

The Impact of ICT on a person with special / particular needs



Andrea is 11 years old and is in Year 6 of St. Francis R.C Primary School in the south east of London, Peckham. She likes to go swimming, play with her dog and have friends over. She been in four plays and has even received two standing ovations. She has travelled abroad to many places such as Italy, France, Belgium and Germany, next summer she hopes to go to Scotland. Like most children her age, she is interested in many things and can do a lot of things, but the difference between them and her, is that Andrea can't walk, she has spina bifida and uses a wheelchair to get around.

Spina bifida is an inherited disease. Someone born with spina bifida has a opening in their spine, a healthy spine is closed to protect the spinal cord, a bundle of nerves that send messages back and forth between your brain and the rest of your body. The messages tell your muscles to move so you can go such things as kick a ball or lift up a pencil. The messages tell you about the sensations on your skin, you know to pull your hand away from fire. When a baby is growing inside its mother, the spine and spinal cord are developing. But sometimes part of the spinal cord and spine don't grow the way they should, leaving an opening where the spinal cord may stick out outside the body. When this happens, a baby is born with spina bifida. Because of the opening in the spine, the nerves of the spinal cord may be damaged. A spinal cord that's damaged may not be able to do the important job of getting messages to and from the brain. These messages may not be able to get through if a person has spina bifida. The person may not be able to move their muscles the way other people do, this is called paralysis.

Personal



Although Andrea has spina bifida, she is still able to do plenty of normal things thanks to technology. Such as get around independently, she uses a wheelchair to get round, it has helped her a lot during these past few years, so she can move freely around in the playground and such, but the disadvantage of a wheelchair is that in some places like restaurants, there is not easy access for people with wheelchairs, such as ramps, there are only stairs, so it is a struggle for them to get up, and some wheelchairs are quite wide so some doorways may be too narrow to fit through. Spina Bifida is treated by first treating the symptoms such as, difficulty walking, urinating and/or defecating. To urinate, Andrea has a timed programme, spina bifida has caused her to develop neurogenic bladder, when the flaccid bladder becomes full, excess urine spills over and flows out of the body through the urethra. Urine dribbles out continually and when excess pressure is put on the bladder, such as when laughing or crying, this dribbling becomes more severe. However, the bladder never empties completely and some urine always remains. Her timed programme makes sure that she relieves herself every few hours or so, the disadvantage of this is that she may have to go toilet when it is not very convenient for her, such as if she is doing an exam in school, she may have to leave in the middle of it to go to the toilet. Andrea lives in a 3 floored house with her younger brother Arnold, older sister Annette and parents Joshua and Bernadette, with her condition, you can imagine that it is always a struggle going up and down the stairs in her condition, that is why she has a stair lift on both of her staircases, they didn't cost much for her parents, only about £1500 each, since she has 2 staircases it cost her family £3000. They are efficient and is a great use to her, she uses it often to get up and down easier, and its also useful to bring items up and down the stairs, although sometimes, it is not so reliable, because at times, it tends to stop working, and they need to sometimes call in people to fix it, which costs money, and the stair lifts do take up amount a big amount of space on the staircase which tends to become annoying for other members of the family, but they do sometimes find it as a great use themselves, they sometimes use it themselves to get up and down and also,

they use it to bring items down and up the stairs, for example Bernadette, Andreas mother, since the kitchen is on the second floor, she uses the stair lift to bring up groceries.



Social



Here's a link

Andrea has plenty of friends who she loves to go out with and hang around with, but its difficult playing with friends when she has to travel around using a wheelchair. She has one best friend who's name is Charlotte, they have been best friends for 5 years now, and Charlotte understands Andreas condition, and she helps her with her daily routine whenever she is with her, she helps her push around her wheelchair, Charlotte has internet access, and there are plenty of talent shows around their area which they would like to see, so Charlotte, using her internet, she goes on websites and finds out the times of the events, and how much they cost, she has been using the internet since she was 8 years old so she knows how to use it basically, the internet has been a great use for their enjoyment over these past few years. Andrea also a internet connection which she uses rarely, whenever she does use it she goes on her msn messenger her email is andrea_4_eva@hotmail.com, she has 67 contacts on her list, all mostly friends from school, since she's in a wheelchair, it is harder for her to go out, so sometimes its nice to stay at home and chat to her friends on msn, without having to go out, or use the phone to call them. I think that it is really good for Andrea because using Msn Messenger is free and quick, very efficient for her.