



## CHILDREN WITH EPILEPSY: LEARNING, LANGUAGE AND BEHAVIOUR

### Educational Strategies Workshop

#### 1. Problem-Solving Framework

What to think about	
Define & describe the difficulty	Observation ++ Discuss with parents (& child if appropriate) Keep a diary Multiple sources of information
Cognitive factors	Is there any learning difficulty? Global or specific 'higher' cognitive problems, e.g. memory/attention Transient cognitive impairment Need to review regularly – cognitive effects may vary over time. Don't make assumptions
Behavioural/psychiatric problem	Could the difficulty be explained (maybe only partly) by behavioural problems associated with epilepsy? E.g. ADHD, ASD, CD, aggression Mood swings?
Medication	Changes (or altered effect due to child's development) Timing Direct effect on cognition? (but remember: seizure control is best predictor of outcome)
Language & communication	Discrepancy: language v performance skills? Discrepancy: receptive v expressive language? Does the child need a sign environment? Is child motivated to communicate? In what contexts? (see social skills below) Auditory processing difficulties – VERY disabling in the classroom
Social skills / peer interactions	Quality of social interactions? 'Not interested / loner' versus 'doesn't know how' Social stigma Being bullied/teased Is child getting support?

Sleep	Major impact on all areas of functioning Disturbed sleep very common in children with epilepsy
Fluctuation	Bear in mind in all cases. Monitor using diary if possible (home & school) Useful to determine causes of fluctuation – seizures, subclinical epileptiform activity, diurnal variation, timing of medication
Home situation	Parental stress
Developmental perspective	The child's situation is dynamic, not stable. Epilepsy itself may change over time, as will child's response to it. Therefore child's strengths and difficulties may also alter.
Educational setting appropriate?	In terms of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– general cognitive level</li> <li>– specific learning/language difficulties</li> <li>– class size? Noise level?</li> <li>– Level of support (e.g. 1:1)</li> <li>– Access to therapies/special input</li> <li>– Behavioural/psychiatric features</li> <li>– Peer group</li> </ul>
Unrealistic expectations	Very common.