




Including Preschoolers with Disabilities

Including Children with Disabilities in Typical Preschool Programs

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Objectives:



- Define Inclusion
- Why include preschoolers with disabilities?
- What does the law say?
- What strategies do we use to include preschoolers?

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Inclusive Education

All children, learning together in environments that provide special services, supports, and supplements for **all children as needed!**



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Inclusive Education Is...

- Based on the simple idea that every child and family is valued equally and deserves the same opportunities and experiences.
- About children with disabilities - mild or severe, hidden or obvious - participating in everyday activities, just like they would if their disability were not present.
- About building friendships, membership and having opportunities just like everyone else.



Where do we begin?



Purpose of special education for students 3 – 21 years

- Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.

» The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)



Question

- It is 2033. Your child is approximately 26 years old? What does a day in the life of your child look like?
 - Morning?
 - Noon?
 - Night?
 - Weekends?

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Today, we know that...

- Development does not “unfold” as a flower
- Optimum development comes from careful and purposeful exposure to an optimal learning environment.
- It's the opposite of the old idea of development starting within the individual...
- Development comes from the social environment...it originates outside of the individual through social interactions and then becomes internalized within
- From this developmental viewpoint, access to typically developing peers provides more learning opportunities for children with disabilities than any specialized, self-contained environment.

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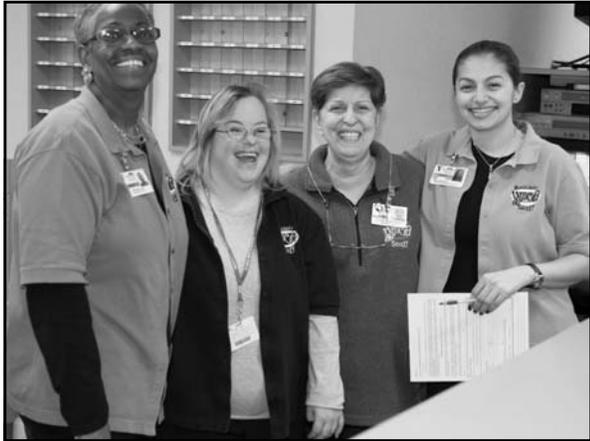
Research and Outcomes of Inclusive Practices

- **Development and Socialization**
 - Programs with 50% typically developing children produce better developmental and social outcomes than programs with fewer than 50% typically developing children. (Streifel et al., 1987)
 - Programs with 80% typically developing children produce twice as much social interaction as segregated environments. (Guralnick, 1990)

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- Congress notes in IDEA that 30 years of research shows special education to be most effective when children with disabilities are educated in the same classroom as nondisabled peers, with maximum access to the same curriculum/activities as their peers.

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This is your vision...

If you keep it in your mind...always...

It will motivate and sustain you on your journey...and

Help you plan for the future...



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How does the law support inclusion for 3-5 year olds?

It is every child's right to be included.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) clearly states that all children with disabilities should be educated with non-disabled children their own age and have access to the same general education curriculum (a.k.a. "activities" for preschoolers).

IN THE LAW, BEING EDUCATED WITH NONDISABLED PEERS IS CALLED THE "LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT" (LRE)



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Inclusion is not....

- Something that happens overnight!
- Just a trend that will pass!



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Transition to Preschool

- N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3(e)(1)(ii) requires that districts provide parents of children in Early Intervention written information on general education classroom options for preschoolers.

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Preschool Memos from the NJ Dept. of Education

- Special education regulations require that to the maximum extent appropriate preschool aged children must be educated with children who are not disabled
- Districts information must "include a statement clearly communicating that access to early childhood programs is available to children with disabilities"
- IEP teams must first consider whether the preschooler could be educated in the general education preschool program and identify modifications, supplementary aids and related services.
- The establishment of a district administered or/and contracted preschool program is considered a potential program placement for a preschool child with a disability

Feb. 4, 1999 and May 12, 2000

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Inclusive Options for Preschoolers in New Jersey

- Typical preschool program within the child's district or in a nearby public school district
- District contracts/collaborates with an early childhood program in another public agency such as Head Start or with a private preschool near the child's home. Special education and related services are provided on an itinerant basis. May include an inclusion aide.

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When should this happen?

- Transition conference when child is 30 to 32 months old
 - Parents discuss vision for their child
 - District representative is there and should share the message that the child is entitled to consideration of a typical preschool setting (whether or not the district administers their own!)
- IEP meeting when the child is 32 to 35 months old
 - only occurs if the parent has consented to evaluation, the child has been evaluated and found eligible for special education services

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What does a good inclusive classroom look like?

WHAT DOES A GOOD INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM LOOK LIKE?



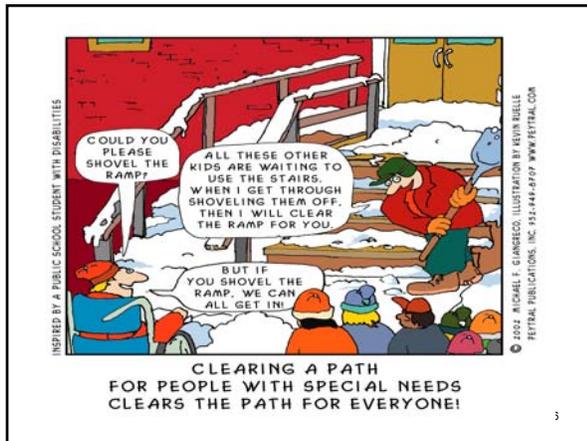
It looks like any other great classroom:

- All students engaged in high quality curriculum
- Environment consisting primarily of typically developing children
- Classroom rules are stated positively and posted in pictorial form
- Clean and organized
- Materials at eye level for all children to see & touch
- Feet are touching the floor and tables are adjusted for height
- Toys and materials are accessible
- Sound level is adequate and there are quiet areas in the room
- Center areas are labeled with pictures and words
- Toys and materials are in easy-to-manipulate containers

Philadelphia Inclusion Network,
Child and Family Studies Research
Programs, Thomas Jefferson University

How do we create environments that welcome and support the participation of all children?

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- Environmental Supports
- Material Adaptations
- Activity Adaptations
- Child Preferences
- Special Equipment/Assistive Technology
- Adult Support
- Peer Support
- Invisible Supports

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The Art Center

Allow the children to stand, to kneel on a chair, or to straddle a chair while working at the art table.
 Hold the paper for the child while they are cutting.
 Provide crayons and markers in multiple sizes, and build up the handles of paintbrushes
 Secure the paper that the child is working on to the table top

Use brightly colored toys.

Put sand/water in individual tubs to define play space.

Allow the child who is 'anxious' about playing in the water or sand the opportunity to observe first.

Provide different materials, (rocks, packing popcorn, dry macaroni) in order to expose the child to different feels & textures.



The Sand & Water Area

Use Bean Bag chairs.

Provide assorted book styles, from cloth to hard board books

Utilize books on tape or electronic books to peak interest.

Encourage children to bring in their favorite book or story.

Add an area rug to reduce noise.



The Library Corner



Model block play and frequently remind children of the rules of the block area.

Use mats, tape or trays to define the children's work space.

Limit the number of blocks.

Make available and rotate different types of blocks.



The Outdoor Area

Start with one step instructions for activities

Provide picture cues.

Model activities and proper behavior.

For group motor & music activities, provide hula hoops, rubber mats or other devices to define personal space.

Allow students the opportunity to: initiate the activity, select the music, pick the dance, etc.



The Movement & Music Area

Think of many of our students (with and without disabilities) as “bilingual”, with their primary language being “visual”



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Use Visual Supports to Address Behavioral “Triggers”

- **Job and routine checklists** can increase independence and prevent confusion/frustration of not knowing how to get routine or job done.
- **Social stories/scripts** can explain social rules, explain “why”, explain more complicated routines.
- **Rules lists** can clarify expectations.
- **Reinforcement visuals** can help clarify the system used to motivate students to exhibit appropriate behavior.

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Tier One: Pre-School Expectations

Student Behavior Expectations:

- “We use walking feet, We take turns, and We use soft touch”
- Used by Head Start program in Kansas

(Fox et al., 2005)

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Behavioral Expectations

We Walk.



We Keep Hands to Self.



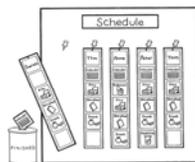
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Schedules

Example of a weekly schedule

MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Example of a group schedule



Example of a daily schedule

Daily Schedule: Tuesday	
8:00	Circle Time
8:30	Play Time
9:00	Story Time
9:30	Snack
10:00	Outdoor Play
10:30	MUSIC
11:00	Learning Centers

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Task Lists for Independent Work, Jobs & Routines

Example of a job chart

He/Pers	
John	Turn on the lights
Frank	Water plants
Emily	Snacks
Carrie	Calendar Person
Justin	Feed fish
Max	Go to the Office

Example of a visual for a routine



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Model Preschool Inclusion

Carefully planned individual interventions



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WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?



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AFTER ONLY TWO MONTHS AS A TEACHER ASSISTANT, GLADYS FINDS HER SPELLING HAS IMPROVED, MATH SKILLS ARE HONED, AND SHE HAS DISCOVERED SHE HAS ARTISTIC ABILITY.

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HELPER OR FACILITATOR?



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JOEY NOTICED A MYSTERIOUS FORCE FIELD AROUND HIS ASSISTANT THAT CHILDREN COULD NOT BREAK THROUGH.

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When supporting students with disabilities in general education classrooms an

“only as special as necessary”

approach should be used.



Know the student and give just the right amount of support; not too much/not too little.

1. What does the activity look like?

2. What can the child/children do independently?	3. What do the children need assistance doing?	4. What can't they do?
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Determine whether an adaptation of the activity or material is needed.

- If child can participate independently, none is needed;
- Least adapted considered first
 - Same task, but with peer or adult assistance?
 - Different expectations?
 - Modified materials?
 - Parallel activity in same environment?
- Avoid stigma as much as possible
 - Consider Universal Adaptations

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All children learn in different ways

Inclusion is about providing the help children need to learn and participate in meaningful ways.

Sometimes, help from friends or teachers works best. Other times, specially designed materials or technology can help.

The key is to give only as much help as needed.



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Hierarchy for Questioning, Cueing, and Prompting

***Less
Intrusive

- 1) **Draw attention to natural cues using gestures or in a natural way**
(Pointing to a picture schedule) *What comes next?*
Right! It's time for Circle!
- 2) **Ask a question about a necessary action**
"What do we do next to get ready for lunch?"
- 3) **Give an option**
"It's time to play. Do you want to go to the art center or house corner?"
- 4) **Tell a student what action to take**
"It's time for morning circle. Sit down on the rug next to Mary."
- 5) **Tell the student and physically guide through what action to take**

More
Intrusive

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Be prepared to honor choices!

Give Structured Choices

- WITHIN: Which problems to do?
- BETWEEN: This or that?
- WITH WHOM: Which partner?
- WHERE: Location for activity?
- WHEN: When to go to locker?
- REFUSAL: Retake the test or not?

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Using Visual Supports to Teach Skills

- A **feelings choice board** can help students learn to express emotions instead of using interfering behaviors.
- **Social stories/scripts** can explain social rules, explain “why”, explain more complicated routines.
- **Comic strip conversations** can help students “practice” social interactions and problem solving skills.

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Teaching Sensory Replacements

When It's Too Noisy

It's too noisy!



I can put on headphones.

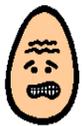
Now it's quieter. I feel better!



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Teaching Self-Calming Skills

When I'm MAD



“I'm MAD !!”



I take 5 big breaths.

Now I feel Calm!



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Should I use visual supports if my student can “talk”?

- Communication is NOT just speech.
- Communicating involves *expressing* and *understanding* what other express.
- Just because a student talks, it doesn't mean they are effectively *communicating*.
- Using visuals can help students understand (receptive language) even if they seem to talk a lot (expressive language).
- Using visual supports does NOT prevent students from talking.

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Tips for Using Visual Supports

- Never answer students' questions verbally without referencing the visual.
 - “Let's check your schedule to see when we have lunch, Timmy.”
- Help students see visual supports as their own tools that will help them.
- If you have created the visual, use it **often**.
- Whenever possible, pair verbal directions with a visual (remember, verbal prompts are far more difficult to fade!).

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Helpful Resources

- <http://speakingofspeech.com> (lots of examples of visuals supports as pdf files for *free* download)
- www.do2learn.com (lots of examples of visuals supports for *free* download)
- www.UseVisualStrategies.com (articles, products to order and a *free* e-newsletter from Linda Hodgdon)
- www.mayer-johnson.com (download a *free* trial of Boardmaker; also products to order)
- www.challengingbehavior.org (pre-school specific behavior information)

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Questions????



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