

Children with disabilities and eLearning: removing the obstacles

In order to provide inclusive education, eLearning platforms must adapt to all needs, including those of children with disabilities.

In the past year, children have had to learn quickly how to manage and use virtual learning tools. Yet, not everyone has the same initial opportunities to enjoy the benefits of **online training**. Among them are **children with disabilities or special needs**. According to a study by the Association on Higher Education and Disability, these children have more barriers to virtual learning.

Here are some tips that can help parents make the online learning journey of children with disabilities smoother:

1. Comfort First

If your child is facing an online journey and spending several hours in front of the computer, the first key factor is comfort. Depending on the disability, in fact, it will be appropriate to choose the most ergonomic chair or desk to be adjusted according to the needs. In this way, the approach to studying will be easier.

2. Help with the online platform

Although most eLearning platforms tend to be user-friendly they don't always take into account the most diverse needs of learners. For this reason, parents can be a valuable ally at the beginning of the course to identify any obstacles to navigation, from the lack of subtitles to the difficulty of managing interactive elements. However, all of these issues should be communicated immediately to the school or to those involved in designing the platform: online learning should be open to all.

3. Personalized times

In general, elearning respects the study pace of each student. However, this is not always possible through a school-based platform. Yet, a child with a disability may need different times. This is, without a doubt, an option that the platform should offer. Structuring the study day to fit everyone's needs is a key element in personalizing learning and making it usable.

As we have already mentioned, any shortcomings of an online platform should not fall solely on families. In fact, eLearning companies have a duty to carefully analyze all elements of platform accessibility. Here are some tips for eLearning providers:

- Give the possibility to enjoy content in different formats (e.g. text, audio, video and subtitles);
- Organize an archive in which all previous lessons are present so that you can listen to them again as often as you need to;
- Divide deadlines into smaller tasks and activities to avoid overloading students and give them the ability to manage their own time;
- Offering additional tutoring options or special guides to those students who are constantly failing to keep up is a great way to get all children to meet their educational goals while always respecting their needs;
- Design a platform that is as user-friendly as possible and allow for customization so that students can choose a simpler, clearer view of the pages without too many buttons or subfolders.