

What is Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS)?

Hypotonia: Low muscle tone

- Hyperphagia – excessive appetite
- Learning disability
- Immature social and emotional development
- Behaviour issues
- Hypogonadism – immature sexual development
- Difficulty grasping a pencil
- Mobility moving around the school – steps and stairs
- Safety within the classroom
- Safety within the playground
- May require a wheelchair
- Can impact on lung capacity and infections

Behaviour

- Emotional outbursts
- Obsessive and compulsive behaviour - perseveration
- Storytelling and fabrication
- Difficulties in processing instructions
- Difficulties in attention switching – moving from one topic to another

Underlying causes:

- Hyperphagia
- Immature emotional and social development
- Mood swings – sometimes extreme

Dual diagnosis can include

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
- Dyspraxia
- Speech and language disorders in expression and understanding.

Hyperphagia: Excessive hunger

A relentless and overwhelming hunger with:

- No sense of feeling full regardless of how much is eaten
- Only 60% of the calorie requirement

RISK FACTORS



- High pain threshold
- Lack of vomiting reflex (different to gag reflex)
- Dysfunctional body thermostat – base body temperature may differ from average . Difficulty in knowing if they are too hot or cold
- Easy bruising
- Constipation

Emotional outburst

Preventing an imminent outburst

- Be aware of trigger
- Use a calm tone
- Distract attention
- Praise for something else they have done
- Suggest a quiet place for a few minutes
- Keep very calm and cool – if possible swap with someone else to take over
- Do not start an argument and say as little as possible.

Environmental control

- Lunch boxes and all other food must be kept out of sight
- 1:1 supervision will be needed at snack and lunchtime or cooking activities
- Ensure classroom bins and any bins that may have waste food are emptied daily
- Birthdays, special occasions and outings – must liaise with parents look at using alternatives
- Do not use food for teaching sessions or food items for play

Learning disabilities

- Use a wide range of methods of teaching
- Usually better at reading and writing, less able with maths and abstract concepts
- Visual processing better than oral – show as well as say
- Require extra time to process information – always check understanding
- Often good at jigsaws and creative work
- Some may show characteristics of Autism, some may have dual diagnosis

Social emotional development

- Friendship can be hard to make and keep
- Keep speech clear and simple
- Check regularly for understanding by getting them to repeat
- Limit repetitive questioning – adopt the 3 times rule
- Use a positive approach – use please leave the door shut rather than don't leave the door open



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