



Primary Epilepsy awareness assembly

Better futures for
young lives with epilepsy
youngepilepsy.org.uk



Primary Epilepsy awareness assembly - plan

Title: Epilepsy awareness

Focus: The brain, seizures, basic seizure first aid and inclusion.

Duration: 20 minutes minimum

Prior learning: No prior learning is required. Several aspects of this assembly are covered in further detail in the Young Epilepsy KS2 lessons and additional worksheets.

Learning Objectives:

1. To introduce epilepsy as a medical condition.
2. To introduce seizures as the result of the electrical messages in the brain getting muddled for a short time.
3. To emphasise that seizures can look very different but that we can all help to keep someone safe if they need our help.
4. To reinforce that children with epilepsy can join in activities and that there are always people around us who are there to keep everybody safe.

Young Epilepsy resources required:

1. Primary Epilepsy awareness assembly - presentation
2. Brain function pictures (one set printed on A3)

PLEASE NOTE: If you are using the PDF presentation, there will be a slight alteration to the slide numbers in this plan.

Further lesson plans, worksheets and activities are available from the Young Epilepsy website:

<http://youngepilepsy.org.uk/what-we-do/helping-schools/resources-for-schools>

Slide	Key idea	Script
1	Young Epilepsy	<p>Today's assembly has been put together by a charity called Young Epilepsy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Young' – they work with young people. That means children just like you, as well as older children in secondary school and those who go to college and university. But they don't like being called children so they say 'YOUNG' to include everybody. • 'Epilepsy' – put your hands up if: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You have heard the word epilepsy. 2. If you think you could tell someone what epilepsy is if they asked (don't worry, I'm not going to ask you now). 3. If you think you would know what to do if someone with epilepsy needed help. <p>If we asked a room full of grown-ups the same three questions, their responses would probably be the same. Lots of people have heard about epilepsy, but not many could explain what it is and not many feel confident about helping someone.</p>
2	Why do we need to learn about epilepsy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people including children have epilepsy. More people have it than we realise because medication keeps lots of people well. We all come into contact with a lot of people - whether at school; families we live with; wider families like aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents; clubs like football, dance, cubs and guides; people we see in shops, at the park, cinema etc. The chances are, you will come into contact with someone who has epilepsy at some point in your life. • Epilepsy can take effect suddenly for a short time. Being taken by surprise can give us an uncomfortable feeling which soon passes when we realise we know what is going on. • You can help people with epilepsy to stay safe. We feel more confident if we know what to do and people with epilepsy will feel more confident if they know people around them understand how to help.

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3	So what is epilepsy?	First I will tell you what it is not ...
4	You can NOT catch epilepsy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's not catching like a cold or flu! If someone with epilepsy sneezed all over you, it would be pretty disgusting, but you can't catch epilepsy. • It's a problem with a part of the body that doesn't work exactly how it should just some of the time. <p>Question: Does anyone know which part of the body is it? Ask children to put their hands up to answer the question</p>
5	It's the brain	Here is a picture of a brain. Our brains aren't these lovely colours, but the picture does show us that it is made of lots of different parts and different parts have different jobs.
6	What does the brain do?	<p>Let's think about all the different things our brain does. Our brains are the control centre of our bodies.</p> <p>Activity: The brain – ask the children to put their hands up if they know one of the things that the brain does. Invite the children to come out and hold the picture from the 'Brain function pictures' that illustrates the function they said.</p> <p>The pictures are - moving, thinking, tasting, seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, speaking, feelings, balancing and body working (breathing, heart, digestion, etc).</p> <p>You can see that our brains control everything we do. Ask the children: Does anyone know how the brain sends messages around our bodies so fast? It uses very tiny bits of electricity because electricity can work really fast. In someone with epilepsy, these electrical messages can sometimes get muddled up.</p>

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7	Key point 1: Epilepsy	<p>There will be 5 key points in this assembly. At the end I want to see how much you have remembered - so listen carefully! When you see a star like this one, you know it's a key point that you need to remember.</p> <p><u>Here's our first key point:</u> Epilepsy is a problem with the electrical messages in the brain.</p>
8	Key point 2: Seizures	<p>The brain is too important to get in a muddle, but thankfully our bodies are very clever and have a way of sorting it out. Just like if at dinner time a bit of food goes down the wrong way, my body coughs to sort it out. Or if I have a tickly nose, my body sneezes to sort it out.</p> <p><u>Here's our second key point:</u> When the electrical messages in the brain get muddled up, the person may have a seizure - like the brain doing a cough or a sneeze to sort out the muddle.</p>
9	Key point 3: Medication	<p><u>Here's our third key point:</u> People who have epilepsy usually take medicine everyday – it helps the messages in the brain to not get muddled and therefore can stop seizures, or make them happen less often.</p>
10	What do seizures look like?	<p><i>Ask the children:</i> What might it look like when someone has a seizure?</p> <p>As the brain controls so many different things, there are lots of different types of seizures. A young person may have one or more different seizure types.</p>
11 & 12	Focal seizures	<p>I'm going to tell you about some of the different types of seizure. First, I will tell you about focal seizures.</p> <p>The electrical messages can get muddled up in just one part of the brain. Any of the jobs we saw earlier could be affected.</p>

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		<p>Use the pictures to explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it's the movement part of the brain, the person might wander around. • If it's the touch/feeling part, the person may fiddle with their clothes. • If it's the talking part, the person's speech may be jumbled up. • If it's the taste part, the person may look like they are chewing something but there's no food in their mouth. <p>They're not choosing to do these things – it's happening automatically because electrical messages are muddled in the brain and going to the wrong places during the seizure.</p>
13	Absence seizures	<p>In another type of seizure, the electrical muddle is kept in the brain and the person suddenly stops what they are doing for a few seconds and appears to be daydreaming but they are not. They will not respond to you if you speak to them. It's called an absence seizure – a bit like they are not there, or absent, for a few seconds.</p> <p>This can happen many times in a day so they will miss lots of bits of information unless you realise this is happening and help them catch up.</p>
14	Tonic clonic seizures	<p>In the last type of seizure that we're going to learn about, the electrical messages get muddled in the brain and are sent out to all the muscles in the body to make them go stiff. It's got a rhyming name: tonic clonic seizure</p> <p>Activity- Ask the children to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put your arm in the air and make a fist – making the muscles as hard as possible. This is your brain sending electrical messages to your arm muscles to work hard. • To stand normally, we need a mixture of muscles being relaxed and tight. When all the muscles are made to go tight and stiff during the seizure, it causes the person to fall over. • Put your arms in the air again. This time, turn the muscles on, then off, then on, then off ... faster until shaking. This is what happens to the person's muscles after the stiffening and

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15		<p>causes their arms and legs to shake.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask pupils – did it hurt? No, because our bodies are made to move. But a person with epilepsy can't choose when or where they are going to have a seizure, so they might be banging their arm against a table leg. This won't hurt during the seizure because no messages from the arm are going to get through to the brain (because it's trying to sort out the muddle) - but when the seizure passes their arm will be sore.
	Key point 4: Keep the person safe	<p><u>Here's our next key point:</u> ... our job is to keep the person safe whilst they are having a seizure.</p>
	Safety	<p><i>Ask the children to suggest what could be done to keep the person safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move things out of the way. Put something soft under their head. <p>After a few minutes the person wakes up. They may feel tired as their muscles have all been very active – like you running round the play ground a few times, but after a rest they are fine.</p>
17	Key point 5: Join in with activities	<p><u>Here's our last key point:</u> People with epilepsy can join in activities just like everyone else.</p> <p>People worry about keeping someone with epilepsy safe. They are more likely to hurt themselves when they fall if it is hard ground than if it's soft so sometimes they are not allowed to join in activities just in case they have a seizure. Sitting in a comfy chair all day would be the safest thing to do but very dull! These are children remember, and they want to have fun like everyone else.</p> <p>Let's look at some of the activities that children your age do and think about what might happen if someone had a seizure and whether we can make it safe.</p>

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18	Ride a bike	<p>Ask children: What might happen if someone had a seizure while doing this? How can we make this safe?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They may fall off, or crash into something or someone - wear a helmet, avoid busy roads, ride with a friend.
19	Swimming	<p>Ask children: What might happen if someone had a seizure while swimming? How can we make this safe?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They may go under the water or drown - tell the lifeguard so they can keep a close eye on them, swim with a confident swimmer nearby in the pool.
20	Playing Sports	<p>Ask children: What might happen if someone had a seizure while playing football? How can we make this safe?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They may fall over and stop the game - who keeps everyone safe during a match? The referee - he'll pause the game and make sure that they are ok.
21	Discos/Parties	<p>Ask children: What might happen if someone had a seizure while at a party? How can we make this safe?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The flashing lights may trigger a seizure and the person may hurt themselves. If lots of people are crowded around and dancing, they might get trodden on or people might not notice straight away - make sure an adult knows, only 5 out of every 100 people who have epilepsy are sensitive to flashing lights
22-24	Key point summary	<p>Let's see who can remember the five key points. Prompt as necessary to enable children to remember the key points</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Epilepsy is a problem with the electrical messages in the brain.</i> 2. <i>When the electrical messages in the brain get muddled up, the person may have a seizure.</i> 3. <i>People who have epilepsy usually take medicine every day.</i>

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		<p>4. <i>During a seizure, keep the person safe</i></p> <p>5. <i>People with epilepsy can join in activities just like everyone else.</i></p>
25	Young Epilepsy logo	<p><i>Challenge the children to test the grownups at home to see how much they know about epilepsy – you probably know more than them now!</i></p>