

table of contents

introduction

section 1	<i>philosophy of inclusion & educational reform</i>	1
section 2	<i>the IEP process</i>	13
section 3	<i>roles of team members</i>	21
section 4	<i>working as a team</i>	29
section 5	<i>the curriculum & instructional design process</i>	33
section 6	<i>special issues</i>	41
section 7	<i>partnering with parents</i>	49
section 8	<i>syndromes & disabilities</i>	55
section 9	<i>bibliography</i>	65
appendix	<i>universal health precautions</i>	68
	<i>medications</i>	70
	<i>seizures</i>	72
	<i>choking</i>	74
	<i>adaptive equipment</i>	77
	<i>print and a/v resources for teachers and students</i>	89
	<i>resource organizations</i>	101
	<i>glossary</i>	106

With inclusion, students with disabilities are part of the regular classroom, led by the regular classroom teacher. Their academic programs are provided in this setting, with support to the level necessary by the special education teacher, an integrating aide, therapists, or other specialists. They take part in both the formal and informal social activities throughout the day. Through interaction with students their own age, they assimilate the interests and mannerisms of their peers. They lose many of the stereotypic behaviors often associated with disabling conditions.

Students with disabilities who attend inclusive schools participate in the full range of school events. They are provided with special services only as necessary according to the nature and severity of their specific disabilities. Each student's academic program draws from what is occurring in the regular classroom, with the necessary special assistance and modifications. Special therapies are also part of the regular instructional program. Students are no longer separated from the typical school environment through various segregated programs — they are just another member of the group.

"Evonne had all her therapies in the classroom. Sometimes the children would help. They'd talk to her or read to her while the therapist 'ranged' (stretched) her. She was part of everything we did."

"Michael could do most of the academic curriculum. But his attention span was really short. So we broke the work periods into shorter segments. Michael had a checklist where he crossed off assignments as he completed them. For every three he finished, he earned ten minutes on the computer. This system kept him going. He became a really productive member of our class."

"Carlos can't talk, so we had to figure out a way for him to be able to communicate. We started with the 'Woof,' which electronically says phrases for him when he pushes a button. He's gone a long way since I had him in the first grade. The fifth grade teacher showed me his first 'story' — he wrote it on a word processor. Just two words, 'Love Mom.' You can bet his mother will treasure that. I know I would."

advantages of the inclusion model

The inclusion model has advantages for everyone. This is what makes inclusion an effective educational model for the whole community, as well as for students with disabilities.

For students with disabilities, independence and the opportunity to learn how to do things for themselves are important benefits. For students with developmental disabilities, this might mean acquiring basic communication and self-help skills. For students with learning disabilities it might mean developing self-management techniques or organizational strategies. For students with physical disabilities, it might mean learning to use adaptive equipment for mobility and self-expression.

Roles of Team Members

"At first it was quite confusing; who does what on the team? I had worked with consultant teachers before. They basically ran a parallel curriculum for one or two kids. They seemed more like a tutor than a real teacher. And what about all these therapists? I didn't even know who they were, let alone what they did. The facilitator they hired to 'make us a team' really earned her money! It took a lot of work, but I feel really good about what we do together. The kids are learning. Not just the curriculum, but about what it means to be responsible, what it means to be a human being."

overview

One of the interesting things about inclusion is that it changes relationships among members of the school community. It eliminates the artificial distinctions between regular and special education staff. It also involves students in decisions about their own education and those of their peers. It enhances the partnership between parents and schools, and encourages parent involvement in decision-making. Perhaps most importantly, it shifts responsibility for student performance from individual teachers to teams of professionals who work together to promote student success. Adaptation to these changes is facilitated by a clear articulation of the role and responsibilities of each team member.

the role of the building administrator

The building administrator has the critical role of providing the leadership necessary to create an inclusive school. As a leader, the school administrator helps school personnel redefine their roles in a manner which is compatible with school-based management and the inclusion of all students in the regular school environment. The administrator leads the school community away from traditional roles and toward the concept of a collaborative team in which everyone is a contributing member of the group.

relationships or misperceptions of social cues are often interpreted as intentionally disruptive behaviors. Rather than dealing with these as intentionally noncompliant or disruptive, the team must try to determine what the student is trying to say, or what the misperception is.

Before deciding how to intervene around a certain behavior, it is important to determine whether the behavior truly is disruptive, and why it is occurring. You will need to make note of what happens before and after the behavior in question. Once the necessary information has been obtained, the team members can work together to develop and implement a plan to change that behavior. Obviously, if the disruptive behavior is endangering any students, then the team will also have to put in place some immediate measures to ensure the safety of those involved.

"Children adjust well to disruptions and noise. When Janie was in my first grade, she cried a lot, and kind of moaned. I noticed the other children watched her out of the corner of their eyes. I was concerned they might be frightened. So we had a circle time about it with Janie right there. I asked the children if there were anything that worried them about how Janie communicated. John said, 'I was scared she was hurt when she cried. But she cries one way when she's happy, and when she wants something or she's sick, she cries a different way.' When I asked John how he figured that out, he looked kind of exasperated, and pointed to the 'Math Our Way' number line. 'Well,' he said, 'she's been here 132 days.'"

accountability

Teachers often wonder about how to evaluate students with disabilities. Will they be accused of watering down standards if they reward individual accomplishment on tasks well below grade level? Will they be held accountable for failure to teach 'basic skills'?

The assumptions of the mainstreaming model often exacerbate these concerns. How can you help students with disabilities attain average success on developmental norms when 'special' education teachers have been unable to do so?

The inclusion model does not place this demand on teachers. It acknowledges that the classroom experience is valuable to all students, not only for the academics but also for the richness of its 'embedded curricula' — organizational routines, social interactions, and opportunities for self-expression. Access to these hidden treasures of classroom culture, along with appropriate curriculum accommodations, is what the inclusion model seeks for students with disabilities.