

INCLUSION PANEL VS. RESOURCE ROOM DISCUSSION

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Definitions Regarding Inclusion

Inclusion refers to the process of educating students with special education needs in the regular education classroom, and bringing support services to the child instead of in a separate setting. Inclusion assumes that the best educational placement is in the regular education classroom, in the child's home or neighborhood school, and only requires that the child will benefit from being in the regular class. Inclusion differs from Mainstreaming, in which special education students participate in selected regular education classes, and the assumption is that the child must be able to 'keep up' and/or behave appropriately to participate. Accommodations and Modifications refer to supplemental aids and services to be provided to the student. Accommodations involve adapting the instructional strategies and/ or altering the classroom environment; modifications involve changing the program or curriculum to enable the student to participate in the regular education classroom. The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) refers to the concept that each child will be educated in the classroom and school that a nondisabled child would attend, to the maximum extent possible.

The following considerations can make inclusion decisions more positive and appropriate:

- ❖ Mandated full inclusion is not appropriate, just as mandated special class placement is inappropriate. Inclusion decisions must be made on an individual basis, and a continuum of placements (from full inclusion to the more restrictive options of separate class, etc.) should be considered and available to each child. The Individual Education Plan for each child should be specific as to what services are required, who will deliver them, and in what extent/ and setting.
- ❖ Inclusion philosophies in schools tend to be more successful if adopted school-wide and fostered by the administration. It takes a great deal of collaboration to intertwine regular and special education staff successfully, and cooperation makes the process more fluent.
- ❖ Inclusion is NOT a measure to save money and resources on special education programs....it takes people and funds to make an inclusive setting work for each child.
- ❖ Inclusion should not serve to promote parallel instruction, that is, a child sitting in a regular classroom doing separate work, and segregated with an individual aide. In the best possible setting, an inclusion aide works with nondisabled peers to help them model and learn collaboratively with the child with special needs. Your child will learn much from their peers in an inclusive setting, and you don't want the adults to interfere with that process and hinder friendships.
- ❖ Parents should take opportunities to observe different special education settings before making decisions about their child's LRE. Expectations for education in the regular education classroom should be made with an understanding that the classroom teacher will be attempting to treat your child as he or she treats every other child (with appropriate modifications and accommodations.) Inclusion is not intended to promote

special treatment, low expectations, and excuse the responsibilities of the student. Good inclusion settings allow the nondisabled students to view the special education student as a peer, and friend, and not only as someone who needs help.

Selected Resources for Inclusion

Family Village Website www.familyvillage.wisc.edu

Inclusive Education Website www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/index.html

Best of Inclusion (resources and publications) www.inclusion.com

Inclusion Resources www.quasar.ualberta.ca/ddc/incl/inclusion.html

Online Textbook - Collaborative Teaching: Special Education for Inclusive Classrooms
www.parrotpublishing.com/