye or limb movement)
- Be helpful when being undressed and dressed (eg: relax limbs)
- Offer limbs (eg: when putting on a coat/ trousers/ shoes)
- Finish taking off clothes once the process has been started by an adult (eg: wriggle out of shoes once they have been loosened/ pull sock off toes after they have been pulled down)

- Take off their clothes (probably starting with shoes and coats and progressing to other items of clothing)
- Pull up pants/ trousers (eg: after using the toilet)
- Put on their clothes when handed the correct item (probably starting with shoes and coats)
- Put clothes on the right part of the body in the correct orientation
- Put their clothes on a peg/ on a chair or in a locker
- Put clothes on in a sensible order (eg: socks before shoes)
- Choose the correct clothes for an activity (eg: coat to go outside, swimsuit for swimming)
- Put PE/ swimming kit into a bag
- Put socks together/ put shoes together
- Recognise basic clothing vocabulary/ sign/ symbol in context (probably coat and shoes)

3. Using the Toilet

Although the toilet section is mainly about urination and defecation, menstruation is also involved. Girls with PMLD are unlikely to show awareness of managing menstruation but adults need to be aware of possible mood changes and discomfort.

Children should have opportunities to:

- Show awareness of having their nappies changed (eg: by or limb eye movement)
- Be helpful when having their nappies changed (eg: relax limbs or lift bottom)
- Sit on potties or toilet seats regularly (usually after completing a toileting chart to find any patterns in times for urination or defecation)
- Transfer from chair to toilet or from standing to toilet
- Use toilet or potty appropriately if taken by an adult regularly
- Indicate the need to change their wet/soiled nappies (eg: cry with discomfort)
- Move to the changing table when shown their nappies
- Stand to have their nappies/ sanitary towels changed
- Recognise the word/ symbol/ sign 'toilet' in context
- Indicate a need to use the toilet (eg: go to the door or use sign/ symbol)
- Take themselves to the toilet when they need to use it
- Flush the toilet
- Shut the toilet door
- Complete the whole toilet sequence (probably with adult support and prompting each step)
- Wipe their bottoms

4. Cleaning Teeth

Children have opportunities to:

- Show awareness of teeth being cleaned (eg: by eye blinking, pulling a face)
- Be helpful when their teeth are being cleaned (eg: opening mouth)
- Hold an electric toothbrush in their mouth but probably only on front teeth
- Use a conventional brush (or electric toothbrush) (probably on front teeth first, gradually learning to include all teeth)
- Put the paste on the toothbrush (beginning with just squeezing the toothpaste but then learning to twist the top off and on)
- Swill and spit with mouthwash

5. Brushing Hair

Children should have opportunities to:

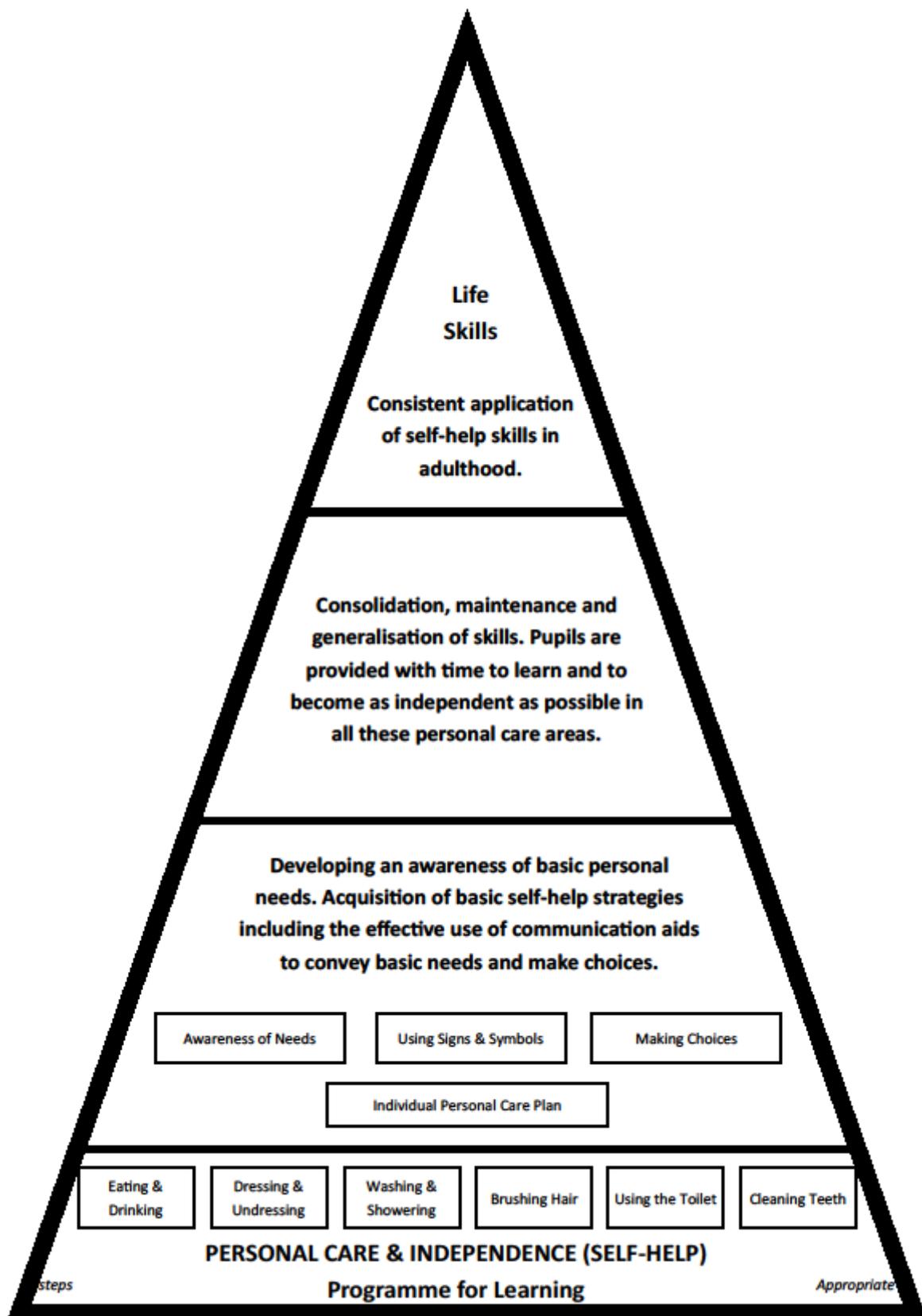
- Show awareness of having their hair brushed (eg: eye blinking or head turning)
- Be helpful when their hair is being brushed (eg: holding head up)
- Hold hairbrushes (but not necessarily brush their hair)
- Brush someone else's hair or the hair/ fur of a toy
- Brush their own hair (probably one side first and then learning to brush all over)

6. Washing and Showering

Children should have opportunities to:

- Show awareness of being washed and dried - usually hands, face and bottom – or being showered (eg: by eye or limb movement)
- Be helpful when being washed and dried/ showered (eg: hold out hands or turn up face)
- Wash and dry their hands in the sink / shower
- Wash and dry their faces in the sink/ shower
- Wash and dry their bodies whilst taking a shower
- Complete the whole showering sequence (probably with adult supporting and prompting each step)

Personal Care & Independence Progression Pathway



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