

WHY THE PINWHEEL?

A pinwheel does not move on its own.
It waits for the wind.

Every child carries potential. Yet potential
cannot move without the right
environment around it.

For a child with a disability, that wind
may be access, understanding, support,
opportunity or simply a school that
believes they belong.

The child does not need to be changed.
The environment does.

When schools become inclusive,
possibilities begin to move.



THE EIGHT BLADES OF THE ABLE PINWHEEL



No single blade creates movement alone.
Together, they set possibility in motion.

ONE BREEZE. A BILLION LIVES.

The ABLE Journey

Building Inclusive Schools, One Step at a Time

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EDITION

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LEGAL & MEDICAL DISCLAIMER

This book is a general awareness and action guide for school leaders. It is not a substitute for legal or medical advice. For matters relating to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities RPwD Act, 2016, or other applicable law, consult a qualified disability rights practitioner. For matters relating to diagnosis, treatment, or assistive technology, consult a qualified healthcare professional. References to specific devices, therapies, or treatments are provided for general awareness only; availability, cost, and regulatory status vary and should be independently verified. Sources last reviewed in July 2026.

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Scan the code below for a free, accessible digital edition, compatible with screen readers, at globaledfest.com/journey.

CONTACT & RESOURCE BANK

For corrections, or bulk copies, contact info@scoonews.com. Full sources, companion resources, and the ABLE Journey portal: globaledfest.com/journey

CREATED COLLECTIVELY

The ABLE Journey was not written by one person.

It was shaped by the knowledge, lived experience, time and honest contributions of experts from across India's disability inclusion and education landscape.

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Together, we offer this work freely to every school, educator and community that wishes to use it, adapt it and carry it forward.

**This book is dedicated to three people,
without whom I could not have reached this point in my life.**

*To Babul Chandra, my lifelong friend, who gave me a ray of new hope when I had
lost everything, and helped me start ScooNews.*

To Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, for helping me reach where I am today.

And to Ferose, who first showed me that inclusion is not a policy. It is a posture.

FOREWORD

A Note from Ravi Santlani

I did not always understand disability the way I do today.

My understanding changed because of a friendship. Because of a conversation. Because of a man named Ferose V R, who runs the India Inclusion Foundation and who, over the course of knowing him, made me see something I had been missing for years: that inclusion is not a policy. It is a posture. It is the way you walk into a room and decide, before anyone has said a word, that every person in it belongs.

I lead ScooNews, India's leading education media platform. Every year we bring together more than 500 of India's top school leaders, owners, and educators at our annual flagship conference. And this year, for the first time, and for the next five years, I have committed that conference entirely to the cause of disability inclusion. We are calling it ABLE.

But before school leaders walk into ABLE, I wanted to give them something. Not a policy document. Not a legal handbook. A guide written in plain language, by fellow educators, that answers the question most school leaders are too embarrassed to ask out loud: what does disability actually mean?

This guide walks through all 21 categories of disability recognised under India's Rights of Persons with Disabilities RPwD Act, 2016, as well as ADHD. Not as a legal list. Not as a medical reference. But as a human conversation about the children and teachers already in your school, whether you have recognised them or not.

We have also added something new to this edition: for each disability, we share the most recent technology and AI innovations that are opening doors which were bolted shut until very recently. Because hope is part of this conversation.

The truth is that some disabilities can be invisible. The child with dyslexia looks exactly like every other child. Invisible does not mean absent. It means unidentified. And unidentified means unsupported.

This guide exists to change that. Read it. Share it. Keep it on your desk. And then do one thing: name one child in your school who might be in these pages, and decide what you are going to do differently for them. That is where inclusion begins.

Ravi Santlani

Founder & CEO, ScooNews • Curator, ABLE Summit 2026, Jaipur

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How This Book Works

This book brings together everything ABLE has built for school leaders into one volume: a guide to understanding disability, a plain-language summary of the law, a practical framework for action, and a staged journey for sustained change. Read it in order the first time. After that, use it as a reference and dip into whichever part answers the question in front of you.

The four parts follow a deliberate arc:

PART ONE—UNDERSTAND

The School Leader's Guide to the Disability Spectrum

All 21 categories of disability recognised under India's RPwD Act, 2016 and ADHD (not currently in the Act but often seen in classrooms), explained in the language of a classroom, not a medical file. Start here if disability still feels abstract or unfamiliar. This is where most school leaders should begin.

PART TWO—KNOW THE LAW

Know Your Law: The Rights of Persons with Disabilities RPwD Act, 2016

What the RPwD Act actually requires of your school: admissions, infrastructure, classroom practice, and board examination accommodations. This turns inclusion from a moral aspiration into a legal and operational baseline.

PART THREE—ACT

The ABLE Inclusion Framework

A practical toolkit organised by who you are : school leader, educator, human being, community—with a School Readiness Survey to tell you honestly where to start.

PART FOUR—COMMIT

The Five-Stage Journey

A five-stage, badge-earning action plan that turns Part Three's intentions into a structured, multi-year commitment with mentorship, quarterly calls, and a public marker of progress at every stage.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A Note on the Two Companion Resources

Alongside this book, two shorter resources are designed to be used on their own:

The FAQ & Myth-Buster handout addresses the myths that stop most schools from starting (cost, “we have no such students”, standards, staffing, parents), along with the honest questions people ask right before they sign up—all answered directly, in one place.

The IEP Resource Bank collects anonymised, annotated sample Individual Education Plans for schools that have started enrolling children with disabilities and now need to know what a good IEP actually looks like. It will grow as schools on the Journey submit their own Stage 3 badge evidence.

Both are referenced within this book where relevant, and both live in the ABLE Resource Bank at GlobalEdFest.com/journey.

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Two standalone companion resources—the FAQ & Myth-Buster Handout and the IEP Resource Guide are distributed separately and referenced throughout this book. See page 7.

SCOONEWS · A FIELD GUIDE FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

The School Leader's Complete Guide to The Disability Spectrum

All 21 categories of disability recognised under India's Rights of Persons with Disabilities RPwD Act, 2016, as well as ADHD—explained in plain language, built for every school leader in India.

Curated by Ravi Santlani · Founder, ScooNews · Curator, ABLE Summit 2026

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How to Use This Guide

This guide is organised around two things for each of the 21 disabilities:

- What this looks like in a classroom—a human description of how this disability presents in a school setting. Not medical language. The language of a child you have already met.
- What your school can begin doing—practical, immediate actions that do not require large budgets or specialist infrastructure. The starting point, not the gold standard.

Three things to remember as you read:

- Disability is a spectrum. Mild to severe. Two children with the same condition can have completely different needs.
- Disabilities can be invisible. If you do not see them, it does not mean they are not there.
- This is a rights document. The RPwD Act, 2016 is a rights document, not a charity document. These are legal entitlements, not acts of goodwill.

THE 21 CATEGORIES

A Spectrum of Difference

A note on categories: The Rights of Persons with Disabilities RPwD Act, 2016 recognises 21 categories of disability, numbers 1 to 21 below. Our expert contributors recommended adding a 22nd, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), given how often it appears in classrooms today, even though it is not yet a legally recognised category under the Act. It is marked with an asterisk throughout this guide.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, India, 2016. Some are invisible. None are absent.

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22*	Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)*	NEURODEVELOPMENTAL

**ADHD is not currently recognised as a separate disability under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities RPwD Act, 2016. It is included here because it is a common neurodevelopmental condition frequently encountered in classrooms, with important implications for learning, participation and inclusion.*

01

PHYSICAL

Blindness

The disability most people picture first. But there is far more to it than most schools understand.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

This student cannot access the blackboard, printed worksheets, or visual demonstrations. They navigate the world through touch, sound, and spatial memory. In a classroom where everything is written and projected, they are constantly working twice as hard just to keep up with information their peers absorb passively.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Ensure all printed material is available in audio or Braille format. Describe what you write on the board aloud. Assign a peer buddy for navigation in new or unfamiliar spaces. Seat them where acoustics are clearest and background noise is minimal.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

Neuralink's Blindsight device received FDA Breakthrough Device Designation in 2024 [E1]. It aims to bypass the damaged optic nerve and directly stimulate the visual cortex, offering the possibility of functional sight for those with complete optic nerve damage, although human trials have not yet begun. In India, a cost-effective AI spectacle-mounted assistive device was tested for usability and acceptance in a multicentric Indian cohort study published in the Indian Journal of Ophthalmology in 2025 [E2]. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

02

PHYSICAL

Low Vision

The invisible sibling of blindness. Present in far more classrooms than schools realise.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

This student can see, but not clearly enough to read standard text from a normal distance. They squint at the board, hold books too close, miss facial expressions and non-verbal cues, and are often labelled as inattentive or disengaged. Their vision cannot be fully corrected with glasses or contact lenses.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Seat them in the front row without making it a point of embarrassment. Provide enlarged print materials as standard. Increase font size on projected content. Never assume that because a child wears glasses, their vision needs are fully met.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

AI-powered image recognition tools are increasingly able to describe visual scenes, read handwriting, identify faces, and read text in real time through smartphone cameras. Microsoft's Seeing AI is one widely used example, continuously updated through 2025 [E3]. Wearable AI glasses with real-time scene understanding are a fast-moving area of research, though independent, peer-reviewed evidence of their real-world benefit for people with low vision is still emerging. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

03

PHYSICAL

Leprosy Cured Persons

The most stigmatised disability in India. And the most widely misunderstood.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

This is a student, teacher, or staff member who was treated for leprosy and fully recovered, but was left with permanent nerve damage, loss of sensation in hands or feet, or visible physical changes. They are completely healthy. They are not contagious in any way. But they carry the weight of one of the most brutal social stigmas in Indian history.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

The most important thing a school can do is lead by example. Do not allow stigmatising language, assumptions, or behaviour in your staff room or classroom. Educate teachers and students with facts: leprosy cured means cured. Their inclusion begins entirely with your language and your culture.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

AI-assisted dermatological image recognition is showing early promise in supporting earlier diagnosis, which may help prevent disability. Wearable pressure-sensing insoles are being developed to alert people with reduced sensation to dangerous pressure points before wounds form. 3D-printed prosthetics and reconstructive devices are increasingly used to improve functional outcomes for those with residual limb damage. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

04

PHYSICAL

Hearing Impairment

A silent classroom is not the problem. An inaccessible one is.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

Deaf and hard of hearing students miss instructions delivered with the teacher's back turned, miss group discussions where multiple voices overlap, and often miss the casual social banter that builds friendships. Hard of hearing students may hear some things but mishear others, which can make them appear distracted when they are simply working with consistently incomplete information.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Face the class when speaking. Use written instructions alongside verbal ones. Explore basic sign language awareness for teachers and classmates. The 40-hour, self-learning Basic Sign Language Course on the Project Inclusion platform is one option worth considering. Ensure school announcements are delivered visually and not only over a speaker system.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

AI-enabled cochlear implants increasingly use neural network processing to help optimise sound quality in real time. The Phonak Adéo Sphere Infinio hearing aid, trained on 22 million sound samples and capable of 7.7 billion operations per second, recorded some of the highest independently tested speech-in-noise scores of any hearing aid at the time of its 2024 launch [E4]. AI sign language translation apps such as Hand Talk aim to translate text and speech into sign language in real time [E5]. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption*

05

PHYSICAL

Locomotor Disability

When the building itself becomes the barrier.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

This student may use a wheelchair, crutches, or walk with significant difficulty. In most Indian schools, the building was never designed with them in mind. Stairs without ramps, bathrooms they cannot enter, laboratory benches at the wrong height. Their mind is fully present. The school infrastructure is what is absent.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Conduct a physical accessibility audit of your school and prepare a phased roadmap towards full accessibility. While creating an accessible campus requires planning and investment, every journey begins with a first step. Identify priority areas such as the main entrance, accessible toilets, ramps, handrails and pathways, and work towards full compliance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities RPwD Act, 2016 by the prescribed deadline of 20 June 2027.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

Powered exoskeletons and smart wheelchairs are increasingly able to support independent movement across stairs and uneven terrain, although most remain costly and are not yet widely available in India. Apple's iOS added support for Brain-Computer Interface control in 2025, in partnership with Synchron, enabling people with severe mobility impairment to control devices through brain signals [E6]. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

06

PHYSICAL

Dwarfism

A condition of stature, never of capability.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

A student with dwarfism has shorter than average height (typically 4 feet 10 inches, or 147 centimeters, or less) due to a medical condition affecting bone growth. They face physical barriers including desks and chairs at the wrong height, lockers they cannot reach, and equipment designed entirely for taller bodies. They also face social barriers: being treated as younger than they are, spoken to in a condescending tone, or made the subject of curiosity and laughter.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Adjust furniture where possible. Speak to them at eye level, not from a standing position that requires them to look up. Address any mockery the moment it occurs. The message you send in that moment defines whether your school is genuinely safe for this child.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

Smart home automation increasingly allows voice and app control of home functions, reducing dependence on standard-height installations. Universal design principles are gaining architectural and legal traction in several countries. AI-powered robotic assistance and adaptive kitchen tools are an emerging area that may reduce daily physical barriers for people with dwarfism. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

07

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Intellectual Disability

Every child can learn. Not every child learns the same way or at the same pace.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

A student with intellectual disability has significant limitations in both intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and adaptive behaviour (the range of everyday, social and practical skills). They may take longer to understand instructions, need concepts explained in simpler and more concrete language, struggle with abstract thinking, or require more time to complete tasks. They are not less intelligent in the way the word is so often used carelessly. They process, learn, and express differently.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Simplify language without being condescending. Break tasks into smaller, achievable steps. Celebrate genuine progress rather than measuring it only against grade-level standards. Peer support models and visual learning aids make a meaningful and lasting difference.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

AI-powered adaptive learning platforms are increasingly able to adjust content difficulty in real time based on student responses. AI-powered picture and symbol-based communication apps are being developed to adapt vocabulary, pacing, and prompts to an individual student's developmental level. Interactive games and cognitive training apps aim to adapt dynamically to the user's responses, to help maintain engagement without frustration. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

08

MENTAL ILLNESS

Mental Illness

The most present and the least spoken about disability in Indian schools.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

This could be a student managing depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, OCD, or psychosis. They may have days when they simply cannot function and days when they appear completely fine. They are not being dramatic and they are not seeking attention. Their brain chemistry is working against them, and the shame attached to mental illness in India means they are almost certainly suffering in complete silence.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Train teachers to recognise behavioural signs without diagnosing. Create a counsellor presence in school that is genuinely accessible and destigmatised. Build a culture where seeking help is normalised rather than marked as weakness. Remove casual language that uses mental illness as an insult.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

A 2024 international study developed an AI classifier based on structural MRI data that predicted psychosis onset in adolescents with up to 85% accuracy in initial testing [E7]. VR combined with large language models is being piloted for AI-assisted CBT, where a virtual therapist adjusts tone based on emotion analysis. AI wearables that track physiological patterns to help predict mental health episodes are an active area of research, though not yet in widespread clinical use. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

09

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Autism Spectrum Disorder

A different way of experiencing the world. Not a broken version of the usual one.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

A student on the autism spectrum may struggle with social communication, find certain sounds or lights physically overwhelming, have intense focused interests, need predictable routines to function, and process sensory information very differently from their peers. Autism may or may not be accompanied by an intellectual impairment; the two are not the same thing. A school fire drill, a crowded lunch hall, or an unexpected change in the timetable can be genuinely distressing, not merely difficult.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Predictability is the foundation. Give advance notice of changes. Identify sensory triggers in your school environment and address what you can. Create a quiet space where students can decompress when needed. Peer awareness programmes help build genuine understanding rather than mere tolerance.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

AI early screening tools are being researched to analyse behavioural, neurophysiological, and biomarker data, with some studies aiming to detect early signs of autism in children as young as two; these tools are not yet a substitute for formal diagnosis. CognitiveBotics, an Indian AI-based learning platform for children with autism, showed improvements in therapeutic outcomes in a 12-month observational study of 43 children aged 2 to 18, published in JMIR Neurotechnology in 2025 [E8]. Virtual reality platforms such as Floreo provide social-practice scenarios for children and adolescents

with autism [E9]. AI systems that analyse behavioural data to help anticipate meltdown triggers are an emerging area of research. Closer to home, a screening tool such as the one on the Project Inclusion app can serve as a practical starting point for teachers. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

10

PHYSICAL

Cerebral Palsy

The body moves differently. The mind is entirely its own.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

Cerebral Palsy affects movement and motor skills due to a brain injury that occurs before, during, or shortly after birth. A student with CP may have difficulty walking, controlling their hands, or speaking clearly. But their cognitive ability is completely separate from their physical presentation. Many students with CP are academically sharp and deeply frustrated by being routinely underestimated by the adults around them.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Never make assumptions about cognitive ability based on physical presentation. Provide assistive technology for writing where needed. Ensure physical access throughout the school. And most importantly, listen directly to the student. If their speech is unclear, give them the time they need. Do not speak over them or address someone else on their behalf.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

AI-powered eye-tracking devices increasingly allow children with cerebral palsy to control computers, communicate, and engage in academic work through eye movement. Apple's 2025 iOS updates added improved eye tracking and head tracking for hands-free device control [E6]. AI-assisted AAC systems that predict intended words from partial inputs have shown text-entry rate improvements of up to 60% above baseline in published research on eye-gaze communication for people with severe motor impairment [E10]. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

11

PHYSICAL

Muscular Dystrophy

A progressive condition. Which means the school must be ready and willing to evolve alongside the student.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

Muscular Dystrophy is a group of genetic disorders that cause progressive muscle weakness over time. A student with MD may have been fully mobile in Class 1 and require a wheelchair by Class 6. They and their family are navigating a condition that changes continuously while also trying to maintain a full and dignified school life. The school's response cannot be static.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Work closely with the family to understand the student's current needs and anticipate future ones thoughtfully. Ensure physical adaptations are in place before they become urgently needed. Create genuine space for the student to communicate what they need, on their terms and in their time.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

Gene therapies for Duchenne muscular dystrophy have received FDA approval, including Elevidys, a one-time gene-replacement therapy approved in 2023 [E11]. AI-powered exoskeletons are being developed to assist with ambulation and may extend the period of independent walking. Wearable robotics that support weak limb muscles are moving from research labs toward wider availability, although cost and access remain significant barriers in India. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

12

NEUROLOGICAL

Chronic Neurological Conditions

When the brain itself is the source of the daily challenge.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

This category includes conditions such as epilepsy and other long-term neurological disorders that affect the brain and nervous system. A student with epilepsy may have a seizure in class. A student with a chronic neurological condition may have days of significant fatigue, cognitive fog, or involuntary movements that disrupt both their concentration and their dignity in front of their peers.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Train all teachers in basic seizure first aid without exception. Establish a clear, calm school protocol for medical episodes that is known by every member of staff. Treat medical events with discretion so the student does not face shame or excessive attention on top of an already difficult experience.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

AI-powered wearables are increasingly able to detect physiological patterns that precede a seizure, alerting caregivers and allowing preventive action, although this remains an active area of research rather than a widely deployed solution. Responsive neurostimulation systems, which adapt stimulation in real time based on detected brain activity, are FDA-approved for certain forms of epilepsy. AI models trained on health records are being studied for their potential to help predict disease progression and support personalised management plans. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

13

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Specific Learning Disabilities

The most common disability in any Indian classroom. And the least identified.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

This category includes Dyslexia, which affects reading and spelling, Dyscalculia, which affects numerical understanding, and Dysgraphia, which affects writing. A student with dyslexia is not a poor reader because they are lazy or unintelligent. Their brain processes written language differently. They may be highly articulate, creative, and intellectually capable while struggling intensely with a written examination.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Identify early. A student who struggles consistently with reading or writing by Class 2 or 3 should be screened, not labelled. Offer alternative assessment formats. Allow additional time in examinations. Use audio-based learning where possible. The RPwD Act, 2016 gives these students, once formally certified, specific rights to accommodations. The majority of schools are unaware of this. Tools like Project Inclusion can help by screening children early and giving teachers a personalised intervention plan to work from.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

Microsoft's Immersive Reader uses AI to support reading comprehension for people with dyslexia by spacing letters, breaking words into syllables, and reading text aloud [E12]. AI tools increasingly convert handwritten text to typed text in real time, which can reduce the barrier of dysgraphia in examinations. Speech-to-text AI has improved significantly in recent years, allowing children who struggle to write to produce written work through voice. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

14

NEUROLOGICAL

Multiple Sclerosis

Rare in children but present. And almost entirely invisible in most school environments.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

Multiple Sclerosis is a condition where the immune system attacks the protective covering of nerves, causing fatigue, vision problems, balance difficulties, and cognitive changes. While more common in adults, it does affect young people. A student with MS may have unpredictable good days and significantly difficult days, and their needs can shift rapidly and without warning.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Flexibility is the essential response. Attendance policies, assessment timelines, and physical expectations should be genuinely adjustable for students with episodic conditions. A rigid, inflexible school structure can be as disabling as the condition itself.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

AI-assisted MRI analysis is increasingly used to help detect MS lesion progression, and several studies suggest it may support earlier detection alongside radiologist review. Wearable exoskeletons can assist with gait for people with MS who have walking difficulties. Telemedicine platforms increasingly enable MS monitoring from home, which may reduce the burden of frequent hospital visits. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

15

PHYSICAL

Speech and Language Disability

They have something to say. The school must create the space and the safety to say it.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

This includes students who stutter, who have articulation disorders, who have lost speech following a neurological event, or who have language processing difficulties. In a classroom where participation means raising your hand and speaking clearly in front of forty peers, these students often fall silent. And when they go silent, they effectively disappear from the learning environment.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Never call on a student who stutters without giving them advance notice. Do not finish their sentences for them. Create participation formats that go beyond verbal responses: written answers, drawing, digital tools. Refer to a speech therapist early. Address any mimicry or mockery from classmates immediately and firmly.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

AI speech recognition systems trained specifically on atypical speech patterns are showing improved accuracy for people who stutter or have dysarthria. Google's Project Euphonia is developing AI models trained on thousands of voices with speech impairments [E13]. AAC apps powered by AI aim to predict intended words from partial speech input, which can reduce the time and effort needed to communicate. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

16

BLOOD DISORDER

Thalassemia

A blood disorder that makes ordinary school life extraordinarily demanding.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder where the body produces abnormal haemoglobin, resulting in chronic anaemia. Students with thalassemia require regular blood transfusions, often every two to four weeks. They experience ongoing fatigue, miss school frequently for medical appointments, and are managing a complex condition that most of their classmates and teachers have never heard of.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Coordinate with the family on transfusion and medical schedules. Build a structured catch-up system that does not punish absences that are medically necessary and entirely unavoidable. Ensure classmates have enough understanding to be supportive rather than confused or excluding.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

Betibeglogene autotemcel (beti-cel), the first FDA-approved gene therapy for transfusion-dependent beta-thalassemia, has made some patients transfusion-independent in clinical follow-up [E14]. CASGEVY, a CRISPR-Cas9 medicine, received regulatory approval in the US, UK, EU, and Gulf nations by 2025 [E15]. These are recent, highly specialised treatments, and access in India remains limited. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

17

BLOOD DISORDER

Hemophilia

A condition where a minor injury is never minor.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

Hemophilia is a disorder where the blood does not clot properly. A student with hemophilia who falls in the playground, takes a knock during sports, or even has a tooth come loose is at risk of serious internal bleeding. They are not fragile in terms of personality or academic capability. But their physical safety requires the school to think very carefully and specifically about risk.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Ensure the school nurse and all physical education teachers fully understand the condition and its implications. Establish a clear emergency protocol. Do not exclude the student from all physical activity, but modify where necessary in close consultation with their doctor and family. Treating them as though they are made of glass is not inclusion.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

Fidanacogene elaparvovec, the second FDA-approved gene therapy for hemophilia B, was approved in 2024, with follow-up data published in the New England Journal of Medicine [E16]. Some patients who previously needed lifelong infusions are now producing clotting factor on their own. These remain highly specialised, high-cost treatments that are not yet widely accessible in India. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

18

BLOOD DISORDER

Sickle Cell Disease

Painful. Invisible. And almost entirely unrecognised in most Indian schools.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

Sickle Cell Disease is an inherited blood disorder where red blood cells become rigid and sickle shaped, blocking blood flow and causing episodes of severe pain called crises. A student in a sickle cell crisis is in genuine, serious pain. In several Indian states, particularly in tribal communities, this condition is relatively common and almost entirely without school-level support.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Recognise the signs of a pain crisis and have an immediate response protocol in place. Do not dismiss a student’s pain as exaggeration. Ensure the classroom is adequately warm and that students can access water, as cold and dehydration are known triggers. Maintain regular communication with the family.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

CASGEVY, the world’s first approved CRISPR medicine, was approved for sickle cell disease in late 2023 and has been accessible in some countries, including via the UK NHS, since January 2025 [E15]. A 2025 study in Blood Advances found improvements in quality of life after CASGEVY treatment, with patients reporting less time in hospital [E17]. This treatment is not currently available in India and remains extremely costly worldwide. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

19

MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

Multiple Disabilities incl. Deafblindness

The most complex category. And the one that demands the greatest creativity from schools.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

This category covers students who have more than one disability simultaneously. Deafblindness, the combination of both hearing and vision impairment, is specifically named. A student who is both deaf and blind experiences the world almost entirely through touch. They cannot be supported by adaptations designed for deaf students alone or blind students alone. They need a genuinely individualised approach.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

This category requires specialist support and a commitment to truly individualised education planning. The starting point is honest acknowledgement: a standard approach does not work here. The school must be willing to ask, to listen, and to build something that has not been done before.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

Haben Girma, the first deafblind graduate of Harvard Law School, uses technology that converts live speech to text she can read on a Braille display in real time [E18]. Refreshable Braille displays have become smaller and more affordable in recent years. AI tools that convert live speech to Braille-ready text are improving, opening classrooms, meetings, and events to deafblind participants in new ways. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

20

PHYSICAL

Acid Attack Survivors

Survivors of targeted violence. Recognised under Indian law as persons with disability.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

The RPwD Act, 2016 includes acid attack survivors as persons with disability, which is a landmark and deeply important recognition. An acid attack causes permanent damage to skin, eyes, and airways, often resulting in vision loss, disfigurement, and reduced mobility. The psychological trauma is equally significant and long lasting. A student or teacher who is an acid attack survivor is carrying both visible and invisible damage into school every single day.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

The school's response begins entirely with culture and language. An environment where a survivor is stared at, discussed, or pitied rather than respected is not an inclusive one. Sensitise students and staff. Address unkind behaviour immediately. Ensure access to counselling support. Their dignity is non-negotiable.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

AI-assisted surgical planning is increasingly used in reconstructive surgery, aiming for more precise outcomes in facial reconstruction. 3D-printed prosthetics and custom facial prostheses have become more accessible in recent years. AI-powered skin-matching and bioprinting technologies for burn and wound reconstruction are an active area of research, though most remain in early clinical stages rather than routine practice. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

21

NEUROLOGICAL

Parkinson's Disease

**Rare in students but relevant for teachers and school staff.
Inclusion goes in every direction.**

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

Parkinson's Disease is a progressive nervous system disorder affecting movement, causing tremors, stiffness, and balance difficulties. While uncommon in school-age students, it does occur and is highly relevant for teachers and school staff. A teacher with early-stage Parkinson's may be managing visible tremors and significant fatigue while continuing to teach, often without having disclosed their condition to the school.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Inclusion is not only about students. A school leader who creates a genuinely inclusive environment for staff with disabilities sends a clear message: inclusion here is real, not a policy that exists only on paper. Ask. Listen. Accommodate where it is reasonable and possible. And protect the dignity of every person managing a condition they did not choose.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

Adaptive deep brain stimulation devices, which adjust electrical impulses in real time based on movement patterns, are FDA-approved and increasingly used to help manage tremors. Google's Project Euphonia is developing AI speech recognition trained on Parkinson's speech patterns [E13]. Tremor-compensating smart utensils are commercially available, although cost can be a barrier. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

22

NEURODEVELOPMENTAL

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)*

Every child can pay attention. Not every child regulates attention, impulses, or activity in the same way.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN A CLASSROOM

A student with ADHD may struggle to regulate attention, control impulses, stay organised, or manage time. They may seem distracted, restless, forgetful, interrupt others, or find it difficult to start and finish tasks. These behaviours reflect differences in executive functioning, not laziness, poor motivation, or a lack of intelligence.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN BEGIN DOING

Use clear routines, break tasks into smaller steps, minimise distractions, provide movement breaks, and use visual reminders and timers. Recognise effort alongside outcomes, and respond with support rather than punishment.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBILITIES

AI-powered planning tools, adaptive learning platforms, and focus-support technologies are increasingly used to help students organise tasks, manage time, and sustain attention. Digital reminders, speech-to-text tools, and gamified learning platforms aim to personalise support based on individual needs. *These tools may not be universally available, affordable or clinically appropriate. Schools should seek professional advice before adoption.*

** ADHD is not currently recognised as a separate disability under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities RPwD Act, 2016. It is included here because it is a common neurodevelopmental condition frequently encountered in classrooms, with important implications for learning, participation and inclusion.*

AFTERWORD

What Comes Next

You have now read through all 21 categories, as well as ADHD. Take a moment before you move on.

Ask yourself three questions:

- Of these 21 categories ,plus ADHD ,how many does your school have a written response to?
- How many have your teaching staff been trained to recognise?
- How many have you ever discussed in a leadership or staff meeting?

If the honest answer to all three is not many ,you are not behind .You are at the beginning .And the beginning is exactly where change starts.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY REFERENCES

These are the sources for the ‘Emerging Technology and Possibilities’ notes in Part One. Sources last reviewed in July 2026. This is a fast-moving field: treat every entry here as a snapshot, not a permanent fact, and verify independently before making adoption or budget decisions.

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Know Your Law

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities RPwD Act, 2016

A plain-language summary of what the law actually requires of your school

July 2026

Important note

This document is a plain-language summary prepared for school leaders and educators. It is accurate as of July 2026 but is not a substitute for legal advice. For advice on specific situations, consult a qualified disability rights practitioner. Examination board policies are updated periodically. Please always verify current procedures directly with your board’s regional office before submitting applications. The full text of the Act is available at the link in the References section.

Quick Reference—What the RPwD Act, 2016 Is

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities RPwD Act, 2016 (RPwD Act) replaced the old Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 and came into force on 19 April 2017. It was enacted to fulfil India’s obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which India ratified in 2007. [1]

The shift from the 1995 law was fundamental. The old law treated disability as a welfare issue—something to manage charitably. The new Act treats it as a rights issue rooted in Articles 14, 15, 16 and 21 of the Constitution. Courts have repeatedly described the RPwD Act as a ‘super-statute’. [2]

What your school does for a student with a disability is not a favour. It is a legal obligation.

Enacted	Disabilities covered	Benchmark disability
December 2016; in force 19 April 2017	21 categories (up from 7 under 1995 Act)	40% or more of a specified disability

PART 1—The 21 Categories of Disability

The Act expanded recognition from 7 to 21 categories. The following conditions received legal recognition for the first time under the 2016 Act—they were not covered under the previous law. [3]

NEWLY RECOGNISED UNDER THE 2016 ACT

- Specific Learning Disabilities (including Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Speech and Language Disability
- Acid Attack Survivors
- Dwarfism
- Blood disorders—Thalassemia, Hemophilia, Sickle Cell Disease
- Parkinson's Disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Cerebral Palsy
- Chronic Neurological Conditions
- Multiple Disabilities incl. Deafblindness

The full list of all 21 categories recognised under the Act is available in The ABLE Journey and at: [3]

Full list of 21 disabilities: https://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/A2016-49_1.pdf

WHAT IS A BENCHMARK DISABILITY?

A benchmark disability is defined as 40% or more of a specified disability, certified by a competent medical authority. Students with benchmark disabilities are entitled to specific additional benefits—including board examination accommodations (extra time, scribe), scholarships, and reasonable accommodation. The Supreme Court has recently confirmed that 40% is a floor, not a ceiling—schools must not use this threshold to deny support to students below 40% if they have a genuine functional need. [4]

PART 2—What Your School Is Legally Required to Do

Section 16 of the RPwD Act places clear duties on educational institutions. These obligations apply to all schools—government, aided, and private unaided. [5]

On Admissions

No school may turn away or discourage a child with a disability. No admissions process may have criteria that effectively exclude children with disabilities. Every child with a benchmark disability between the ages of 6 and 18 has the right to free education—either in a neighbourhood school or a special school of their choice. [5][6]

On Infrastructure

Schools must provide physical accessibility—ramps, disability-friendly toilets, accessible classrooms, laboratories, libraries, playgrounds, and common areas. Students are entitled to assistive devices and technology matched to their disability, including Braille books, hearing aids, wheelchairs, and communication devices. Assistive devices are to be provided free of cost up to the age of 18 for students with benchmark disabilities. [6][7]

On Classroom Practice

Provide reasonable accommodation according to the individual student's requirements

Provide necessary support—individualised or otherwise—in environments that maximise academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion

Detect specific learning disabilities in children at the earliest and take suitable pedagogical and other measures to overcome them

Monitor participation, progress, and completion of education for every student with a disability

Provide transportation facilities to children with high support needs and, where required, to their attendant

On Language and Communication

Schools must ensure that education for children who are blind or deaf is provided in the most appropriate language, mode, and means of communication—which means Braille and sign language access where needed. Schools must promote the use of augmentative and alternative communication tools. [5]

On Teaching Staff

Schools must employ trained staff. Teachers trained in sign language and Braille must be employed where relevant. All professionals and staff must be trained to support and facilitate inclusive education. Staff appraisals and professional development must reflect this responsibility. [5][8]

PART 3—Board Examination Accommodations

This is the area most Indian schools are entirely unaware of. Students with disabilities are entitled to examination accommodations at CBSE, ICSE, and most state board examinations. The school is responsible for initiating these requests on behalf of the student. Thousands of eligible

students currently sit board examinations without the accommodations they are legally entitled to—because no one at their school knew to apply. [9][10]

CBSE—Concessions and Accommodations [9][10]

Accommodation	Detail
Scribe / Reader	A scribe writes answers as dictated by the student. A reader reads the question paper aloud. Students may opt for their own scribe (one step below their qualification level) or request one from the examination centre. Remuneration is paid by CBSE, not the student.
Compensatory Time	3-hour paper → 60 extra minutes. 2.5-hour paper → 50 minutes. 2-hour paper → 40 minutes. 1.5-hour paper → 30 minutes.
Calculator	Allowed for students with dyscalculia. Calculator is provided by CBSE.
Language options	Students may opt for one compulsory language instead of two. They may then choose any four of the remaining subjects.
Alternative question papers	Visually impaired students receive question papers without visual inputs, with multiple-choice alternatives for practicals in Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics.
Relaxation in attendance	Attendance relaxation up to 50% may be considered for students who are unable to attend school for medical reasons related to their disability.
Examination fee	Registration and examination fee (Classes 9–12) waived for visually impaired candidates.

HOW TO APPLY FOR CBSE ACCOMMODATIONS

Step 1: Parent obtains a disability certificate from a competent medical authority (government hospital, Civil Surgeon, or Medical Superintendent)

Step 2: Parent submits the certificate and a written request to the school

Step 3: The school forwards the complete application to the relevant CBSE Regional Office

Step 4: Regional Office reviews and communicates approval to the school

Apply early: Schools should initiate this process when a student is in Class 9 or Class 11, not Class 10 or Class 12. Last dates are tied to examination registration deadlines. Late applications are routinely rejected. [10]

ICSE / ISC—CISCE Accommodations [11]

CISCE has its own accommodation framework for ISC examinations. Schools must align with this framework. Schools should contact their CISCE regional coordinator directly to confirm current forms and deadlines. Schools must show active progress on physical accessibility and document what they have done and what they plan to do. Older buildings facing retrofitting difficulties should prepare an accessibility improvement plan with timelines and budgets.

CISCE contact and regional offices: <https://www.cisce.org>

State Board Examinations

Accommodation frameworks vary by state board. Schools should contact their state board's examination controller directly to confirm the current process, forms, and deadlines for requesting accommodations. State rules were required to be notified within one year of the Act coming into force (by April 2018)—most states have now done so but implementation quality varies significantly.

DEPwD guidelines on scribes for all examinations: <https://depwd.gov.in/en/guidelines-2/>

PART 4—Consequences of Non-Compliance

Non-compliance with the RPwD Act is not merely a reputational matter. It has legal, regulatory, and operational consequences for schools. [2][12]

Affiliation risk

CBSE and ICSE affiliation conditions incorporate accessibility and inclusion requirements. Schools that cannot demonstrate compliance with RPwD Act obligations—accessible infrastructure, special educator appointments, accommodation policies—risk issues during affiliation review. As of 2026, school boards are expected to scrutinise accessibility compliance more closely during inspections.

CBSE affiliation norms now include physical accessibility checks and verification that trained special educators are employed. This is an active compliance point during inspections. [11]

Complaints to the State Commissioner

Families of children with disabilities can file complaints with the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities—an officer appointed under the Act with the power to investigate situations, summon officials, and direct remedies. This avenue is increasingly being used as awareness of the Act grows. [1]

State Commissioners are listed on the DEPwD website: depwd.gov.in

Special Courts

The Act establishes Special Courts at the district level for disability-related offences. Schools that deny admission to a child with a disability, fail to provide mandated accommodations, or discriminate against a student or staff member on grounds of disability may be liable under these provisions. [1]

Courts have described the RPwD Act as a ‘super-statute’ flowing from constitutional rights—enforcement is taken seriously.

Supreme Court precedent

A 2024 Supreme Court ruling (*Rajive Raturi v. Union of India*) held accessibility to be a fundamental right and struck down rules that made accessibility standards merely recommendatory, directing the government to frame mandatory standards. This has strengthened the enforceability of the Act significantly. [4]

The direction of legal enforcement is toward greater accountability, not less.

PART 5—The Four Most Common Compliance Gaps in Indian Schools Right Now

Based on published research, field studies, and judicial observations, the following four failures are the most widespread in Indian mainstream schools today. [8][13]

Gap 0

Children with potential additional needs are screened out at admission

This is the least documented gap and the hardest to name, because it rarely happens as a formal policy—it happens through an informal conversation, a quiet suggestion that ‘this may not be the right fit’, or an admissions process that never mentions disability until a family raises it first. The effect is the same as exclusion, even where no single person intended it. Section 16 of the RPwD Act already prohibits this. Naming it here is not about pointing fingers at any one school—it is a pattern the sector as a whole needs to own and address together.

Gap 1	Not identifying students with specific learning disabilities early The law requires early detection and suitable pedagogical response. The majority of Indian mainstream schools have no screening process at all. Students with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia are routinely labelled ‘slow’, ‘lazy’, or ‘careless’ for years before—if ever—being identified. Under the RPwD Act, failing to identify and support these students is a breach of Section 16, not a missed opportunity.
Gap 2	Not applying for board examination accommodations Thousands of students with dyslexia, dyscalculia, autism, hearing impairment, and other conditions sit CBSE and ICSE board examinations every year without the extra time, scribe, or other accommodations they are legally entitled to—because no one at their school initiated the process. This is one of the most consequential and most avoidable failures in Indian inclusive education.
Gap 3	Treating accommodations as discretionary favours rather than enforceable rights When a student’s family requests support, the response in most schools is discretionary—dependent on the goodwill of individual teachers or principals. It should be procedural. There should be a named Inclusion Champion, a documented process, a timeline, and a paper trail. The RPwD Act does not ask schools to be kind. It asks them to be compliant.

WHAT YOUR SCHOOL SHOULD DO THIS TERM

- **Screen and Identify**—Have teachers undertake PRASHAST, the NCERT-recommended screening tool, or another widely used option such as Project Inclusion, Sri Aurobindo Society’s screening tool, for every student—whether or not a disability has been diagnosed yet. It requires no specialist training and builds a structured pathway to assessment for any student who needs it.
- **Apply**—For every student with a diagnosed disability in Classes 9 or 11, begin the board examination accommodation process now—not in Class 10 or 12.
- **Document**—Create a written inclusion policy and assign a named Inclusion Champion. Every accommodation request, every assessment, every IEP should have a paper trail.
- **Train**—Ensure all members of staff have attended external training on the RPwD Act and its implications for schools this academic year.
- **Audit**—Walk your campus and ask: could a child in a wheelchair navigate this independently? If the answer is no anywhere, that is your first project. Include the sensory environment in this audit too, and note where a quiet or sensory corner could be created.

START HERE—QUICK LINKS

- **PRASHAST**—NCERT’s screening tool referenced throughout this book. Ask your ABLE mentor for the current link, or search ‘PRASHAST NCERT’ for the official portal.
- **Project Inclusion**—Sri Aurobindo Society’s screening tool, also referenced in this book. Search ‘Project Inclusion’ on the Play Store, or ask your ABLE mentor for the current link.
- **RPwD Act, 2016 (full text)**—<https://indiacode.nic.in/handle/123456789/2154>
- **DEPwD**—<https://depwd.gov.in>—guidelines, scribe rules, and State Commissioner contacts.
- **Boards**—CBSE: <https://www.cbse.gov.in> · CISCE: <https://www.cisce.org> · contact your state board’s examination controller directly for state rules.

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Full text of the RPwD Act, 2016

<https://indiacode.nic.in/handle/123456789/2154>

DEPwD—Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

<https://depwd.gov.in>

CBSE—Concessions for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities

<https://www.cbse.gov.in>

CISCE—Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations

<https://www.cisce.org>

This document is part of the ABLE Inclusion Initiative.

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THE ABLE INCLUSION FRAMEWORK

You attended. You listened. You felt something.

Now what?

Jaipur, August 2026 · gloaledfest.com

How to use this framework

This is not a policy document. It is not a government mandate. It is a practical toolkit with real actions, organised into four sections.

Part 1—As a School Leader—What you change in your institution

Part 2—As an Educator—What you change in how you teach and see

Part 3—As a Human Being—What you change in yourself

Part 4—As a Community—What your students, parents and community can do

Each action is doable. Some cost money. Most cost only intention. Pick five to start—at least one from each section. Do them before December. Come back next August with proof.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The School Readiness Survey

Five minutes .Twenty-four questions .A clear picture of where your school is right now.

This survey was proposed by the ABLE committee to give school leaders an honest, non-judgmental baseline before they begin. It is not a test. There are no wrong answers. A low score does not mean your school is failing. It means the journey has not yet started. And the journey is exactly where change begins.

Answer honestly. Your score tells you which part of this framework to focus on first.

Section A—Physical Accessibility

#	Question	Your answer
A1	<i>Could a child in a wheelchair navigate your main entrance independently?</i>	Yes / No / Partial
A2	<i>Is there at least one accessible toilet on every floor of the school?</i>	Yes / No
A3	<i>Have you ever conducted a formal physical accessibility audit?</i>	Yes / No
A4	<i>Does your emergency evacuation plan specifically account for students with disabilities?</i>	Yes / No
A5	<i>Does any classroom have adjustable-height furniture?</i>	Yes / No / Some rooms
A6	<i>Does your school have at least one quiet, low-stimulation space that students can access when overwhelmed?</i>	Yes / No

Section B—Awareness and Training

#	Question	Your answer
B1	Do your staff know the basic requirements of the RPwD Act, 2016 as they apply to schools?	Yes / No / Some do
B2	Have your teachers undertaken PRASHAST (NCERT's classroom screening tool) or another programme such as Project Inclusion (Sri Aurobindo Society's initiative) with any students?	Yes / No / Not sure
B3	Do your teachers understand what an Individualised Education Plan (IEP) is and how they contribute to it?	Yes / No / Not sure
B4	Has any teacher attended external inclusion training in the last two years?	Yes / No
B5	Do you have a designated Inclusion Champion or equivalent role?	Yes / No

B6	Have you ever partnered with a special educator or inclusion consultant?	<i>Yes / No</i>
B7	How many special educators or counsellors does your school currently employ? Do you know the recommended student-to-special-educator ratio for your state? All board-affiliated schools are required to employ at least one special educator and one counsellor to meet minimum norms—that alone is often enough to surface the gap.	<i>Number / None yet</i>
B8	Does your management committee or board have any awareness of the RPwD Act, 2016, NEP 2020, and RTE inclusion provisions?	<i>Yes / No / Not sure</i>

Section C—Students and Admissions

#	Question	<i>Your answer</i>
C1	Does your school currently have any enrolled students with a diagnosed disability?	<i>Yes / No / Not sure</i>
C2	Does your admissions process include a structured conversation with families of children with disabilities?	<i>Yes / No</i>
C3	Does your school offer any alternative curriculum pathway (e.g. a functional curriculum, or an NIOS pathway beyond Class 8) for students who need it?	<i>Yes / No / Not applicable</i>
C4	Do you offer any alternative assessment formats to students who need them?	<i>Yes / No</i>
C5	Is your inclusion commitment published on your school website or prospectus?	<i>Yes / No</i>
C6	In the last academic year, did your school turn away or discourage a family of a child with a disability?	<i>Yes / No / Not sure</i>

Section D—Culture and Community

#	Question	Your answer
D1	Has your leadership team ever discussed disability inclusion as a formal agenda item?	Yes / No
D2	Do students with and without disabilities learn and take part in everyday school life alongside each other—not only through a special assembly or awareness day?	Yes / No / Some settings
D3	Has a person with a disability ever spoken to your students as an expert or role model?	Yes / No
D4	Does your school have any active relationship with a disability organisation or special school?	Yes / No

Mostly No	Begin at Stage 1 of The ABLE Journey. This is the starting line, not a failing grade. Most schools in India are here. The work begins now.
Mix of Yes and No	You have started. You may begin at Stage 2 or 3. Register at GlobalEdFest.com/journey and the ABLE team will recommend your entry point based on your specific answers.
Mostly Yes	You are already doing this work. Enter at Stage 3 or 4—and we need you as a mentor school. Please speak to the ABLE team about supporting newer schools on the journey.

Note: this three-band scoring guide is being refined into a more granular readiness measure that still points you to a starting stage but better reflects partial progress. The banding above remains valid for now—an updated version will follow.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN—CONTINUED

Five Myths About Inclusion

And why every single one of them is wrong

Proposed by the ABLE committee: before school leaders read the framework, they should encounter and discard the most common reasons schools don't start. Here they are.

Myth 1

Inclusion is expensive.

It is not. The most important things your school can do—how a teacher speaks to a child, whether they give instructions in multiple formats, whether they name a student's achievement without surprise or pity—cost nothing. They cost intention. The physical changes come later, in stages, when the intention is already there. Many schools begin and sustain Stages 1 and 2 with no additional budget at all.

Myth 2

We don't have any students with disabilities.

Almost certainly untrue. Disabilities can also be invisible. The RPwD Act, 2016 recognises 21 categories of disability, as well as ADHD—many present with no visible signs. The student who is labelled 'slow', the child who 'can't concentrate', the teenager who 'refuses to write'—many of these children have undiagnosed specific learning disabilities. They are already in your school. They are already not being supported.

Myth 3

Inclusion means lowering standards.

The opposite is true. Universal Design for Learning—the academic framework behind inclusive education—was developed because designing for diverse learners improves learning for every learner. Schools that implement inclusion consistently report improvements in overall classroom engagement, peer relationships, and teacher confidence. Inclusion is not about lowering the bar. It is about widening the door.

Myth 4**We need specialist staff before we can start.**

No. Stage 1 of The ABLE Journey requires only a committed principal, a willingness to walk your own campus honestly, and a few conversations. You build the expertise as you go. The handholding programme assigns a domain expert mentor to your school once you register. You do not need to know everything before you begin. You need to begin.

Myth 5**Parents will resist.**

Some will. But the evidence is consistent: the resistance diminishes sharply when parents see inclusion modelled with confidence rather than apologised for. The parents who resist most loudly are usually the ones whose own children have had experiences of exclusion that they have never named. A well-run parent inclusion session—honest, empathetic, led by another parent of a child with disability—changes more minds than any policy document.

PART 1**As a School Leader**

You run the institution. Inclusion begins and ends with you.

You run the institution. Which means you set the culture, sign the budgets, hire the teachers, and decide what normal looks like inside your school gates. Inclusion begins and ends with you. Here is where to start.

1.1 The Building—Physical Accessibility

Walk your entire campus with one question in mind: could a child in a wheelchair navigate this independently? If the answer is no anywhere, that is your first project. Extend the same walkabout to the sensory environment—noise, lighting, and crowding—and identify one space that could become a quiet or sensory corner. This is inexpensive and relatively easy to create.

- Audit every entrance, corridor, classroom, toilet, canteen, library and playground for physical accessibility—commission a formal audit if you have not done one.
- Install ramps at all main entry points that meet BIS standards for gradient (1:12 or gentler) and minimum width (900mm).
- Ensure at least one accessible toilet on every floor.
- Replace fixed furniture in at least two classrooms on every floor with adjustable-height furniture—start small, expand annually.
- Add tactile paving or guiding strips at key navigation points for visually impaired students.
- Ensure all emergency evacuation plans explicitly account for students and staff with disabilities.
- Check that signage throughout the school includes Braille and pictogram alternatives.

If you need to bring an architect's eye to your infrastructure review, the ABLE programme can connect you with an advisory architect. Mention this when you register at GlobalEdFest.com/journey.

1.2 Admissions and Enrolment—Who Your Door Is Actually Open To

- Remove language from your admissions form that implicitly screens out children with disabilities—review every question for hidden bias.
- Train your admissions team on how to have conversations with families of children with disabilities—empathy before paperwork.
- Set a school-wide target: at least three new students with a disability enrolled this academic year.
- Create a buddy system for every newly enrolled student with a disability—a peer, not a minder.
- Review your fee structure: are concessions or scholarships available for families with disabled children?
- Publish your inclusion commitment on your school website and in your prospectus—make the promise public.

1.3 Staffing and Training—Building a Team That Can See Every Child

- Mandate at least one inclusion-focused professional development session per term for all teaching staff.
- Designate one staff member as your school's Inclusion Champion with protected time to fulfil that role.
- Partner with a special educator, therapist or inclusion consultant for a minimum of ten hours per term.
- Add one question to your annual staff appraisal: what did you do this year to support a child with a specific learning disability?
- Attend at least one external training on specific disabilities relevant to your student population—autism, dyslexia, hearing impairment, visual impairment.
- Review whether your school has ever hired a staff member with a disability—and ask honestly why or why not.

1.4 Curriculum and Classroom Practice—Learning That Works for More Children

- Introduce Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in at least three classrooms this year—UDL means designing lessons that work for all learners from the start.
- Ensure every child with a diagnosed specific learning disability has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or equivalent, developed by a qualified special educator or multidisciplinary team, with classroom teachers and parents contributing relevant input. Ask your Inclusion Champion to lead this.
- Review your assessment methods: is written examination the only way your school measures learning? Add oral, portfolio and project-based alternatives.
- Include disability history, disabled leaders and disabled achievers in your curriculum materials—across subjects, not just in one special assembly.

- Introduce co-teaching models in at least one class per grade—a general teacher and a special educator working together.
- Ensure your library has books with disabled protagonists represented across all age groups.

PART 2

As an Educator

You are in the room every day. This section is about that.

You are in the room every day. The way you look at a child, respond to a question, assign a group, or speak about difference in front of thirty students—all of it shapes who those students believe they are and who they believe their classmates are. This section is about that.

2.1 How You See Students—The Shift That Changes Everything Else

- This week, identify one student in your class who you have been seeing as a problem to manage rather than a learner to understand—then spend ten minutes with them one-on-one.
- Stop using deficit language in staff rooms—‘slow learner’, ‘can’t cope’, ‘difficult child’—replace with language of need and context.
- Ask yourself honestly: do I call on every child equally, or do I unconsciously skip the ones I think will struggle?
- Learn the name, correct pronunciation and preferred identity of every student with a disability in your school, not just your class.
- Read one book this year written by or about a person with a disability—ask your librarian for a recommendation.

2.2 How You Teach—Classroom Changes That Cost Almost Nothing

- Give instructions in multiple formats—spoken, written on the board, and visual where possible—this helps every learner, not just those with disabilities.

- Allow students to choose how they demonstrate learning: written, spoken, drawn, built or performed.
- Give extended time on assessments to any student who needs it—without making it feel like a punishment.
- Seat students who need support near the front and near you, not in isolation.
- When a student with a disability achieves something, celebrate it the same way you celebrate any achievement—not with pity, not with excessive surprise.
- Invite a person with a disability to speak to your class this year—as an expert, not as an object of sympathy.
- Create a quiet corner or regulation space in your classroom for students who need sensory breaks—a beanbag and a corner is enough to start.

2.3 How You Speak—Words That Include and Words That Exclude

- Learn and consistently use person-first language: ‘student who has dyslexia’, not ‘dyslexic student’—unless the individual prefers identity-first. Ask them.
- Never use disability as a comparison or insult—and address it immediately when students do the same.
- When a parent questions why a child with a disability is in their child’s class, have a prepared, confident response ready—practise it.
- Introduce disability awareness vocabulary to your students as part of everyday classroom language—not just during a special week.

WHEN A PARENT PUSHES BACK—A GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

Parent resistance is normal. It is not a sign that inclusion is wrong. It is a sign that inclusion is new. Here are the questions you are most likely to face, and the honest, confident responses that work.

“Will my child fall behind because the teacher is spending more time with the child with a disability?”

No. Research consistently shows that inclusive classrooms benefit all learners. When teachers use Universal Design for Learning—which they will be doing—every child benefits from clearer instructions, more flexible assessment, and higher engagement.

“Is it safe for my child to be in a classroom with a child who has behavioural challenges?”

Safety is our first priority for every child. The accommodations we put in place—sensory spaces, structured routines, support staff—are designed precisely to ensure a calm, safe learning environment for everyone.

“My child is not getting enough attention.”

That concern is always worth hearing. Let’s talk about your child specifically. Inclusion does not mean less attention for any child—it means better teaching for all children. If something isn’t working for your child, I want to know.

PART 3

As a Human Being

This section is the hardest. And the most important.

This section is the hardest. It asks you to look at your own assumptions, your own comfort zones, and your own life outside school. Inclusion does not begin when you enter school gates. It begins in how you move through the world.

3.1 Examine Your Assumptions—The Questions Most People Avoid

- Sit with this question for one minute: when you picture a school leader, a doctor, a scientist—do you picture someone with a disability? Your honest answer tells you something important.
- Think of the last time you were in a public space with a person with a disability. What did you do, think, say?
- Identify one assumption you hold about disability that you have never examined—write it down and sit with it.
- Ask your own family members whether your home is accessible to a guest with a disability—then ask whether it matters to you.

3.2 Change Your Behaviour in Public—Small Acts That Change Culture

- Do not park in accessible parking spaces unless you need them—and speak up when others do.
- When you see an inaccessible entrance or facility, report it to the management rather than simply walking away.
- Speak directly to a person with a disability—not to their companion or carer. This is the most basic act of respect.
- When dining at a restaurant or attending an event, check whether the venue is accessible before you book—choose accessible venues when you have the choice.

- If someone tells you about their disability, thank them for trusting you—do not immediately offer sympathy, advice or a solution.

3.3 Extend Your Circle—Relationships That Expand Your Understanding

- Seek out one friendship, mentorship or professional relationship with a person with a disability this year—not as a project. As a person.
- Follow at least five disability advocates, educators or leaders on social media and actually read what they write.
- Donate to or volunteer with one disability-focused organisation in your city this year.
- When you are in a room making decisions that affect others, ask yourself: have we heard from someone with a disability about this?

PART 4

As a Community

Inclusion that stays inside one school is not inclusion. It is a pilot project.

Inclusion that stays inside one school is not inclusion. It is a pilot project. This section is about what happens when the school turns outward—what students can do, what parents can do, and what the school can do to shift its neighbourhood.

4.1 What Your Students Can Do—Building the Generation That Gets This Right

- Introduce a Student Inclusion Council—a student body whose specific remit is making the school more inclusive—give them a real budget and real authority.
- Train student peer supporters to assist classmates with disabilities—with consent and proper guidance, not as babysitters.

- Have students audit their own school for accessibility and present the findings to school leadership—it teaches empathy, observation and civic responsibility simultaneously.
- Invite students with disabilities to lead school assemblies, head student committees, and represent the school externally—leadership, not just participation.
- Encourage student-led social media content celebrating inclusion in your school—stories, not statistics.
- Organise a school-wide celebration of disability achievers during the academic year—in sport, art, science, literature, business, public life.

STUDENT BUDDY PROGRAMME

Proposed by the ABLE committee: students can be trained and designated as peer buddies, paired with a classmate with a disability in the same class, in a structured, supervised way. This is not a charity role. It is a leadership role. Senior students in Classes 7 to 10 also work well as visible role models for culture building across the whole school. The schools that have done this well report that the buddies benefit as much as the students they support. A training guide for teachers running this programme will be made available through the ABLE Resource Bank.

4.2 What Parents Can Do—The Conversation That Goes Home Every Evening

- Hold a dedicated annual parent session on inclusion—not to explain the policy, but to have an honest conversation about discomfort and resistance. Address the questions parents actually have.
- Create a parent inclusion committee with at least two parents of children with disabilities as leading voices.
- Ask parents to sign an inclusion pledge as part of the school enrolment process—a visible commitment, not a legal document.
- Share resources with parents on how to talk to their children about disability—at every age level.

- Invite parents of children with disabilities to speak at parent evenings—their experience is the most powerful curriculum in the room.

4.3 What the School Can Do Beyond Its Gates— Using Your Institution's Influence

- Reach out to one civic body, hospital, heritage site or public institution in your city and offer to collaborate on an accessibility audit—model the Jaipur Commitment in your own city.
- Partner with a special school or disability organisation in your area for at least one joint activity per term—not charity. Partnership.
- Make your school facilities available to disability organisations for events, training and community meetings.
- Advocate publicly for accessible infrastructure in your neighbourhood—write to local government, raise it at civic meetings, use your school's platform.
- Run a student-led disability inclusion project in your community—this can be an accessibility audit, a bake sale to support a local NGO, a sports meet, or a joint activity day with a local special school—something that gives real practical exposure to your learners and shifts mindsets while helping them meet their curricular requirements. This works especially well for IB and IGCSE schools.
- Create an annual inclusion report for your school—published, public and honest. Include what you did, what you intended to do but did not, and what you will do next year.
- Connect with other school leaders from this festival and create an accountability group—meet quarterly, share progress, hold each other to commitments.

ABLE

Every child is capable of something extraordinary when the system stops being the barrier.

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THE FIVE-STAGE JOURNEY

A Stage-by-Stage Action Plan for Building a Genuinely Inclusive School

Co-presented with Ferose V R and India Inclusion Foundation

What is The ABLE Journey?

Most inclusion frameworks are documents. This is not a document. It is a journey. A structured, stage-by-stage action plan that takes a school from the moment it first asks an honest question about inclusion, all the way to becoming a model that other schools learn from.

There are five stages. Each stage has five milestones. Each milestone has clear actions. Every stage ends with a badge your school earns and displays. Every August at the ABLE Summit in Jaipur, schools on the journey come together to share where they are, what they learned, and what they did next.

This is not a competition. There is no ranking. A school at Stage 2 is not behind a school at Stage 4. It is simply earlier in the same journey. What matters is that the journey has begun and that it does not stop.

How It Works

STAGE	THE SCHOOL BECOMES	BADGE EARNED
Stage 1	The Aware School	The Open Eye
Stage 2	The Accessible School	The Open Door
Stage 2	The Accommodating School	The Open Classroom
Stage 4	The Advocating School	The Open Community

Stage 5	The Anchored School	The ABLE School
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The Quarterly Expert Calls

Four times a year, schools on The ABLE Journey come together on a virtual call with some of India’s most prominent voices on disability inclusion. Each call is three hours. Each call is free. These are not lectures. They are conversations.

Schools share where they are. They ask the questions they cannot find answers to. They hear what other schools are doing. And the experts, each of whom has volunteered their time, offer guidance that is practical, honest, and grounded in real experience.

All quarterly calls are calendarised at the start of the academic year—so your school knows the dates before it begins the journey. The full year calendar will be shared with every registered school.

The next call date will be shared with every school that registers for The ABLE Journey at GlobalEdFest.com/journey

THE SCHOOL HANDHOLDING PROGRAMME

Once a school registers for the ABLE Journey, it does not do this alone. Every cohort of schools is grouped and assigned to domain experts who mentor and handhold them through the implementation process. Your school will have a named contact—someone who knows your stage, knows your constraints, and can answer the questions you cannot find answers to anywhere else. Mentors are assigned based on the stage your school begins at and the specific areas identified in your School Readiness Survey. They are not consultants. They are fellow travellers who have been on this road longer.

STAGE 1

THE AWARE SCHOOL*You have started asking questions. That is further than most.*

Stage 1 is about waking up. Not guilt. Not panic. Just honest looking. Most schools have never conducted an inclusion audit. Most school leaders have never walked their campus as a child with a disability would. Stage 1 changes that. Every action here costs more intention than money.

MILESTONES—WHAT COMPLETING THIS STAGE LOOKS LIKE

Stage 1 has five milestones. You complete the stage when all five are done. There is no deadline. Go at the pace your school can sustain.

- The Principal and the senior leadership team reads The ABLE Journey in full. **M1.1**
- The school conducts its first physical accessibility audit by walking the entire campus asking: could a child in a wheelchair navigate this independently? **M1.2**
- The school has teachers undertake PRASHAST Part 1 screening, the NCERT-recommended, teacher-administered tool, or another widely used option such as Project Inclusion's screening tool, for all students in at least one class, to help surface support needs whether or not a disability has been diagnosed, and initiates a Part 2 assessment conversation with the families of any students the screening flags. **M1.3**
- At least three teachers attend an external inclusion-focused training session. **M1.4**
- The school leadership team watches at least two episodes of The Education Verdict Disability Inclusion Series together and discusses as a group. **M1.5**

**YOUR ACTION PLAN—WHAT TO DO
STARTING MONDAY**

These are the specific actions that will move you through the milestones. They are ordered by ease. Start with number one.

- Download and print The ABLE Journey. Read it. Keep it on your desk.
- Set a date in your calendar for the physical campus walk. Do it with a student if possible.
- Identify one space that could become a quiet or sensory corner. It is inexpensive and relatively easy to create.
- Ask your class teachers to run PRASHAST Part 1 screening across one full class, to surface any student whose learning looks different—diagnosed or not. Write their names down, then move to Part 2 for those it flags.
- Search for one inclusion training happening in your city this term and register three teachers.
- Book a staff meeting this month where you watch one episode of the series together.

HOW TO EARN YOUR STAGE BADGE

To receive your Stage 1 Badge, submit a one-page reflection on what your campus audit revealed and name three students whose inclusion journey your school is now committed to.

Submit your evidence at: GlobalEdFest.com/journey

STAGE BADGE: THE OPEN EYE

WHAT COMES NEXT: STAGE 2

You are now ready to become The Accessible School. Before you change how you teach, you need to change what your building says about who belongs here.

STAGE 2

THE ACCESSIBLE SCHOOL*You are removing the barriers your building put in the way.*

Stage 2 is about infrastructure .Before you change how you teach ,you need to change what your building says about who belongs here .A school with no accessible toilet is telling a child in a wheelchair something every single day .Stage 2 changes the message.

MILESTONES—WHAT COMPLETING THIS STAGE LOOKS LIKE

Stage 2 has five milestones. You complete the stage when all five are done. There is no deadline. Go at the pace your school can sustain.

- At least one functional ramp is built or improved at a main school entrance point—meeting BIS accessibility standards for gradient and width, and at least one sensory or quiet corner is created in a classroom or common area. **M2.1**
- At least one fully accessible toilet is created or designated on every floor of the school. **M2.2**
- Adjustable height furniture is introduced in at least two classrooms on every floor of the school. **M2.3**
- Tactile paving or guiding strips are installed at key navigation points for visually impaired students. **M2.4**
- The school emergency evacuation plan is updated to explicitly account for students and staff with disabilities. **M2.5**

Also consider—alongside the physical access audit, walk the campus again with sensory needs in mind: lighting, noise levels, crowding, and signage. A sensory-friendly campus is as much a Stage 2 project as ramps and toilets.

YOUR ACTION PLAN—WHAT TO DO STARTING MONDAY

These are the specific actions that will move you through the milestones. They are ordered by ease. Start with number one.

- Get a contractor quote for a ramp at your main entrance. Ask specifically about BIS-compliant gradient (1:12 or gentler) and minimum width (900mm). Costs vary significantly by specification—budget accordingly.
- Identify which bathrooms are most easily accessible and assess what it would take to make them accessible.
- Order two sets of adjustable-height chairs and desks for your most-used classrooms.
- Contact your local municipality or a vendor about tactile strip installation.
- Pull out your current evacuation plan and add a section specifically for mobility-impaired individuals.
- Walk the campus again with sensory needs in mind, lighting, noise, crowding and signage, alongside your physical access audit, and note quick fixes you can make this term.

HOW TO EARN YOUR STAGE BADGE

To receive your Stage 2 Badge, submit photographs of the physical changes made and a brief note on what your school learned during the process.

Submit your evidence at: GlobalEdFest.com/journey

STAGE BADGE: THE OPEN DOOR

WHAT COMES NEXT: STAGE 3

You are now ready to become The Accommodating School. You have fixed the building. Now the work moves inside—into how your teachers teach and how every child experiences learning.

STAGE 3

THE ACCOMMODATING SCHOOL*The classroom is changing. Every learner is beginning to be seen.*

Stage 3 is about learning. You have fixed the building. Now fix how you teach. The RPwD Act, 2016 gives students with specific learning disabilities the right to accommodations in examinations and in the classroom. Most Indian schools either do not know this or do not implement it. Stage 3 closes that gap.

MILESTONES—WHAT COMPLETING THIS STAGE LOOKS LIKE

Stage 3 has five milestones. You complete the stage when all five are done. There is no deadline. Go at the pace your school can sustain.

- Every child with a diagnosed specific learning disability—and every child flagged through PRASHAST screening, whether or not a formal diagnosis follows—has a written Individual Education Plan (IEP) or equivalent. **M3.1**
- At least one alternative assessment format is introduced alongside written examination for any student who needs it. **M3.2**
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles are implemented in at least three to five classrooms. **M3.3**
- One staff member is officially designated as the school Inclusion Champion with protected time for the role. **M3.4**
- The school partners with a special educator or inclusion consultant for at least one day a week this academic year—occasional or fortnightly visits are not enough to meaningfully support students with additional needs. (For reference, Delhi's recommended ratio of children with special needs to special educators in a mainstream school is 8:1.) **M3.5**

Also consider—extend last term's sensory-needs walk-through into the classroom: identify specific sensory triggers in daily teaching spaces (lighting, acoustics, seating) and address what you reasonably can this term.

STUDENT BUDDY PROGRAMME—STAGE 3 ADDITION

Schools at Stage 3 may also introduce a Student Buddy Programme: students in Classes 7 to 10 trained as peer buddies for younger classmates with disabilities. This is a leadership role, not a charity role. A training guide will be available through the ABLE Resource Bank.

Buddies support one classmate at a time. Some students are ready for a wider role: schools may also stand up a small Youth Champions group—an ambassadorial, role-modelling track (in the spirit of #InclusiveDuniya Youth Champions), distinct from one-to-one buddying. A guide for both tracks will be available through the ABLE Resource Bank.

YOUR ACTION PLAN—WHAT TO DO STARTING MONDAY

These are the specific actions that will move you through the milestones. They are ordered by ease. Start with number one.

- Ask your class teachers to list every student with a known diagnosis. Then ask: do they have a written plan? If not, create one this term.
- Introduce one oral or portfolio-based assessment option in at least one class this term.
- Ask one teacher to attend a UDL workshop and come back to train the rest of the staff.
- Choose your Inclusion Champion. Give them one afternoon per week to do the work.
- Reach out to one special educator in your city. Two sessions this term is a starting point—build towards at least one day a week of their time across the academic year.

HOW TO EARN YOUR STAGE BADGE

To receive your Stage 3 Badge, submit one anonymised IEP each—developed by a qualified special educator or multidisciplinary team, with input from classroom teachers and parents—for three children, and a note from your Inclusion Champion on the first thirty days in the role.

Submit your evidence at: GlobalEdFest.com/journey

STAGE BADGE: THE OPEN CLASSROOM

WHAT COMES NEXT: STAGE 4

You are now ready to become The Advocating School. The work so far has happened inside your walls. Stage 4 is where it begins to reach your community—your parents, your students, and the world beyond your gates.

STAGE 4

THE ADVOCATING SCHOOL

Inclusion is no longer a project. It is becoming your culture.

Stage 4 is about going beyond the classroom .A school that is genuinely inclusive does not just accommodate students with disabilities inside four walls .It builds a community around them ,trains the people around them ,and begins to influence the world outside its gates .Stage 4 is where the culture shifts.

MILESTONES—WHAT COMPLETING THIS STAGE LOOKS LIKE

Stage 4 has five milestones. You complete the stage when all five are done. There is no deadline. Go at the pace your school can sustain.

- A Student Inclusion Council is formed with a real budget and genuine authority to drive change. (A Student Inclusion Council here is a

small group: 6–8 students, sitting inside your existing student council rather than as a new body. It has four responsibilities, each once a term: coordinate the peer buddy matches, hold one listening session, run one small finishable project, and report back to leadership.) **M4.1**

- A dedicated annual parent session on inclusion is held—not to explain policy, but to have an honest conversation about discomfort, resistance, and what belonging actually looks like. **M4.2**
- Disabled leaders and achievers are included in curriculum materials across at least three subjects, not just in a special assembly. **M4.3**
- The school publishes its inclusion commitment publicly on its website and prospectus. **M4.4**
- The school partners with one civic body, local institution, or disability organisation outside its gates. **M4.5**

YOUR ACTION PLAN—WHAT TO DO STARTING MONDAY

These are the specific actions that will move you through the milestones. They are ordered by ease. Start with number one.

- In your next student council meeting, propose an Inclusion Sub-Council. Ask for volunteers. Give them a small discretionary budget.
- Schedule a parent evening specifically on inclusion. Invite a parent of a child with disability to co-lead it—their voice carries more weight than any policy document.
- Ask every subject head to identify one unit this year where a disabled achiever could be referenced meaningfully.
- Update your school website this month with one paragraph on your inclusion commitment.
- Identify one local hospital, heritage site, or civic space and offer to collaborate on an accessibility review.

HOW TO EARN YOUR STAGE BADGE

To receive your Stage 4 Badge, submit a photograph of your Student Inclusion Council's first meeting, along with the meeting agenda, the minutes of the meeting, and your school's published Inclusion Statement.

Submit your evidence at: GlobalEdFest.com/journey

STAGE BADGE: THE OPEN COMMUNITY

WHAT COMES NEXT: STAGE 5

You are now ready to become The Anchored School. By this point, inclusion is embedded in how your school functions day to day. Stage 5 is about making it permanent, making it visible, and using what you have built to help others begin.

STAGE 5

THE ANCHORED SCHOOL

Inclusion is not what you do. It is who you are.

Stage 5 is not an end .It is a beginning .A school that reaches Stage 5 has not finished the work .It has simply reached the point where inclusion is no longer a programme or a project .It is embedded .It is normal .It is what this school does and who this school is .From here ,you become a model for others.

MILESTONES—WHAT COMPLETING THIS STAGE LOOKS LIKE

Stage 5 has five milestones. You complete the stage when all five are done. There is no deadline. Go at the pace your school can sustain.

- The school has enrolled students with disabilities across at least two to three academic years, with documented support provided for each. **M5.1**

- Staff appraisals formally include an inclusion-related question or criterion. **M5.2**
- The school actively mentors at least one other school that is beginning its inclusion journey. **M5.3**
- The school presents its case study at the ABLE Summit, sharing what worked, what did not, and what it learned. **M5.4**
- The school applies for and receives full ABLE Inclusion Certification. **M5.5**

YOUR ACTION PLAN—WHAT TO DO STARTING MONDAY

These are the specific actions that will move you through the milestones. They are ordered by ease. Start with number one.

- Review your past two years of enrolment data .How many students with disabilities are enrolled ?How many were supported with a formal plan?
- Add one inclusion question to every teacher’s annual appraisal starting this academic year.
- Reach out to a school in Stage 1 or 2 in your city and offer one conversation with your Inclusion Champion .The best thing an Anchored School can do is pull another school forward.
- Register to present your case study at ABLE Summit .2027 Your story is the curriculum.
- Write to the ABLE team to initiate the ABLE Inclusion Certification process.

HOW TO EARN YOUR STAGE BADGE

To receive your Stage 5 Badge and the ABLE Inclusion Certification, submit a full case study of your inclusion journey across all five stages—including student impact data, staff reflections, and community outcomes.

Submit your evidence at: GlobalEdFest.com/journey

STAGE BADGE: THE OPEN COMMUNITY

THE FIVE YEAR VISION

2026 to 2031

Where we are going—and the plan to get there

THE 2031 AMBITION

By August—2031 five years from the first ABLE Summit—we will have:

- 300 Indian schools that have completed at least Stage 2 of the ABLE Journey and hold a verified badge
- 100 schools that have achieved Stage 4 or 5 and are actively mentoring others
- 25 schools that hold the ABLE Inclusion Certification—the country's first verified standard for inclusive schooling
- An AI-powered resource chatbot used by school leaders across India as their first point of reference on disability inclusion
- PRASHAST and the ABLE Journey integrated as the standard reference documents in the resource bank
- A live community of practice—schools ,experts ,advocates ,and disabled people—that outlasts any single conference

YEAR 1—2026/27

BUILD THE FOUNDATION

Launch, sensitise, recruit the first cohort of schools

- ABLE Summit 2026—300 school leaders complete the three-hour Handbook bootcamp
- The Jaipur Resolve signed by every delegate—five specific commitments each
- 50 schools register for the ABLE Journey using the School Readiness Survey as entry diagnostic
- First quarterly expert calls begin—calendarised for the full year before schools start
- Resource Bank seeded with first documents including PRASHAST
- AI Resource Chatbot feasibility study completed
- Domain expert mentors confirmed and assigned to first cohort
- Badge verification model finalised before first submissions are accepted

YEAR 2—2027/28

DEEPEN AND EXPAND

First cohort progresses; second cohort recruited

- ABLE Summit—2027 first cohort schools present their Stage 1 case studies publicly
- 100 additional schools recruited to the Journey
- First badges awarded and verified—The Open Eye and The Open Door
- AI Resource Chatbot prototype launched for pilot schools
- Student Buddy Programme formalised and embedded in Stage 3 milestone requirements
- First schools reach Stage 3—Inclusion Champions named, IEPs in place across cohort
- Architect advisory role filled—infrastructure guidance added to Stage 2 support

YEAR 3—2028/29**ANCHOR AND CERTIFY***First ABLE-certified schools; peer mentoring begins*

- ABLE Summit 2028—first schools present Stage 3 and 4 case studies
- First 10 schools achieve Stage 4 or 5 and begin mentoring newer cohorts
- ABLE Inclusion Certification criteria finalised and first certifications awarded
- Resource Bank publicly accessible to all Indian schools—not only ABLE Journey participants
- Annual inclusion reports published by Stage 4+ schools—a public accountability standard

YEAR 4—2029/30**SCALE AND INFLUENCE***300 schools on the journey; policy advocacy begins*

- 300 schools on the ABLE Journey across India
- ABLE Inclusion Certification recognised by at least one national or state body
- Hindi and regional language versions of all core documents available
- ABLE model presented to NCERT, CBSE, and ICSE for consideration as part of school accreditation
- Disabled educators and advocates formally embedded in the ABLE structure—as architects ,not advisors

YEAR 5—2030/31**THE 2031 MILESTONE**

Reach the ambition ;define the next five years

- ABLE Summit—2031 a national celebration of five years of the journey
- 25 ABLE Certified schools. 100 Stage 4+ schools. 300 Stage 2+ schools.
- The ABLE model documented as a replicable national programme
- This committee publishes an honest report: what worked, what didn't, what we wish we had done differently
- A new five-year vision defined—built with the voices of disabled students and educators at the centre from day one

A Final Word

You do not have to be at Stage 5 to matter. A school at Stage 1 that built one ramp and started one honest conversation has already changed something for a child who was told, by the architecture of their school, that they did not fully belong.

Inclusion does not begin with a complete overhaul. It begins with one question. One audit. One decision. One Monday morning that looks different from the one before it.

The ABLE Journey is not asking you to be perfect. It is asking you to begin. And then to keep going.

We will see you in Jaipur. And we will see you again next August. And the August after that.

YOUR PERSONAL COMMITMENT

The Jaipur Resolve

You have read the framework. Now make it personal. Pick five things from this document—one from each of the framework’s four sections, plus one more of your choice—that you will do before 31 December 2026. Write them here. Sign it. Share it with one colleague.

1

I will

2

I will

3

I will

4

I will

5

I will

Name:

School:

City:

Date:

6–8 August 2026, Jaipur

Signature:

Begin your journey at GlobalEdFest.com/journey
*The ABLE Journey | ScooNews Global Educators Fest 2026 |
Jaipur, India | GlobalEdFest.com*

CLOSING Your Next Step

You have now read the full arc—what disability looks like in your classrooms, what the law requires, what your school can start doing, and the staged journey that turns intention into a lasting commitment. Here is where that becomes concrete.

ONE—TAKE THE SCHOOL READINESS SURVEY

Five minutes, twenty-four questions, found in Part Three. It will tell you honestly where your school is right now—not to grade you, but to tell you where to start.

TWO—SIGN THE JAIPUR RESOLVE

Five specific commitments—one from each of the framework’s four sections, plus one more of your choice—that you will act on before 31 December 2026. Not aspirations. Actions. Write them down. Sign them. Share them with one colleague.

THREE—REGISTER FOR THE ABLE JOURNEY

GlobalEdFest.com/journey. Your school will be matched to a starting stage, assigned a mentor, and calendared into the year’s quarterly expert calls—before the term is out.

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Inclusion does not begin with a complete overhaul .It begins with one question .One audit .One decision .One Monday morning that looks different from the one before it.

We will see you in Jaipur again next August .And the August after that.

ABLE—India’s First Summit on Disability Inclusion in Mainstream Schools.

Every child can do something extraordinary when the system stops being the barrier.

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