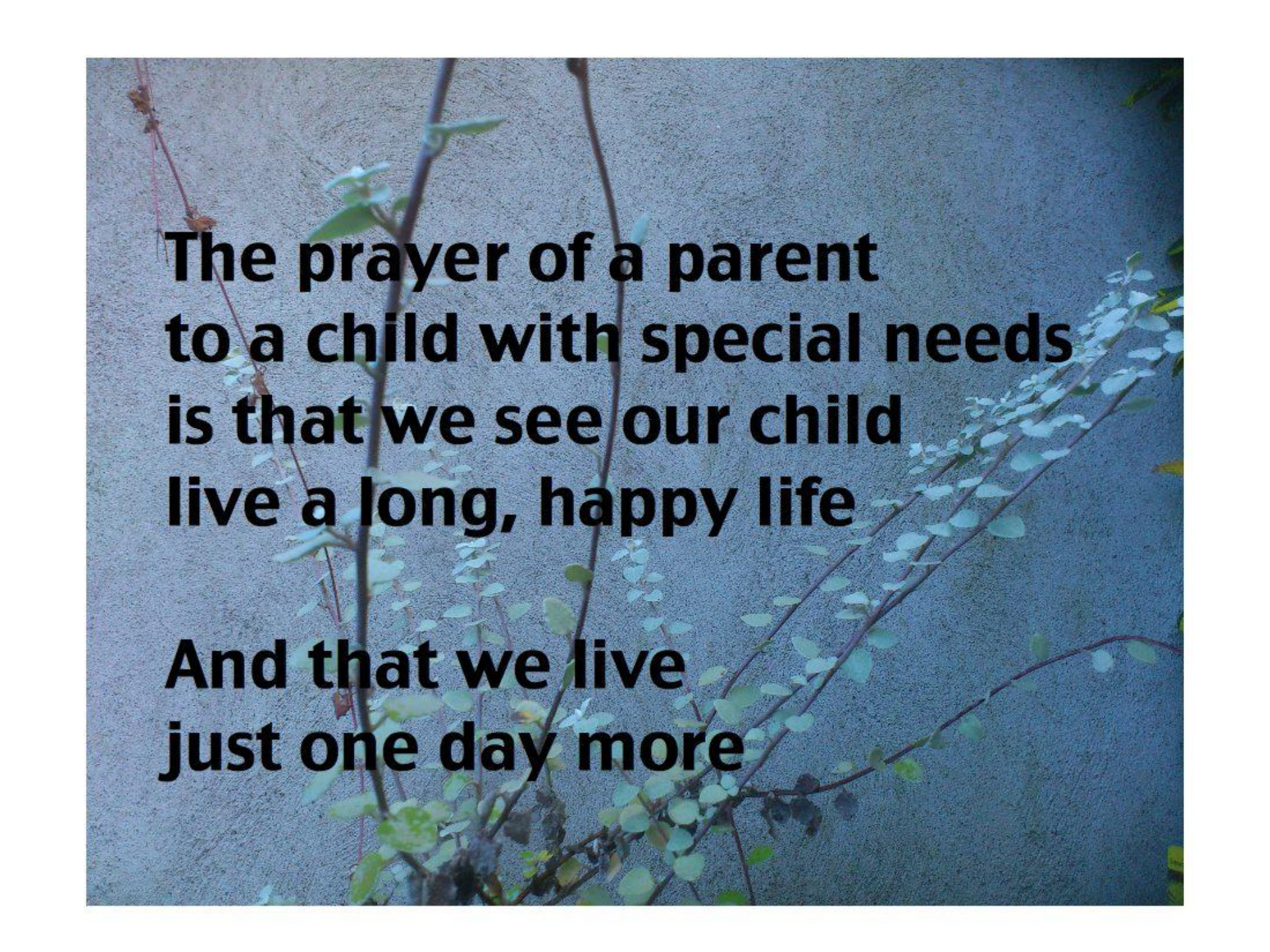




Vulnerabilities of Children with Disabilities - Need for Special Provisions

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**The prayer of a parent
to a child with special needs
is that we see our child
live a long, happy life**

**And that we live
just one day more**

Children with Disability and Special Needs

Disabilities/Impairments resulting in Special Needs

- **Visual impairment**
- **Speech impairment**
- **Hearing impairment**
- **Physical disabilities**
- **Cognitive-learning difficulties**
- **Intellectual disabilities**
- **emotional and behavioural difficulties.**



***But there lives inside a mind , a heart , a person
who wants to live life with dignity and respect .
BEING BORN WITH A DISABILITY IS NOT EQUAL TO
BEING BORN FROM A LESSER GOD.***

Why Children with disability are more vulnerable 1

- **Poor communication skills**
- **Limited sense of danger**
- **Lack of mobility**
- **Need for intimate care such as washing and toileting**
- **Reliance on adults for many of their needs - a variety of carers and care settings**

Why Children with disability are more vulnerable 2

- Need for attention, friendship or affection**
- Poor self-confidence and limited assertiveness**
- Fear of not being believed**
- Limited understanding of sexuality or sexual behaviour.**
- low self-esteem, feelings of isolation & powerlessness**

Right Attitude & Respectful Handling



Emotional development



Lesser behavioural issues



Holistic development

Key aspects of policy formulation

- **Schools and learning therapy centres should formulate Special guidelines to address specific safety needs for children with disabilities**
- **Parents/ guardians representative body should be included to provide inputs and participate in framing of such Special Guidelines.**

Guidelines should cover not just Schools but all Child Development Centre, therapy Centres or and stand alone Children Clinics run by trained or semi trained professionals / experts conducting therapy sessions with children including physical / cognitive / soft skill development.

To adapt safety skill lessons

- **Safety Skill Lessons should accordingly be adapted to meet the special needs of the children**
- **The main lessons being ;**
 - **Feeling Safe**
 - **Bullying**
 - **Touches**
 - **Telling and secrets**
 - **Strangers**

A Few Prevention Strategies by Handling Staff 1

- **Young people are enabled to develop an awareness of their own sexuality .**
- **Learn core words of body parts .**
- **Approach the child as a mentor , an advocate , as a partner ...look at her not her disability . *Its not a bad limb but a weak limb .***

A Few Prevention Strategies by Handling Staff 2

- **Do not depersonalize the child .**
- **Attitudes must change .**
- **We think it's a special child , a problem child ,may deserve punishment or it's a medical condition and its okay if the child shows on his body ; BRUISES , PINCH MARKS**
- **YELLS ,CRIES**

Some tools for imparting safety skills

Use what may work best

- ✓ **Role play**
- ✓ **Music**
- ✓ **Drama/ puppetry**
- ✓ **Poems**
- ✓ **Visual cues/ illustrations**
- ✓ **Social stories**

Safety Measures - 1

- **Classes / sessions should take place in unlocked classrooms which are accessible at all times.**
- **All sessions should be observable (either through CCTV, windows).**
- **For children who require assistance during toileting the minimum level of assistance required should be determined .Staff should be adequately trained regarding privacy, toileting and related issues. In the event that a child has a toilet accident, no matter how young he / she is he should be be changed in toilet alone**

Safety Measures - 2

- **No child should be subjected to any kind of physical aversive such as hitting, pushing, pulling hair, etc. If a child is put a room for calming down (isolation) that should not exceed 5 minutes**
- **No child will be subjected to verbal, physical or emotional abuse.**
- **A consent from parents about the strategies that would be used by the school/centre in case of a meltdown, again authorized by a trained special educator.**

Safety Measures - 3

- **Specific therapies requiring body touch should be undertaken as per specified protocol . At all times a female attendant should be present during the therapy hours .**
- **All schools and therapy centres will have an SOS number(s) of person to be contacted that will be displayed prominently in high traffic areas with the note: IF YOU FIND THAT YOUR SCHOOL / THERAPY CENTER IS NOT FOLLOWING THESE RULES, PLEASE CALL XXXXXXXXX AND REPORT.**
- **There should be a Zero tolerance policy towards these issues and to ensure a space free of any risks of abuse for special needs children .**

Key Recommendations

- **Training for professionals and support staff for safe handling of the children and identifying instances or potential of abuse .**
- **Develop a ‘Good Practice Guide for Therapists /Teachers /Caregivers ’ with special emphasis on Intimate care policy.**
- **A whistleblower policy to protect the identity and victimization of the reporting staff**
- **Awareness and sensitizing workshops not just for schools but Child Protection Workers (including Police and Social workers) on the different disabilities and corresponding handling requirements .**

THANK YOU



'EVEN A JOURNEY OF 10,000 MILES, STARTS WITH A STEP'

- LAO TZU

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