

Surpassing Least Restrictive Environment...

Practical Inclusive Education In New Mexico



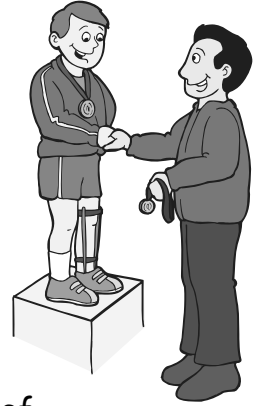
Improving Outcomes for All Students By
Creating Schools Where All Students Belong!



Parents Reaching Out
Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family

Summer 2009

Few will have the greatness to bend history itself,
but each of us can work to change
a small portion of events,
and in the total of all of those acts
will be written the history of this generation.



It is from the numberless diverse acts of courage and belief
that human history is shaped.

Each time a person stands up for an ideal,
or acts to improve the lot of others,
or strikes out against injustice,
they send forth a tiny ripple of hope...those ripples build a current
that can sweep down the mightiest walls
of oppression and resistance.

Robert Kennedy, 1966



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Greetings from Parents Reaching Out

Inclusive schools may be one of the most important issues that our society faces today. In the 70's, children with special needs were first allowed to participate in school. We all thought that special schools, special places and special teachers were what our children needed. Researchers have found that providing everything "special" does not necessarily improve results for children with disabilities. Children with disabilities have better outcomes when they are supported and educated with their non-disabled peers in the general education classroom. The charts on the following page show that students without disabilities do better, too! Inclusive settings offer greater opportunities for students with disabilities to contribute to their communities and enjoy productive lives as adults! Imagine that!

The safeguards, supports and services provided by special education are only part of the picture for improving results for children with disabilities. The *learning environment* where children are educated and the *opportunities* they receive in this environment are critical for student success. In fact, research shows that these factors may have more to do with who they become as adults, than anything else. To improve results, parents and educators have to become *risk takers*.

For educators, this means recalling the real reasons they went into the teaching profession: to help children be prepared for life and to instill a love of learning in leaders for tomorrow! It may mean trying something *new* or modifying something familiar. For parents who believe that an invisible safety net surrounds a segregated special education placement, this will mean trying a new perspective that extends this net to the entire school environment. Improving student outcomes means *pushing the envelope* to advocate for supports, services and well-trained teachers to help children succeed in this place we call "school".

New Mexico schools are facing challenges as they work to improved student outcomes. In national comparisons of states, New Mexico ranks near or at the bottom in most educational categories including services in the Least Restrictive Environment. States that rank high in student achievement, reduced drop-out rates and employability also have high ratings for providing services in the least restrictive environment. Schools that focus on what children need to learn and modify instruction to bring out the best in each learner actually improve outcomes for all students. If we apply this message, we can make a difference for children in New Mexico.

This book includes strategies and resources for families and schools to use in working together to meet the needs of all students and create truly inclusive schools. Our booklet offers::

1. A dream for the future;
2. A vision for restructuring schools to meet each child's unique needs; and
3. Guidance to make inclusive schools a reality for every child.

We encourage you to take risks, try new paths and remember:

Special education is a service ~ not a place!



After High School, seventy percent of students with disabilities are under-employed, un-employed or stay home. We must prepare our children to live in a world after high school where there are no self-contained classrooms, no special education malls and no special education.

Bob Pasternack, Alliance Conference, 2003

Inclusive Settings Benefit All Students!

The charts below compare student progress as measured by the Basic Academic Skills Samples (BASS) – a group administered instrument designed to assess student achievement in math and reading. Both students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers made more progress in reading and math when instruction was provided in an *inclusive* setting. **Yes, inclusive environments provide opportunities for successful outcomes for all learners!**

Students with disabilities	Inclusive setting	Segregated setting
Math	43.3 %	35.9 %
Reading	45.9 %	41.9 %

% measures amount of students who improved

Authors: C.M. Cole and M. Majd, Indiana University, Nancy Waldron, Florida University (2002)

Students without disabilities	Inclusive setting	Segregated setting
Math	60.7 %	37.5 %
Reading	53.6 %	45.9 %

% measures amount of students who improved

Authors: C.M. Cole and M. Majd, Indiana University, Nancy Waldron, Florida University (2002)

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The Best Place In all The World, Is Right Beside A Friend.



Inclusive Education Means Welcome!

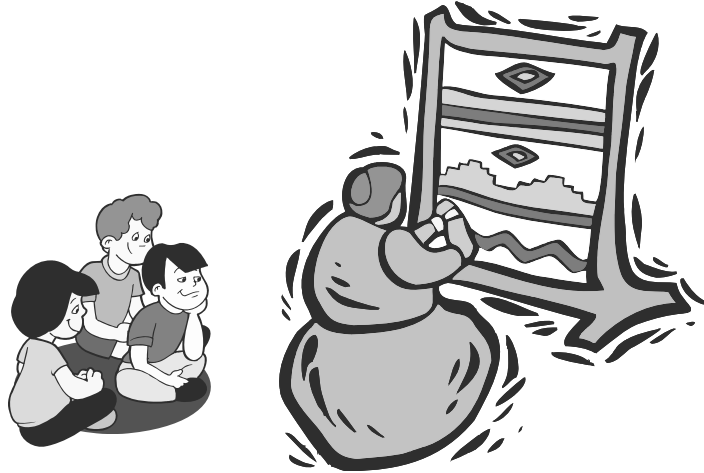
Your children should feel valued and know that they belong.

Every child comes to school with a unique set of gifts that they can contribute to the group. Inclusive schools recognize these gifts and value the individual. All students are welcomed in an inclusive school regardless of ethnicity, culture, economic status, learning style or ability. Students learn because they are accepted for who they are and encouraged to be all that they can be as they participate in meaningful activities with high expectations.

How is an inclusive school possible? It takes vision, teamwork, flexibility, training, and planning. Every student benefits when the focus is on inclusion. The rewards are great. That is the reason why more and more New Mexico schools are making the practical choice to provide inclusive education!

Section 1

Inclusive Education



Have you ever been excluded from an activity? Most of us would say "yes" and remember the hurt. Inclusive practices adapt activities so that all can participate in meaningful ways regardless of disability, economic status, language or culture. Kids succeed! We can improve student outcomes by using inclusive practices in our schools.

Wait a minute. As parents and educators, it seems like the system is *always* giving us 'one more thing' to do. Each new initiative is something else added to our plate. Our schools have become containers of bits of this and pieces of that and our kids still don't have great outcomes as adults. Will *inclusion* make a difference, or will it be the straw that broke the camel's back?

It might help if we look at this picture in a different way. What if we took the bits and pieces that are supposed to happen in school and thought of them as pieces of thread? What if we began learning how to weave these threads into strands? What if we worked together to weave these strands into a beautiful blanket designed to bring success to *all* children? This inclusive blanket brings each thread together for a common purpose. With practice and cooperation each weaving becomes who we are and what we do. *Inclusion becomes the natural way we do things in schools.*

We believe that when educators and parents focus on common goals, they become weavers of the future. Like anything new, it will be work in the beginning, but the outcomes for all of us will be awesome!

What is Inclusive Education?

The collaboration between regular and special educators brings new teaching methods into the general education setting. All students with varying learning styles and abilities can benefit. Inclusive education helps peers learn to deal with others that are different from them and how to respect individual differences. It builds self-esteem and creates caring communities of learners.

It is extremely important that we all understand what inclusive education is and what it is not. Together, we need to explore the benefits that general education offers our children in addition to what the research and best practices say about inclusive education.

Supported Inclusive Education IS:

- All students receiving an education that meets their individual needs
- Bringing supports and services to students where they need them
- Providing training and supports to teachers that help them teach with confidence
- General and special educators, administrators, and peers sharing responsibility for educating all students
- Significant use of cooperative learning, flexibility in scheduling, peer tutoring and differentiated instruction
- Focusing on students' strengths and teaching them by incorporating their areas of interest
- Placement determined by individual student needs



Supported Inclusive Education IS NOT:

- Providing supports and services only in special education settings
- Special educators taking full responsibility for students with disabilities
- Expecting regular educators to teach students with disabilities without support
- Focusing on student weaknesses
- Placement determined by disability label, the severity of disability, available resources/space, or administrative convenience
- Lessening the special education support services that a child needs
- Dumping a child in a “regular class” and hoping for the best

“I want to be included!” This simple statement is being spoken, signed, facilitated, key-boarded, whispered, and shouted by people of all ages, shapes, sizes, colors, and cultures.

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint

The General Education Setting

What does general education offer?

A classroom full of typical peers, who are expressing ideas, having conversations, asking questions, and behaving age-appropriately!

A rich curriculum, which can be adapted for any student!

High expectations!

Friendships!

A great variety of experiences!

A chance to belong in a natural community setting!

Opportunities to prepare to become a productive member of society!



What does the Research say?

Parents and educators have been led to believe that we need specialists to teach our children, even for the slightest of discrepancies. The research has shown that a lot of the special stuff has not really taught our children what they need to know to make it through life. The plain simple truth is that a good teacher is a *good* teacher. Good teachers are the best gift we can offer to our children. With appropriate supports, good teachers can be successful with all children in an inclusive setting.

In a 1994 review of effective environments for educating students with special needs, Baker et al., “concluded that regardless of the type of disability or grade level of the student, ‘special needs students educated in regular classes do better academically and socially than comparable students in non-inclusive settings.’”

In 1995, “The U.S. Department of Education reported that ‘across a number of analyses of post school results, the message was the same: those who spent more time in regular education experienced better results after high school.’”

Villa and Thousand, 2000, *Restructuring for Caring and Effective Education*

In 1997, in light of all the evidence, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act stated “over 20 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access in the general education curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate...” (20 U.S.C. 1400(c) (5))

Meaningful Participation

The key to a student's meaningful participation is creative thinking on the part of the student's support team, which always has at least four options for arranging the student's participation in general education activities. We invite you to check out the information on pages 24-25 and our Resources section for more ideas on adaptations that can help kids succeed.

A student can do the *same* things as everyone else (e.g., practice songs in music).

Multi-level curriculum and instruction can occur; that is, all students can be involved in a lesson in the same curriculum area, but pursue varying objectives at multiple levels based on their unique needs. (For example, in math, students might be applying computation skills with regrouping – some with complex word problems, others with one-digit subtraction problems, and still others with materials that illustrate counting with correspondence.)

Curriculum overlapping involves students working on the same lesson, but pursuing objectives from different curricular areas. (For example, in science, students can work in cooperative groups while dissecting frogs. While most students are identifying body parts, one student could be working on communication goals or turn taking).

Alternate activities may be added to a child's schedule to allow for community based work options or to address management needs (e.g., catheterization in the nurse's office). Alternate activities can be considered when regular activities cannot be adapted.

Villa and Thousand, 1995, *Creating an Inclusive School*

The Research says:

“Benefits described by (typical) students revolve around several themes, including improvement in self-concept, growth in social cognition, and reduced fear of human differences

(Peck, et al., 1990).”

“...Some of the instructional strategies and organizational approaches typically introduced into the general education setting for the purpose of supporting identified students actually yield academic benefits for a far wider range of students (Manset and Semmel, 1997).”

McGregor and Vogelsberg, 1998, *Inclusive Schooling Practices: Pedagogical and Research Foundations*



Creating Inclusive Schools

Attitude is everything! Inclusion is more than physical presence in the classroom. Students learn when they actively participate in the academic lessons and interact with others. We must believe that all students can participate. Our actions must value the student and their independence. We cannot afford to cling to past failures. It's time to focus on the potential of the present to plan future success.

We have gathered information from many sources including work by Project Participate, the Bayridge Consortium including publications by Dr. Richard Villa et al, Pacer Center and others to highlight some common sense ideas about inclusive settings.

Tips for Creating Meaningful, Inclusive Learning Environments

Listen and Share

Student success is the responsibility of everyone on the team. Everyone involved has valuable insights. Share stories, critical bits of information that one learns from daily contact with the student, or ideas from home. Collaborate when identifying lesson goals and modifications. Troubleshoot problems together.

Create and Design Universally

Design instruction and choose materials that make the learning activities accessible to all students. Involve staff and parents in planning activities. Plan and consider all differences in abilities including speaking, sight, hearing, movement, reading, writing, attention, memory, and organization skills.

Promote Independence

Independence builds self-esteem and preserves the student's integrity. Students learn independence by doing tasks, not by watching others do for them. Academics and social activities should be structured to encourage active participation.

Positive Peer Power

A student's peers are an excellent resource. They are probably the most under-used source for support or ideas to make inclusive practices really work in today's schools. Students can act as peer buddies, coaches or learning partners. Peers make great consultants for programming communication devices or suggesting new ways to increase participation.



Little Things Make a Big Difference!

Collaborate, communicate and promote the participation of students with disabilities throughout the school environment. When the entire school community looks at success for all students—everyone comes out a winner. Very often, sharing the smallest spark of an idea can lead to great learning opportunities.

Special Education is a Service. . . *Not a Place*



Children receive their education with a community of learners in a place called school!

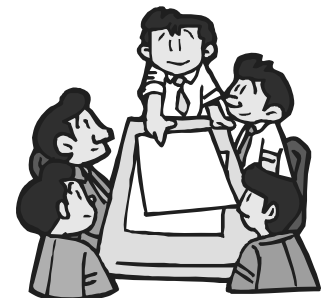
Children with disabilities and their non-disabled peers should have every opportunity to learn from one another in a variety of instructional settings.

The Individualized Education Program identifies supports and services to help the child succeed. Following the step-by-step process of the IEP should lead to an appropriate program for the child in the Least Restrictive Environment. Supports and services come to the child in a setting that meets the child's needs in this learning community.

In New Mexico, it seems one of the biggest barriers to inclusive schools is a literal, and *misinterpretation* of the funding formula. In New Mexico, each student receives one unit of funding automatically. The dollar amount changes each year based on legislative appropriation and total number of students in the state. In essence, the number of students, plus other predicted factors like the number and levels of service of students receiving special education services are determined and divided into the legislative appropriation to arrive at the unit value. On top of the unit generated by each student, additional units may be generated based, in the case of students who receive special education services, on their level of service. Additional units are provided to bring the school supplementary funding to meet the needs of students in the least restrictive environment. Unfortunately, in past practice, the A, B C, D, levels of funding have been translated, literally into placement where we find all "D-level students" in a self-contained, 8:1 PTR classroom. A, B, C and D (or the 1, 2, 3, 4 service levels) do not mean a particular place but refer to levels of funding attached to minimum, moderate, extensive and maximum levels of service. **Neither the funding nor the level of service is attached to the location in which the services are provided.**

We must remember that placement refers to a continuum of supports and services to help the child succeed. This decision is made at the IEP meeting by the IEP Team only after the team has shared all available information about the child including present levels of performance, education needs, appropriate goals and objectives. At the end of the meeting, the discussion should focus on what the student needs to meet the goals set forth in the IEP and what supports, modifications or accommodations the student and teacher need for success in the general education classroom. The supports, modifications or accommodations need to be clearly documented in the IEP. Only then, should the discussion move to the location in which those services will be provided.

IEP teams were never meant to be fiscal agents for funds. That task is left to the Local Education Agency (LEA). School administration working in conjunction with the District should, at a later time, review the IEP and determine the funding level and then submit the appropriate documentation in its quarterly data submission to the NM State Department of Education (SDE) for funding.



Services are provided on an individualized basis according to a student's IEP. The examples below illustrate how services could be provided to meet a student's needs.

Example: A student may need full-time assistance to be successful in the general education classroom. The IEP should describe the type of assistance for both the student and the teacher. The district would receive the *maximum level* of funding because the student will receive assistance *approaching a full day*.

Example: A student receives pullout to the resource room for reading 3 times a week for one hour each time. The district would be funded by the SDE for the *minimum level* of funding because the student receives support *less than 10 percent of the week*.

Example: A student receives pullout to the resource room 3 times a week 1 hour each time for reading with 1 hour of Occupational Therapy 2 times a week and Speech Therapy 3 times a week in 30 minutes sessions. In addition, the Resource Room teacher consults with the general education teacher 30 minutes 2 times a week. The district would be funded from the SDE for the *moderate level* of funding because the student receives support *less than 50 percent of the week but more than 10 percent*.

Example: A student may need counseling 1 hour each day, Therapeutic Recreation for 30 minutes twice a week with 1 hour of specialized reading instruction 3 times a week. The student also needs Speech therapy 30 minutes three times a week and Occupational Therapy 2 times a week. The general education teacher receives consultation from the Occupational Therapist 30 minutes each week and the Special Education teacher 15 minutes 4 times a week. The district would be funded by the SDE for the *extensive level* of funding because the student receives support *greater than 50 percent of the day/week and less than 80 percent*.

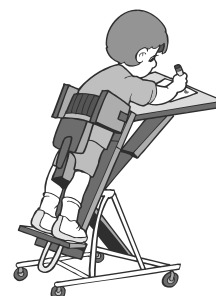
The setting for a student who receives the maximum level should be just as individualized as his or her needs. Maximum service does not automatically mean a segregated classroom. The IEP team must first consider *how supports and services can be brought to the child* in the general education setting with modifications and adaptations to meet the child's needs. Maximum service level can reflect the time spent by a general educator and special educator or related service provider in team or cooperative teaching activity that directly benefits the student. It may include consultations with related service providers or paraeducator support during activities in settings with non-disabled peers. Students are often placed in a segregated classroom because of how they look. Whether or not a child looks disabled should *never* be used as placement criteria. A segregated setting with opportunities to interact with non-disabled peers is only appropriate when it meets the child's needs!

Example: A student who, even with modifications or adaptations, is over-stimulated by the noise or activity of a general education classroom and requires a smaller setting in order to benefit from instruction. A paraeducator escorts the student during general school events to provide relaxation techniques designed to increase the student's ability to adjust to outside stimuli, re-direct the student's attention or relocate to a more quiet space. Peer buddies join the student for a daily outside walk, which has proved to be a good calming strategy. Several typical students join the physical therapy sessions because the student is more cooperative when peers model the exercises (All of the students benefit from the therapy.) The district would be funded by the SDE for the *maximum level* of funding because the student receives assistance *approaching a full day*.

Please review the SDE Regulatory Guidance section and the information in our Resources section entitled, "Unlocking the Mystery of School Funding in New Mexico".

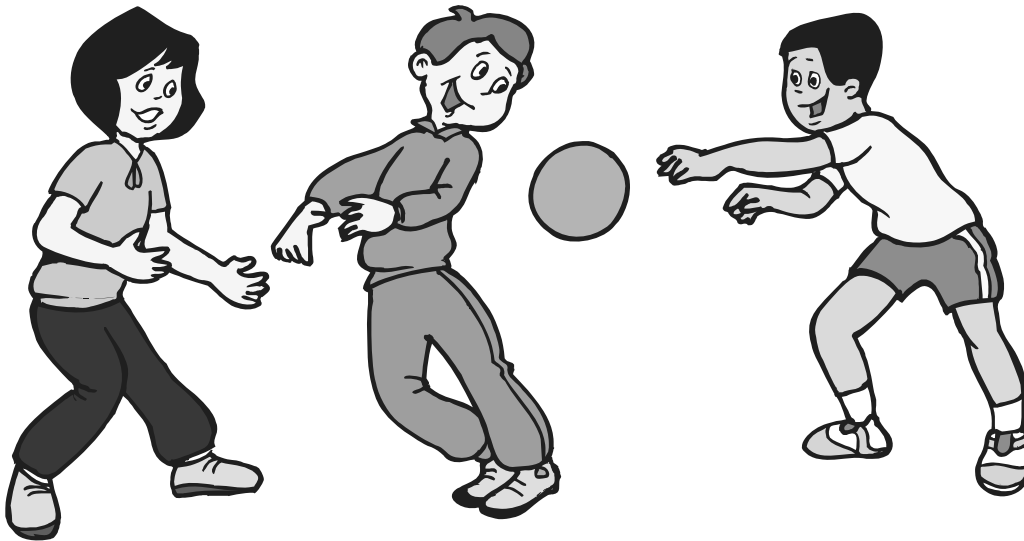
New Mexico's Best Practice Indicators for Least Restrictive Environment

- School staff is aware that when determining placement for a student with a disability, the general classroom is the setting first considered.
- School staff is aware that supplementary aids, supports, and services are linked to the LRE provision.
- School staff is aware that the LRE provision must be adhered to for all students regardless of severity of disability.
- The school develops curriculum, which provide opportunities for all students to learn about and appreciate individual differences among people.
- General and special education personnel have received training in collaborative teaming and creative problem-solving strategies.
- There is adequate planning time for general and special education teachers and other staff to collaborate.
- Families, educators, related service personnel, and students collaborate to write IEP goals and objectives.
- Students with various disabilities (e.g., those with mild, moderate, severe, hearing, emotional, and visual impairments) are members of their age-appropriate general education home school classrooms.
- The supports, aids, and services (e.g., modifications and other instructional methods) required for students with disabilities to be successful in the general education setting are implemented and updated as needed.
- Teams collaborate to: develop peer networks, adapt learning objectives, develop differentiated lessons/assessments, and make materials and environmental adaptations.
- Family input regarding their child's strengths as well as ideas for effective adaptations and accommodations are solicited and considered.
- The principal ensures that professional development is provided for their staff that includes a focus on LRE legal requirements, roles, responsibilities, and best practices.
- The site-based LRE Best Practice Plan addresses ways to:
 - Build consensus for a **vision** of educating all students in shared environments/experiences,
 - Provide school staff with the necessary **skills**,
 - Provide **incentives** to support system and classroom change (e.g., time to meet, training, opportunities to provide or receive mentoring),
 - Allocate the **resources** necessary to meet LRE mandates.



Section 2

Inclusive Practices



Inclusive practices help pave the way for fresh perspectives. As parents, we have to change the way we think about all those specialists and segregated classrooms. For educators, it means that we may have to think of ways we can work with others to create opportunities to reach all learners. For administrators, inclusion may mean re-allocating resources and looking at schedules to build in time for collaboration. Our brightest hope lies with students and their amazing gifts of resilience, curiosity and flexibility. While adults may get stuck in a comfortable "rut", students often adapt quickly and shine in this new environment.

As you read this chapter, think about our schools. Are these things happening? What would it take to make some of these changes? Would the suggested role changes be that difficult if supports for staff and students were a part of the picture? Would it be worth it to improve the results for all children?

It's not change that we mind. *We mind being changed.*

A Student's Perspective

Final Project

by Amanda Bohy, Peer Tutor

I have chosen to reflect on my experience as a peer tutor for my final project. Please share this letter with anyone you would like to. I hope it will show them how beneficial being a peer tutor can be in your life.

I began working with Ricky about a month into the school year. I did it because I didn't have a sixth period and my counselor suggested that I should become a peer tutor. He said it would be good community service and would look good on college applications. So I decided to give it a shot. I was a little nervous at first. I wasn't sure if I would be able to relate with Ricky in a way that we could work together, alone, for an hour. I soon discovered we could. Right away, Ricky and I became friends. He was always smiling and seemed like a really happy person.

Before I met Rick, I was very unhappy. Quite frankly, I believed that life was not enjoyable at all. I was depressed and I didn't smile very much. I had a lot of problems with my friends and family. I hated coming to school.

Ricky changed all that. First off, his smile was contagious. I found myself smiling all through sixth period. I started looking forward to that class every day. Just thinking about Rick made me smile. He made me realize that no matter how bad your life is, you can always make it better. So, I began smiling all the time. I started looking on the bright side of everything.

Even my dad noticed a change in me. He said I seemed much happier and he also credited Ricky for that. I felt better about myself because just as Ricky was helping me, I was helping him. He depended on me every day for his sixth period. Together, we work on his homework, class work, or anything else he needs to get done.

However, at the same time we laugh together, share stories and past experiences. We talk about the future and who we want to be. We talk about life. Ricky and I have become good friends. I am on the road recovering from my depression and I give Rick partial credit for that.

He taught me how to smile. Thousand, Villa, and Nevin, 2002, Creativity and Collaborative Learning

Peer Tutors—Key Players on the Inclusive School Team

Partner learning and peer tutoring systems are not new. Think of all of the learning that goes on during informal activities when children are playing games or when they engage in sporting activities. Student interactions will be even more effective with quality peer training and ongoing support. Peer tutor programs can involve same-age or cross-age connections among students. They can involve students in a single class, paired classes or across an entire school. Positive results in school climate have been one of the many benefits. Effective peer tutoring programs require organization and a significant time commitment from teachers. Schools have found that the initial investments are well worth the time and effort.

“Student tutors experience benefits similar to those of their partners...they develop interpersonal skills and may enhance self esteem. Further, tutors report that they understand the concepts, procedures, and operations they teach at a much deeper level than they did before instructing.”

(Villa and Thousand, 1995, *Creating an Inclusive School*)



Students are the most under-used resource in today's schools!

People who say it won't work *are* right; if our thinking and answers are limited to the solutions we already have in place. Our vision of the new system is based on the value that everyone belongs - all are welcome.

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint

A Teaching Team in Vermont: Nancy and Lia (As told by Nancy)

“Before Lia and I could stand together in front of our students and represent ourselves as a viable teaching team, we had to establish a regular planning time...I had been trained as a secondary science teacher, with little focus placed on making accommodations for students with learning differences. Lia, on the other hand, possessed the very skills I lacked. By combining our teaching skills, we complimented each other.

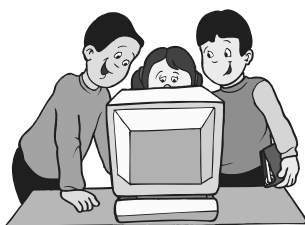
...We both assumed from the beginning that I would be responsible for delivering the content and Lia would assist me...this meant that I took on the tasks related to what and how content would be taught, while Lia supported this instruction by classroom and student management.

In our first year, we had defined our roles along the boundaries of our relative expertise: Lia the special educator, and Nancy, the science teacher. In our second year, we came to see ourselves as teachers of children, not as different types of teachers for different types of children...Now we were two teachers jointly responsible for developing lesson objectives, evaluating student progress, conferencing with parents, managing student behavior, and covering the logistics (e.g., making copies, preparing worksheets, and setting up labs).

Giving general and special educators the opportunity to share their respective expertise as a teaching team opens the door to a richer educational experience for all children. (Emphasis added) By working as a team, members benefit by sharing both the challenges and the fun. I no longer experience teaching as an isolated professional, for I now appreciate the critical part my colleagues play in my professional growth.”

Excerpts from Nancy’s story were taken from the book,

Creating An Inclusive School, by Villa and Thousand (1995)



Inclusive Education Changes the Roles of Educators

“Given the cultural, racial, economic, and religious diversity of communities...the notion and practice of one educator working alone in a classroom is rapidly becoming outdated. In fact, it is probably the most impractical notion in education... Inclusive education redefines the role of the classroom teacher from the ‘lone ranger’ to a ‘partner with supports’.”

Villa and Thousand, 1995, *Creating an Inclusive School*

Models for Co-teaching

Supportive Teaching

- One teacher presents content, second teacher provides enrichment
- Strategies can enhance learning for the entire class

Parallel Teaching

- Work in separate groups in the classroom
- Typically, how a lot of support teachers begin
- If this is the only thing you do--this is not co-teaching
- Only use parallel teaching now and then

Complimentary Teaching

- Teaching students certain learning strategies within the context of a lesson
- Some strategies of this method may include:
 - Content teacher lists things to remember, co-teacher write them down using key words
 - Before content lesson, co-teacher works with students to teach outlining, note taking or mapping skills

Team Teaching

- Both teachers share the whole class instruction
- Teachers divide lessons
- Teachers provide simultaneous instruction



“Inclusion means inviting those who have been left out (in any way) to come in, and asking them to help design new systems that encourage every person to participate to the fullness of their capacity - as partners and as members.”

Marsha Forest & Jack Pearpoint

Redefined Roles Bring Opportunities

This chart illustrates the changes in job responsibilities of school personnel that are evident before and after role definition in inclusive education settings.

<i>Job Title</i>	<i>Traditional Responsibilities</i>	<i>Redefined Responsibilities</i>	
General Education Administrator	<p>Manages the general education program.</p> <p>Cedes responsibility for special programs to special education administrators, although special programs are "housed" within general education facilities.</p>	<p>Manages educational programs for all students.</p> <p>Articulates the vision and provides emotional support to staff as they experience the change process.</p>	<p>Participates as a member of collaborative problem-solving teams that invent solutions to barriers inhibiting the successful inclusion and education of any child.</p> <p>Secures resources to enable staff to meet the needs of all children.</p>
Teacher	<p>Refers students who do not "fit" into the traditional program for diagnosis, remediation, and possible removal.</p> <p>Teaches children who "fit" within the standard curriculum.</p>	<p>Shares responsibility with special educators and other support personnel for teaching all assigned children.</p> <p>Seeks support of special educators and other support personnel for students experiencing difficulty in learning.</p>	<p>Collaboratively plans and teaches with other members of the staff and community to meet the needs of all learners.</p> <p>Recruits and trains students to be tutors and social supports for one another.</p>
Special Educator	<p>Provides instruction to students eligible for services in resource rooms, special classes, and special schools.</p>	<p>Collaborates with general educators and other support personnel to meet the needs of all learners.</p> <p>Team-teaches with regular educators in general education classes.</p>	<p>Recruits and trains students to be peer tutors and social supports for one another.</p>
Paraeducator (Teaching assistant)	<p>Works in segregated programs.</p> <p>If working in general education programs, stays in close proximity to and works only with student(s) eligible for special services.</p>	<p>Provides services to a variety of students in general education settings.</p>	<p>Facilitates natural peer supports within general education settings.</p>

(Partial Chart from Villa and Thousand, 1995, *Creating An Inclusive School*)

Cooperative Learning: Strategies for Improving Outcomes for All Learners

Cooperative learning is much more than a seating arrangement. “It is the instructional use of small groups that allows students to work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning . . . they work through the assignment until all group members have successfully understood and completed it...***When teachers want to maximize students’ learning, increase their retention, and promote the use of higher-level reasoning strategies, they would be well advised to use cooperative rather than competitive or individualistic methods.***”

(Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec, 1994, *The New Circles of Learning*)

- Students must be taught that all of the group members are dependent on each other for success.
- Students should be coached to help, support, and praise each other.
- There must be individual accountability to improve the productivity of each member.
- Students must learn academics and the skills to function as a team.
- Groups must process together and assess whether or not they are achieving their goals, and decide what to continue or change.



“The more students care about each other and the more committed they are to each other’s success, the harder each student will work and the more productive each will be. As relationships become more positive, absenteeism and dropout rates decrease, while commitment to educational goals, feelings of personal responsibility to the school, willingness to take on difficult tasks, motivation... satisfaction ... desire to listen to and be influenced by classmates and teachers, and commitment to each other’s learning and success increase. Thus, to maximize student learning, teachers need to promote caring and committed relationships among classmates.” (Johnson, Johnson, 1994, 1989)

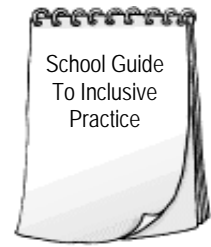
“Individuals care more about each other and are more committed to each other’s success and well-being when they work together cooperatively than when they compete to see who is best or work independently from each other. The more often students learn in cooperative groups, the more they like each other. This is true when students are homogeneous as well as when individuals differ in intellectual ability, handicapping conditions, ethnic membership, social class, and gender.”

“Teaching is changing! The old paradigm is being dropped for a new paradigm based on theory and research. Students construct, discover, transform, and extend their own knowledge. *Learning is something a learner does*, not something that is done to a learner. Students do not passively accept knowledge from the teacher or curriculum. Teacher’s efforts are aimed at developing student’s competencies and talents.”

Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec, 1994, *The New Circles of Learning*

Promote Inclusive Practices

Tips for Administrators



Establish inclusive practices. Include students with IEPs in general education classrooms as you develop classroom assignments. Seek input from parents and teachers that will identify learning and teaching styles to create a good match. If teachers feel apprehensive, identify their concerns and solicit the expertise of the special education staff.

Consult with families. Caregivers are experts on their child, so invite them to meetings and keep them in the communication loop. Make sure that communications are given in parent friendly terms and that written notices are provided to families in their home language.

Define roles and create accountability. Successful inclusion works when the entire staff understands their roles, responsibilities. Ensure that all staff knows their duties. Encourage staff to ask questions to clarify expectations.



Set high expectations for sharing and collaboration. Let your staff know that all teachers are responsible for promoting student learning and participation. Expect that the classroom teachers share lesson plans and offer feedback on modifications and accommodations. Expect special educators to observe general classrooms and assist staff in troubleshooting and problem solving activities.

Facilitate team planning. Create a master schedule that supports shared planning periods for special educators and general classroom teachers. Work with administrators of other schools to share ideas and provide mutual support for inclusive school practices.

Supervise teamwork. Assess progress and productivity. Keep the team on track and prevent tangents. Regularly monitor staff and student participation. Your visibility and participation will serve as a model for others. Walk the talk!

Encourage teachers to vary methods. Remember everyone learns from a variety of modalities. Encourage educators to replace direct instruction with active experiential methods. Provide staff development on learning styles and multiple intelligences to offer additional teaching tools.

Devote money to technology. Technology is the key to academic access for many students. Implement technology that supports the entire classroom.

Train staff on inclusive practices. Your staff needs special skills to meet the demands of a diverse student body. Sponsor in-services to enable your staff to make better modifications and adaptations. Teach the staff how to apply technology in the classroom.

Prevent staff burnout. When one person is the sole expert on a child, their absence creates a school crisis! Encourage staff to alternate and share duties and share knowledge.

Promote Inclusive Practices

Tips for General Educators

Assume Responsibility. YOU are the teacher. Do not delegate this important role to others, even when other professionals accompany a student in the classroom.



Greet students every day. Get to know your students. Saying hello to a student requires no prep time and helps the student feel like a member of the class.

Promote Socialization. Seat students with students! Adults sitting with students may inhibit peer interactions. Encourage paraeducators to sit off to the side or away from students as they build independence.

Expect Success. Expect everyone to learn and participate in the classroom. Share this expectation with students and staff members. Remember that participation and learning occur on many levels. Adjust the demands of an activity or assignment to match student ability.

Vary instructional methods! Make learning an active experience for ALL students. Create cooperative learning groups. Encourage partner learning. Provide students with a variety of resource materials, projects, workshop formats, and experiential activities. Students can demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways.

Share your lessons and plans. You are not alone. When you share your plans, the learning specialist can adapt or modify the content to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Set clear expectations for students. Students thrive when they know what is expected of them and routines are clearly established. If a student requires a Behavior Improvement Plan, take an active part in developing the plan to insure that the student has the supports needed to be successful in the classroom. Make you have a copy of the plan and understand your responsibilities.

Share your ideas and feelings. It's okay to express your fears and opinions. Phrase concerns in specific terms. Instead of saying "I don't think this student belongs here!" try saying "How can I make Shakespeare dialog meaningful for this student?" If you feel you need more training or support to modify activities, ask for it!



Resist temptations to talk through paraeducators or other support staff. Taking the time to direct greetings, questions and explanations to the student increases their involvement in the task and builds a personal relationship.

Be Observant. Continually monitor student participation and learning. Your observations will provide useful insights. The information you share helps to evaluate curriculum modifications and individualize lessons.

Promote Inclusive Practices

Tips for Special Educators

Supervise classroom assistants. Outline duties in detail with specific instructions. Always follow up and monitor how things are going in the classroom!

Promote active learning! Alternative methods encourage active learning for ALL students. Assist classroom teachers in planning cooperative learning groups and project-based lessons.

Don't be a stranger to the regular classroom. Become familiar with routines and instructional techniques. Your lesson modifications, adaptations, and learning goals will be more meaningful in measuring progress and planning for student success.

Collaborate with others. Talk with teammates and other staff, including administrators. Person to person communication builds partnerships that help promote inclusive practices. A two-minute chat between classes can be the beginning of a great connection.

Use peers as natural supports. Let peers walk together between classes, program communication devices and assist at lunch.

Invite students to IEPs. Students who attend their own meetings have a better understanding of their role and responsibilities. Ask students, family, friends, teachers and other professionals to share their goals and expectations with the student.

Define roles and expectations. Work with classroom teachers to explain your role and how you can help. Specify what you will need to increase student participation and encourage new ideas or questions. Discuss assistive technology as well as discipline and behavior expectations.

Use the expertise of others. Do not waste time researching content areas. Solicit the classroom teacher's participation in IEP meetings and general planning discussions.

Watch your language! Teamwork stems from good communication. Use people-first language. Avoid acronyms or language specific to your field.

Promote student-teacher relationships. Brag about student strengths! Tell classroom teachers how students can participate. Provide appropriate supports and share successful practices.



Promote Inclusive Practices

Tips for Paraeducators and Support Staff

Communicate and consult with caregivers. Listen to families and keep them informed. Some strategies that work at home, can work at school. Sharing what works can be an important part of planning for future activities. Using a communication journal in collaboration with the classroom teacher can be an effective tool to promote communication among all members of the child's team.



Maintain student dignity. Be discreet about the student's physical needs. Refrain from making comments aloud. Schedule tube feedings, splint changes, stretching and toileting in between classes or class activities if at all possible.

Facilitate peer relationships. Remind others to communicate directly with the student. Seat the student with other students in the classroom and cafeteria. Give students the space and freedom to socialize and develop friendships.

Watch your voice and volume. Discussions with other adults or students during lecture disrupt the class. Save important discussions for times that will not interfere with learning activities.

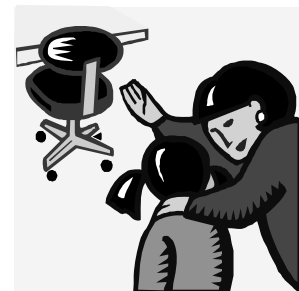
Let students make mistakes and take risks. Everyone learns from mistakes. Natural consequences that do not cause harm to the student or others are part of the learning experience.

Help students create authentic work. Students learn when they actively participate in assignments. Avoid completing assignments, taking tests or answering questions for students. Caregivers want to see their child's genuine work and progress.

Encourage students to make choices. Give students the ability to control their lives and interact with the environment. Offer choices to the student, no matter how insignificant they may seem. Making choices builds responsibility and self-determination.

Ask for help. You are not alone. Ask for direction in the classroom. Request guidance for discipline issues. Content decisions or curriculum modifications are the teacher's responsibility.

Help the classroom teacher. Use class lectures as an opportunity to program a student's communication device, make copies for the teacher or plan for next week. Time away from the student's side promotes independence.



Give as few prompts as possible. Foster independence in tasks and activities. Limit hand-over-hand assistance. Give hand-over-hand assistance to teach a task, not to complete a task. Resist the temptation to give verbal directions for every aspect of a task.

What Can Families Do To Promote Inclusive Education?

Build a positive relationship with your child's school. Share information/books with the teacher/principal on inclusive practices. Talk to them about new ideas and methods.

Your child's IEP is a contract. Schools must document and explain the extent, if any, that your child will not participate with non-disabled peers in the regular class. You can propose goals for language and behavior role models, and document your child's need for social relationships. You can also propose the supports and training needed for inclusion. Your input regarding your child's strengths and meaningful strategies must be considered by the IEP team.

Contact Parents Reaching Out for information, resources, and training!



Families of children with disabilities have provoked positive change in how students are educated at all levels. Families can provide the impetus for entire schools to be more responsive to students. It is their vision, knowledge, expertise, and advocacy as they work alongside committed, visionary, and skilled educators that make the difference.

This work to create inclusive schools and communities requires knowledge, courage, persistence, and true collaboration among everyone involved. Families have a great sense of urgency to move to craft inclusive communities because their children with disabilities have no time to wait. If their children grow through their childhood and school-age years excluded in special classes, pulled out of programs, or denied the supports that they need to learn and interact successfully in general education classrooms, then rich opportunities for learning and priceless experiences of friendship and belonging will pass them by. These particular kinds of opportunities never come again in a person's lifetime.

(Thousand, Villa, and Nevin, 2002, *Creativity and Collaborative Learning*)

Promote Inclusive Practices

Tips for Parents or Other Caregivers

Share your expectations. Inform others that you expect your child to participate daily in the classroom. Share your child's strengths. And explain how your child is best able to participate.



Keep the IEP meaningful! Remember the IEP is a working document! Begin with a few important manageable goals. Focus on the areas that are most meaningful for your child. Write goals that promote active learning in the classroom.

Develop a rapport with school staff. Talk with teachers in person! Encourage the teacher to voice concerns, hopes and fears. Tips and tricks that work at home will work at school or in the community.

Share your story. Documentation can be dull. Teachers and other professionals learn about your child and the experience of a disability through your stories.

Go out and VOTE! Your voice counts. Connect with advocacy groups to keep up with public policies. Vote for representatives who support the rights and needs of citizens with disabilities.

Join a parent organization. Seek out friends and peers. Gain emotional support and share ideas and insights with other families. Call **Parents Reaching Out** to ask about our *Parent to Parent* program. You can also connect with others in your school's parent-teacher groups.

Be Flexible. Remember that with very little funding, your school must educate all their students. Ask others how you can best help and support the school team. You may have connections with community resources that would be helpful partners for the school.

Hold your criticism. Teaching a diverse classroom is challenging but not impossible. Save negative feedback for important issues and concerns. Encourage your school to continue its efforts towards inclusion. Every small step counts.

Give positive feedback. Your feedback reinforces and rewards positive behavior. Thank a teacher or therapist for something positive they contributed to your child. The school team benefits from your comments and learn from what they are doing well.

Attend meetings and conferences. Reinforce team efforts to keep you well informed. Attend and participate in every IEP for your child. Keep in touch with the classroom by attending Parent-Teacher conferences and other meetings about your child. You are the expert on your child. You can share your knowledge with others.



Facilitating Friendships

Children with challenges will need support in developing relationships. The teacher can help by nurturing friendships that can be seen growing within the classroom. Friendships with children who have disabilities are not one-sided, with the so-called “normal” child giving a lot and receiving very little in return. The reason friendships develop is because the children have something in common. They have something that they want to explore together.

Friendships between students evolve naturally with shared interests and proximity. In any community or neighborhood, common interests bring people together, including children. These existing relationships can continue to develop within the classroom. Friendships and the benefits of building social skills goes beyond school years and can translate into successful lifelong experiences for every child! Friends can share their highest hopes, deepest fears and most impossible dreams. Friends can help one another tackle the biggest problems in the simplest way. They can turn an everyday challenge into extraordinary solutions, if we unlock the doors!

Let the Child Shine!

Inclusive schools provide opportunities to build on the strengths and gifts of each child regardless of economic status, race, culture or disability. Every learner in the school community has something to contribute and deserves respect from others. Children may not feel that way when they enter school so it is up to the school team to let each child know that they are valued.

Administrators, teachers, parents and support staff can lead the way in showing students how to respect individual differences. School-wide and classroom activities that encourage children to get to know one another create paths for new friendships while teaching life-skills for problem-solving and tolerance. Classroom teachers play a key role in developing a community of caring citizens who can create and support friendships. Here are a few simple ways to begin:

- *Reveal child’s strengths and abilities.* Classroom sharing time involving all students focused on favorite hobbies can be a start. A non-verbal or extremely shy child can use pictures, objects or assistive technology to let classmates know about a rock collection. Peer buddies can assist in this activity.
- *Show videos about friendships.* Check with the librarian at school or visit the public library to locate a variety of materials. You may also contact the Resource Center at Parents Reaching Out.
- *Plan a special lunch or snack to celebrate friendships.* Children could bring or prepare their favorite food. This might even turn into a family event with a potluck meal to honor the rich diversity in the community.
- Put on a puppet show or skit about friends. Let students create the script for the show!
- *Use poems, short stories and artwork to focus on making friends.* This could extend to the school community through the use of bulletin boards or special events.



Creating Safe, Inclusive Schools: Teasing and Bullying

No one likes to be teased or bullied. Unfortunately, ridicule, rejection and teasing are a cruel reality in many schools. It isn't only a problem for students with disabilities. It extends to anyone who is perceived as different for whatever reason (race, culture, economic status, skill level). However, less ridicule occurs in an inclusive school because of the caring ethic that is promoted on a school wide basis. The negative actions of teasing or intimidation will probably never be completely eliminated, but there are strategies to reduce how often these actions occur.

- The solution to the problem is not the removal of anyone who is different.
- Teachers can promote a caring ethic within their classrooms by establishing a “peer support committee” of rotating student membership. The mission of the committee is to determine ways for classmates to be supportive of one another.
- Teachers can further reduce teasing by directly teaching children the reasons for and the results of name-calling, teasing, and ridicule.
- Teachers can employ learning structures such as cooperative learning groups, which require and acknowledge positive treatment of classmates.
- Activities that stir concern for social justice have been effective in helping middle and high school students.
- Engaging students in planning for the transition of a student with disabilities to be a welcomed member...has had positive effects.
- At the heart of the solution to teasing is teacher and administrator modeling. Students observe, reflect on, and imitate adult behavior toward people who are different.

(Villa and Thousand, 1995, *Creating an Inclusive School*)

Positive Directions for Student Behavior by Parents Reaching Out is a guide to promote safe learning environments for students. This book features Positive Behavior Supports plus step by step processes for effective Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans.

For information about Bullyproofing Schools visit these web sites:

Positive Behavior Supports: www.pbis.org

PACER Center: www.pacer.org

(PACER Center's Bullying Prevention Project is for all children, with an emphasis on children with disabilities, which promotes bullying awareness and teaches effective ways to respond to bullying. Resources include tip sheets for families and schools, interactive curriculum materials and web sites designed for children and teens.



Inclusion is NOT about placing a child with a disability in a classroom or a school. That is only a tiny piece of the puzzle. Rather, inclusion is about how we deal with diversity...

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint

The Challenge: Teaching Students with Diverse Needs

One barrier to inclusive practices sometimes may lie in our fear of the unknown. We can chart our journey and develop inclusive strategies by taking steps to answer one key question.

How Do We Teach Students That Have Different Ability Levels and Diverse Learning Styles?

1. First, we must get to know the student. What are his/her talents, strengths, and how does he/she learn? The parent's input is very important!
2. The next step is to look at the goals and how they will be addressed in general education. What is the expected performance of the student? It is important to decide what outcomes are achievable and how they will look so that everybody has a clear understanding of the expectations. This is especially important for general education teachers so that they know what is expected.
3. Discuss what general education content should be taught. These discussions should not just take place in an IEP meeting. School leadership must support opportunities for staff collaboration. Staff members need to spend time together. They need to share ideas, reflect on possibilities and problem solve.
4. If the student cannot achieve similar outcomes as the non-disabled students, decide what adaptations are necessary. If the child cannot achieve similar outcomes even with adaptations, decide on appropriate outcomes for that child that will closely approximate success! (This doesn't mean that an educational assistant does all of the child's work) Think! "What will success look like for this child?"

Teams can use the IEP Program-at-a-Glance and IEP/General Education Matrix as they plan adaptations for a student. (See sample forms and ideas in the Resources section of this booklet.) The chart on the next page describes types of adaptations. The **Book of Ideas** by Parents Reaching Out is a great resource for classroom and instructional adaptations.

When considering adaptations, answer these questions.

Can the student participate if the instructional arrangement is different? Traditional instruction, such as teacher lecture to the entire class followed by independent seatwork, does not usually provide effective learning for students with differing abilities and differing learning needs. There are many instructional arrangements that benefit a wide range of students such as, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, small group, partner learning and differentiated instruction.

Can the student participate by changing the lesson format?

Instead of textbook driven lessons, many students can benefit from meaningful activities planned according to their unique interests and learning styles. Hands-on and cooperative learning activities are good ways to increase student participation in ways that fit their learning style. An assistive technology assessment may be needed to select suitable technology to address the student's needs.



Does the student need environmental changes to reduce noise level, provide more visual input or access to materials? Many times, minor changes in the environment can make significant differences in the learning opportunities that help foster inclusive practices.

Nine Types of Adaptations

The chart below offers points to consider in making adaptations to meet the needs of the learner.

<p>Size</p> <p>Adapt the number of items that the learner is expected to learn or complete.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Reduce the number of social studies terms a learner must learn at any one time.</p>	<p>Time</p> <p>Adapt the time allotted and allowed for learning, task completion, or testing.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Individualize a timeline for completing a task; pace learning differently (increase or decrease) for some learners.</p>	<p>Level of Support</p> <p>Increase the amount of personal assistance with a specific learner.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Assign peer buddies, teaching assistants, peer tutors, or cross-age tutors.</p>
<p>Input</p> <p>Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Use different visual aids; plan more concrete examples; provide hands-on activities; place students in cooperative groups.</p>	<p>Difficulty</p> <p>Adapt the skill level, problem type, or the rules on how the learner may approach the work.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Allow the use of a calculator to figure math problems; simplify task directions; change rules to accommodate learner needs.</p>	<p>Output</p> <p>Adapt how the learner can respond to instruction.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Instead of answering questions in writing, allow a verbal response; use a communication book for some students; allow students to show knowledge with hands-on materials.</p>
<p>Participation</p> <p>Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> In geography, have a student hold the globe, while others point out locations.</p>	<p>Alternate Goals</p> <p>Adapt the goals or outcome expectations while using the same materials.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> In social studies, expect one student to be able to locate just the states while others learn to locate capitals as well.</p>	<p>Substitute Curriculum</p> <p>Provide different instruction and materials to meet a learner's individual goals.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> During a language test one student is learning computer skills in the computer lab.</p>

Center for School & Community Integration
Institute for the Study of Developmental Disabilities, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

Creativity and flexibility support better outcomes for all students!

Section 3

New Mexico State Department of Education Regulatory Guidance



As we begin to think about inclusive education, we must first remember that the term “inclusion” is not mentioned in the regulations. Inclusive schools are really about restructuring schools. It doesn’t mean our children are just dumped into something called a full inclusion class without preparation or supports! Children with disabilities are entitled to an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The way inclusion works for kids with disabilities is through the IEP process following the Least Restrictive Environment regulations. We have included the highlights from two memos for achieving LRE from The New Mexico State Department of Education.

Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Understanding and Making the Placement Decision

What is Placement?

It is not the physical location of the special education services. Rather, it is the set of services **and** the type of environment, or the spot on the continuum of services, in which those services are delivered.

Who Makes the Placement Decision?

The student's IEP team is the group who makes the decision. This requires an **individualized** inquiry into the student's unique educational and related services needs.

When is the Placement Decision Made?

It is the last of a series of decisions made at the IEP meeting. It is made after goals, objectives/benchmarks, and instructional modifications are developed. The decision is based on those IEP elements.

What is the LRE Mandate in the IDEA with Respect to Making Placement Decisions?

To the maximum extent possible, students with exceptionalities must be educated in the regular classroom.

Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal from the regular classroom occurs only when the nature or the severity of the educational exceptionality is such that education in the regular class cannot be satisfactorily achieved **with appropriate aids and supports**.

Unless the student's IEP requires some other kind of arrangement, the student attends the same school he or she would attend if not eligible for special education services.

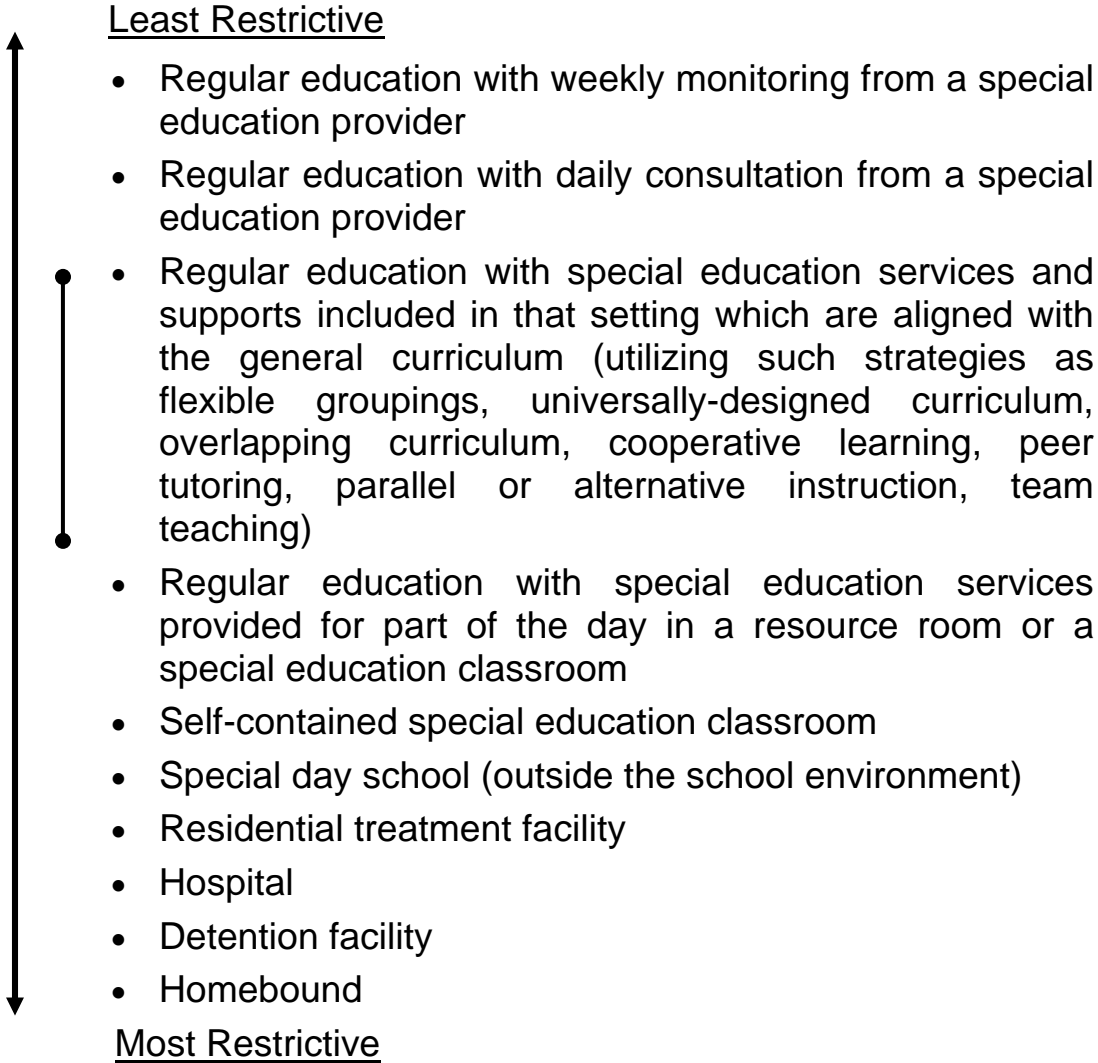
Students with exceptionalities must be afforded the opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities along with their peers in regular education.

Less restrictive placements must always be considered. However, where there is a *reasonable likelihood* that a student with an exceptionality can be educated in the regular classroom with the use of supplementary aids and supports, then that placement should be tried.

The Continuum of Alternative Placements

The continuum is a spectrum of placements where an IEP can be implemented. It ranges from less restrictive (from all regular education with monitoring services) to more restrictive (homebound), as well as placements between those two points as shown in the example below.

Example of a Continuum of Alternative Placements



State and federal regulations require that public agencies make the continuum of alternative placements available as needed in order to meet the needs of the individual student with an exceptionality.

The Decision . . .

When making the placement decision as an **individualized** inquiry, the IEP team should follow these steps.

- First, determine through the IEP process the student's educational needs. Determine what constitutes an appropriate program for the student, not where it will be provided or **what pre-existing "program" fits best.**
- Next, review the continuum of placement options on page 2 in sequence from least restrictive to most restrictive. Look at how each option currently exists, as well as how it might also be modified.
- Now start the decision-making process by examining regular classroom placement as the first option. Have a serious and thoughtful discussion about the three factors below.
 1. Consider whether the student can be educated satisfactorily in the regular classroom with one or more of the following:
 - Supplementary aids and supports
 - Program and/or curriculum modifications
 - Provision of an itinerant special education provider
 - Assistance from a para-educator
 - Special education training for the regular education teacher
 - The use of assistive technology
 - The development and implementation of FBAs and BIPs designed to identify and meet the daily behavioral challenges presented by the student in the regular education classroom
 2. Compare the benefits provided in the regular education classroom and those provided in a special education classroom or segregated setting.
 - Compare social and communication skills, as well as academic benefits.
 - Compare the relative benefits to the student.
 - Keep in mind that regular education classroom placement is not dependent on the student's ability to learn the same things in the same way.

3. Consider the potentially beneficial or harmful effects that a regular class placement may have on the student with an exceptionality or the other students in the class.

- Positive benefits might include social interaction with non-exceptional peers, peer modeling, high expectations, and acceptance of others.
- Harmful effects might include unduly disruptive behavior that impairs the student's learning or that of others even with the implementation of a BIP.

Consider each of the three factors above equally.

Keep in mind the placement decision cannot be *solely* based on

- Category of the exceptionality
- Severity of the exceptionality
- Language and communication needs
- Needed modifications in the curriculum
- Configuration of the public agency's delivery system
- Availability of space or educational and related services
- Administrative convenience

Keep in mind that where there is a *reasonable likelihood* that a student with exceptionalities can be educated in the regular classroom with supplementary aids and supports, then that placement should be tried for as much as the school day as possible.

If the team agrees that the student should receive part or all of the special education services outside of the regular classroom, then the IEP must also provide opportunities for participation in regular education programs in academic, nonacademic, or extracurricular activities, as appropriate.

If the team agrees that the student's IEP cannot be satisfactorily implemented in the regular education classroom with the provision of supplementary services and supports, then the team can consider a more restrictive placement keeping in mind that the regular education classroom is not the LRE for that student **at that time**. That is, having the understanding that the ultimate plan and goal is to work towards a more fully inclusive placement when possible.

Finally, clearly articulate on the IEP document the placement decision and the justification for it based on the considerations in this booklet.





STATE OF NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION — EDUCATION BUILDING
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786

MICHAEL J. DAVIS
Superintendent of Public Instruction

April 6, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Special Education Directors

FROM: Sam Howarth
State Director of Special Education

RE: Frequently Asked Questions About Least Restrictive
Environment (LRE), Placement, and Inclusion under the IDEA.

.....

The purpose of this memo is to provide you and your staff with guidance around the concepts of least restrictive environment (LRE), placement, and inclusion under the IDEA. We are also providing you with this information to assist you as you work to create an improvement plan that will be accepted by the State Department of Education (SDE).

1. *What is least restrictive environment (LRE)?* Generally, the LRE is the most appropriate placement for a child with a disability that most closely approximates where the child, if not disabled, would be educated. The least restrictive possible placement includes fulltime participation in regular classes and full participation in school activities with nondisabled students. Other placements are considered more restrictive to the degree that a student is removed from regular classes and full participation in noncurricular and extracurricular activities with students who are not disabled.
2. *What is the LRE mandate in the IDEA?* The IDEA mandates that the placement for each student with a disability be only as restrictive as the student's individual needs require. The basic regulatory requirement is that students should only be segregated from the regular education classroom if they cannot be educated satisfactorily in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services. This requirement is

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set out in the IDEA regulations at 34 CFR Sec. 300.550. The regulations are driven by the IDEA's strong preference that to the maximum extent appropriate students are to be educated with their age-appropriate, non-disabled peers, but they also provide that the regular education setting is not appropriate 100% of the time or in 100% of the cases. The IDEA provides that the extent to which an individual student with disabilities participates in the regular education setting with the use of supplementary aids and services must be determined on a case-by-case basis by the individualized education program (IEP) team.

This requires an **individualized inquiry** into the unique educational needs of each eligible student in determining the possible range of aids and supports that that might allow the student to be educated satisfactorily in the regular educational environment before a more restrictive placement is considered. Closely aligned with the requirement to educate a student in a regular education environment is the IDEA's recognition that regular class placement may not be appropriate for every student. Thus, the regulations also mandate that the public agency offer a wide range of **placement** options, known as the **continuum of alternative placements**, to insure that each student is educated in what is determined to be the least restrictive environment that is appropriate for that individual.

3. *With respect to the IDEA, how is the term "placement" defined?* Neither federal nor state regulations provide a regulatory definition for this term, but the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has provided some clarity regarding what constitutes placement. It has stated that placement involves the substance of the student's IEP, the services, the supports, or any other aspect of a free appropriate public education (FAPE)—that is, the program itself; not just the physical location or setting.¹ In determining the educational placement for a student, the **first line of inquiry** is whether his or her IEP can be implemented satisfactorily in the regular educational environment with the provision of supplementary aids and services.
4. *Then what is the "continuum of alternative placements?"* It is the spectrum of placement options that the IEP team needs to consider in determining the LRE in which a student with a disability may receive some or all of his or her IEP services. The continuum ranges from less restrictive (from all regular education with no supports or services) to more restrictive (homebound and/or outside of the school environment), as well as placements between those two points. (PRO Note: see continuum on page 27.)
5. *Must an IEP meeting occur in order to change a student's placement?* Yes, if the change involves a material change in the substance of the program itself—nature, frequency, or duration of special education and related services. Therefore any proposal that would move the student in either direction along the continuum as shown in the example above constitutes a proposed change in placement that triggers the district's obligation to 1) convene a properly-composed IEP team meeting pursuant to 34 CFR Secs. 300.343 through 300.345 to make this decision; and 2) provide prior written notification to the parents regarding this change before it is implemented pursuant 34 CFR 300.503 (Prior notice by the public agency).

¹ See *Letter to Fisher*, 21 IDELR 992, (OSEP, 1994).

On the other hand, as long as a schedule change (ex: services on Tuesday as opposed to Thursday) or a location change (ex: services in room 34 as opposed to room 47 with no change in the service delivery configuration) does not involve a substantial or material alteration in the student’s IEP supports and services or conflict with any other provision of FAPE² as detailed in the student’s IEP, a schedule or location change would not require an IEP meeting, prior written notification, or necessitate parental consent. **Again, we emphasize that these kinds of decisions must be determined on a case-by-case basis by the IEP team and not by any blanket or system-wide effort to move the district forward to meet the LRE mandate.**

6. What is “full inclusion” or “inclusion?” These terms are not included in the IDEA, but are understood in the field of special education to mean a policy or philosophy that supports the creation of a system where all children with disabilities attend their home school with their age and grade peers while also holding that for some students a regular education setting may not be the best education option. Inclusive education programs are typically thought of to “include” students rather than merely “mainstreaming” them—a term used in the years before the regulations emphasized the creation of a system that strives to produce better outcomes for all students.
7. Is “LRE” the same thing as “inclusion?” **No.** The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Educations Programs (OSEP) has stated that inclusion is not the same thing as the IDEA’s mandate for educating students in the LRE. All placement decisions (that is, the spot on the continuum of alternative placements that describes of level of services and supports a student needs) must be determined on a case-by-case basis according to the individual needs of the student.³ LRE determinations require an **individualized inquiry** into the unique educational needs of each eligible student in determining the possible range of aids and supports that are needed to facilitate the student’s placement in the regular educational environment before a more restrictive placement is considered.

I encourage you to share this information freely with staff so that each IEP team has the understanding and knowledge that will allow them to develop IEPs and serve students with disabilities in more integrated settings and in compliance with the state and federal regulations. I send my best wishes for your efforts to improve outcomes for New Mexico’s students.

² That is, whether the child will be able to be educated with nondisabled children to the same extent; whether the child will have the same opportunities to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular services; and whether the new location is the same option on the continuum of alternative placements.

³ See *Letter to Trahan*, 30 IDELR 403, (OSEP, 1998).



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION — EDUCATION BUILDING
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786

MICHAEL J. DAVIS
Superintendent of Public Instruction

August 22, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Special Education Directors
Superintendents
Other Interested Parties

FROM: Sam Howarth
State Director of Special Education

RE: Role of Related Service Providers

.....

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance to parents, teachers, administrators, and related service providers regarding the ways in which related service providers support students receiving special education in New Mexico's public schools. These matters are not specified in either state or federal special education regulations and our office has had ongoing requests for interpretation in this area. As such, we offer the following background and guidance.

Two of the chief policy initiatives of the Special Education Office, both of which are aligned with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Program's priorities and selected indicators for the monitoring of states for compliance with IDEA, are (1) to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities; and, (2) to increase, as appropriate, the number of students with disabilities receiving services in the regular education environment alongside their typically developing peers. Related service providers, working together with teachers, administrators, and parents are critical partners as we continually strive to ever improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities and increase the number of students with disabilities accessing the general education curriculum in the regular education environment alongside their typically developing peers.

This memo breaks down the various roles of related service providers into five general areas, each of which is aligned with, and designed to ensure the furtherance of our policy initiatives as stated above while honoring the letter and the intent of state and federal regulation. These five roles are as follows:

1. Related Service Providers as Evaluators

Traditionally, related service providers have participated in the evaluation process for a majority of students with disabilities, lending their expertise to the identification of suspected areas of disability. They have also traditionally been involved in the review of data for reevaluations and, in many districts, have evaluated students for assistive technology needs. For those students who are not successful in regular education, and do not respond to pre-referral interventions, related service providers often participate in the evaluation of students to determine eligibility for special education services under one of the fourteen definitions of exceptionality. **We are not recommending any changes in this role.**⁴

2. Related Service Providers as Contributors in the Development of IEP Goals and Objectives

Traditionally, if a student received a certain score on one of a variety of related service assessments, the student was assumed to be in need of direct service from that related service provider. Then, under that traditional model, related service providers supplied draft annual goals and objectives to IEP teams that would be aimed at progress on therapy-related activities. In order to increase educational outcomes for students with disabilities, we are recommending a change in this traditional practice. After the IEP team has discussed a student's present levels of performance, the family's (and student's, if appropriate) vision for the student, the team needs to develop goals. It is important to recognize that goals must (1) be tied to the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks; (2) be individualized and appropriate for each student; and, (3) address each student's educational needs such that the student is provided access to, and progresses in, the general curriculum. We are recommending that once the present levels of performance have been determined, the vision for the student articulated and the goals established, related service providers, as relevant, contribute to the development of appropriate objectives that lead to the attainment of the IEP goals. This would be true for all students receiving special education services and for whom an IEP is being developed. Even in the case of a student who is eligible under the definition of speech or language impairment, the goals need to be related to the NM Content Standards and Benchmarks. Objectives under these goals may address certain articulation or fluency skills, but the goals must still be tied to Standards. **Our intent in recommending this change in practice is to focus attention on improving outcomes for students in relation to the general curriculum, while recognizing that building skills that lead to improved outcomes may very well involve the specialized contributions from related service providers.**

⁴ Although we are not recommending changes in this role, the nature of this role may change as IDEA is reauthorized. A reauthorized IDEA may require different criteria for eligibility for special education services and/or a different set of protocols and evaluative expectations.

3. Related Service Providers as Experts on Access

Traditionally, related service providers have contributed information that assists the IEP team to develop the health plan section and/or transportation plan of the IEP for students whose ability to access the general curriculum depends on services such as tube feeding or specialized transport. These types of services do not require goals since no instruction is taking place. However, these services do get included on the IEP service schedule and are considered part of a student's special education service. **We are not proposing any change in this role.**

4. Related Service Providers as Creative Implementers

Traditionally, most related service has been delivered directly to students by related service providers in segregated settings (either in segregated classrooms and/or through "pull out" whereby a student is completely removed from the classroom context). In order to improve student outcomes and increase the number of students with disabilities accessing the general curriculum and receiving services in the regular education environment alongside their typically developing peers, we are recommending a change in this traditional practice. **We recommend that IEP teams delay decisions about who will implement each of a student's goals until all of the goals have been developed and the team has discussed the least restrictive environment for implementing the goals.** Then, at that point, the team would discuss the best ways to achieve the goals and which individual, or combination of individuals, in what ways, will support the student to attain the goals, and ultimately educational success. Related service providers should contribute to this discussion with the understanding that they may be called upon to provide service along a continuum, designed to facilitate the attainment of IEP goals. Some of these points of service along the continuum have not always been considered traditional. Specifically, related service providers could (1) train and support the regular or special education teacher in how to accomplish certain objectives with a particular student within the context of the learning environment and in relation to the regular learning activities that all students engage in; (2) work with the student directly, but in the regular education classroom or other school context (playground, cafeteria, hallway) where non-disabled peers are present and involved in the intervention(s) the related service provider is facilitating; and/or, (3) work with the student directly in a segregated setting. All three service roles would be based on particular student objectives, and time spent in these roles should be included on the service schedule of the IEPs for those students. Time needed for direct service would be broken down into time in the regular education setting and time in a segregated setting. Service time for supporting teachers and other staff on how to accomplish certain objectives for a particular student would be noted on the part of the service schedule called "Supports for School Personnel."

While we are aware that all of the above-mentioned service options currently exist for some students in some schools, we are recommending a change in emphasis from the all-too-often automatic decision that related service providers deliver direct instruction/intervention, one-on-one, in segregated settings. **We are recommending that IEP teams expand their thinking about the role of related service providers in working collaboratively with educators and other students to structure the supports, interventions, and services that will help students with disabilities attain their educational and life goals. As such, we are recommending that the entire school context and all those within it be considered when designing these supports and interventions.**

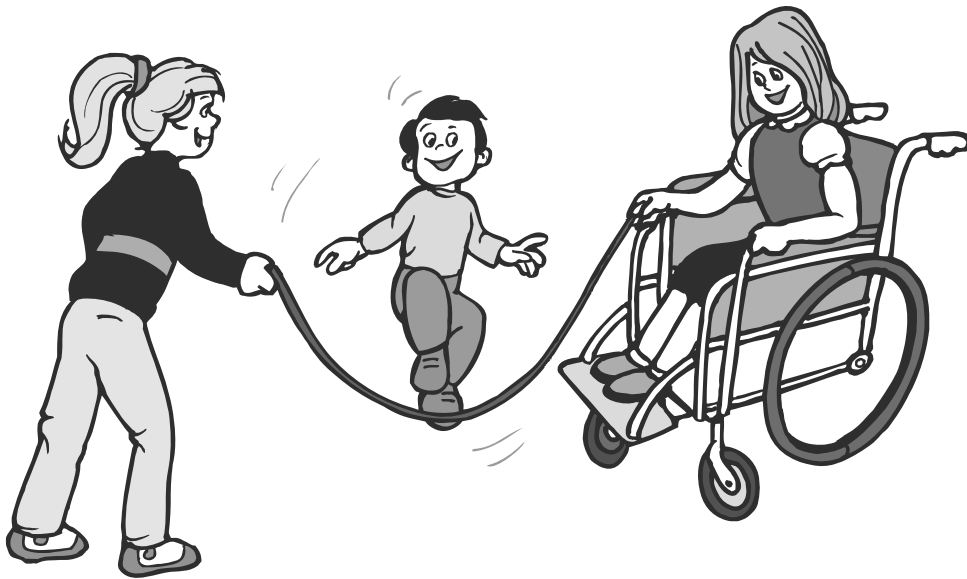
5. Related Service Providers as Instructional Team Members

Traditionally, related service providers have been isolated from meaningful collaboration with regular and special education teachers, due to heavy caseloads that require direct service. In order to increase educational outcomes for students with disabilities and to increase the number of students with disabilities receiving services in the regular education environment alongside their typically developing peers, we are recommending a change in this traditional practice. If students with disabilities are to receive services in more inclusive settings, they need to be supported by a team of educators that collaboratively plan and instruct. Related service providers should be partners on these instructional teams. They have expertise in designing and measuring progress on learning activities. They have experience in breaking down large tasks into smaller tasks. They are committed to focusing attention on particular aspects of a student's strengths, needs, behavior, learning style, processing, and so on. All of these are valuable skills for an instructional team member. **We are recommending that administrators create work schedules for related service providers that include weekly time for collaborating and planning with professional staff who share responsibility for students with disabilities.**

We realize that some of these recommendations propose departures from traditional practice for related service providers. We also realize that we are expecting **all** educators to take on nontraditional roles as we work together to improve outcomes for all of New Mexico's students. We are developing a training plan to provide assistance on the issues addressed in this memo. If you have suggestions about how the Special Education Office might most effectively provide training on this topic, or if you have questions or comments about this memo, please contact Bonnie Anderson at 827-6798 or at banderson@sde.state.nm.us.

Section 4

Resources



If we can pinpoint bomb cities halfway around the globe, and send men and women into space, surely we can figure out how to live together with "liberty and justice for all." Inclusion is truly and simply a matter of will.

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint

From Here to Activity. . .

Project Participate © 1999 JFK Partners K.Lachina rev. 10/00

Students that do not write, communicate verbally or comprehend the curriculum at grade level can actively participate, just look and see!

Passive Participation



Active Solution

In Biology, student receives the same worksheet as others in lab. Student scribbles on the paper as others label the parts of a plant.



Give students Avery labels with simplified terms i.e. stem, roots, leaves etc. Instruct students to use the stickers to independently label the parts of the plant.

In Math, a paraeducator completes long division problems on a worksheet for the student.



Student uses an IntelliKeys keyboard with MathPad software to set up problems and answers independently.

In Computer Class, a paraeducator moves the mouse and student's hand in a preschool program while others create pages for the school web site.



Create a template of the web page. Prompt student to select text and background colors, use a trackball to draw a picture and type their name with a keyboard.

In Physical Education, the class practices archery outside. A paraeducator shoot hoops in the gym along side a student with disabilities.



Student joins others outside to practice turn-taking, social interaction and learn the names of archery equipment.

In Chemistry, students verbally identify solvents and solutes during a review session. The nonverbal student watches and listens.



Add pictures of food items such as soda pop, water, sugar, etc. to an AAC device. Prompt student to press a key and choose a classmate to identify the food item as a solute, solvent or solution during a review.

In History, a paraeducator uses a pencil to fill in the blanks on a test. The student with physical and sensory disabilities sits with a lowered head.



Convert test to multiple-choice format. Create an ABC grid for communication device. Instruct paraeducator to read the questions and choices to student. Student answers A, B or C by pressing a switch.

In Astronomy, students study diagrams of constellations. A paraeducator studies the pictures for the student with low vision.



Photocopy constellation diagrams. Outline each with puffy paint. Let students explore tactile maps with their hands as the teacher lectures.

In Health, students create the Food Guide Pyramid. A paraeducator pastes magazine photos onto paper while the student attends therapy.



Mount a switch accessible camera onto the student's wheelchair. Instruct student to photograph foods from each food group during a fieldtrip to the supermarket.

Inclusive Curriculum Ideas

If possible, the work that each student does in the regular classroom should be related to the work that all of the students are doing. Every student should participate in activities that are meaningful to him or her. When adapting the curriculum continually ask the question, “What are the most important points to be learned from this unit that will have a *functional* application for this student now and in the future?”



*There is always a simple principle to be learned that has an application for life.
This may also help all of the students find relevance in a unit of study.*

Adaptations for students with special needs:

In a geometry unit on different shapes, try relating this to the area of the walls of the room. Calculate the number of rolls of wallpaper to cover them and the time it would take.

In a unit of velocity, consider the bus routes that the student travels. Use a map and work out the distances traveled, and the time it takes to travel the routes on a good day, or a snowy day.

In a math unit of multiplying two digits, the student with goals in number recognition can use the same book, but circle all of the threes on the same page the other kids are working on.

In science, there's so much that a child who isn't academically oriented can do. With the help of their peers, they can do a lot of the measuring, pouring, and observing. Their observations may be at a different level, but they can certainly participate with a partner.

In social studies, as students work on mapping, the child with special needs may color the maps. This would address goals such as fine motor and spatial orientation. The student would have to stay within the lines and recognize the foreground and the background. The other children would do the labeling and identify places.

For language arts research projects, many resources can be made available, such as encyclopedias, magazines and picture books. Students that can't read will not be singled out because they wouldn't be the only ones using picture books.



Taken from the website,
Inclusion, School as a Caring Community

More Adaptation Ideas

(Excerpts from: Villa and Thousand, 1995, *Creating an Inclusive School*)

Example of 3rd Grade Journal Writing:

The goal for the majority of the students is to preface their journal entries with their name and the date, then write a brief paragraph to summarize their thoughts and feelings about the day. These goals reflect skills requiring application, analysis, and synthesis.

Justin, a member of the class with moderate intellectual and physical disabilities, uses picture symbols for communication, is unable to write, and does not construct complex sentences. His goals are to use a date and name stamp to preface his journal entry, select one picture symbol and glue it into his journal to represent an activity that occurred during the day, and use his journal entry to initiate a conversation with a classmate.

Example of a 9th Grade Drama Class:

Students are expected to perform a dialogue with a peer partner using an excerpt from a screenplay.

Paul is a student with Down syndrome who reads at approximately the 1st grade level. To take part in this activity, Paul's peer partner modifies the screenplay by rewriting his part in simplified and common language. Picture symbols are added for clarification. Paul's partner also records the modified dialogue on an audiotape so Paul can review and practice using auditory input, thereby guiding his pacing and voice intonation. (All class members are expected to modify their parts in some fashion).

Example of a 7th Grade Language Arts Alternative Activity:

Each week the class selected a question related to the course content...with this question, a small survey team including a student with disabilities was assigned to poll a representative number of the student body.

The team was arranged in a cooperative format allowing roles for an interviewer, transcriber, and data analyzer. This ongoing activity allowed the student with disabilities and his classmates to apply various language and communication skills.

Examples of Social Studies Adaptations for all learners:

Many students like hearing about topics in a story-like atmosphere. Some students learn by doing map work, helping with charts, or finding pictures on the Internet or in books. Historical artifacts that can be touched are great teaching tools. Some zoos and museums have traveling docent programs that visit school classrooms. Guest speakers can explain culture, language and ceremonies. Social studies activities offer great opportunities for cooperative learning.

Creative adaptations can include and enrich learning for all students!



IEP Program-at-a-Glance⁵

The IEP Program-at-a-Glance provides a tool to summarize the student's primary objectives and identify any critical management needs in every setting. When a student with disabilities receives services in a general education setting, team members must be able to communicate on a routine basis. They must also be able to keep focused on the goals and plans they have developed in the IEP. The IEP Program-at-a glance provides a quick reference for the team. The General Education Matrix shown on the next page extends this information by infusing IEP goals with daily activities and schedules in the general education environment.

IEP Program-at-a-Glance	
Student: Danika	Date: September 4, 1994
<u>Positive Student Profile</u>	<u>IEP Objectives at a Glance</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A kinesthetic learner• Confident• Active• Learns well with hands-on activities• Happy• Musical• Vocal• Assertive about her needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shares materials• Take turns in group activities• Transition independently from one environment or activity to another using a picture schedule• Put away materials• Recognize upper & lower case letters• Write her name• Recognize functional daily living words• Recognize numbers 1 through 20• Use sign language or picture communication system to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Initiate interactions with peers○ Answer yes/no questions○ Answer "what" questions○ Indicate the need to use the bathroom• Dress and undress self
<u>Management Needs</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive and non-aversive behavior management strategies to decrease tantrum when upset or angry• Assistance to use toilet independently when needed throughout the day	

⁵ Giangreco, M., C. Cloninger, and V. Inverson. (1993). *Choosing Options and Accommodations for Children (COACH): A Guide to Planning Inclusive Education*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. Thousand, J., and R. Villa. (1993). "Strategies for Educating Learners with Severe Handicaps Within Their Local Home Schools and Communities." In *Challenges Facing Special Education*. Denver: Love Publishing.

Individual Educational Program (IEP)/ General Education Matrix⁶

Student: Danika

Grade: 3

Date: September 4, 1994

IEP Goals	General Education Class Schedule										
	Arrival - Schedule	Language Arts	Soc. St./ Science	Art	Music	Phys. Ed	Lunch	Recess	Journal Writing	Math	Computer Lab
Share materials		X	X	X	X	X		X			X
Take turns in group activities		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Transition between activities/ environments	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Put away materials	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Recognize upper & lower case letters	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X
Write her name		X	X	X					X	X	X
Recognize/use functional daily living words	X	X	X						X		X
Initiate interactions with peers*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Request a partner for play or work*		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
Answer yes/no questions*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Answer "what" questions*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Indicate the need to use the bathroom*	X					X	X	X			
Dress and undress self						X		X			
Recognize numbers 1 through 20	X		X		X	X				X	X
Management Needs											
Managing anger and reducing tantrums	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Assistance with toileting	X					X	X	X			
<i>*Using sign language or picture communication system.</i>											

⁶ Giangreco, M., C. Cloninger, and V. Inverson. (1993). *Choosing Options and Accommodations for Children (COACH): A Guide to Planning Inclusive Education*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. Thousand, J., and R. Villa. (1993). "Strategies for Educating Learners with Severe Handicaps Within Their Local Home Schools and Communities." In *Challenges Facing Special Education*. Denver: Love Publishing.

Individual Educational Program (IEP)/ General Education Matrix⁷

Student:

Grade:

Date:

	General Education Classes									
IEP Goals										
Management Needs										
Important Considerations										

⁷ Giangreco, M., C. Cloninger, and V. Inverson. (1993). *Choosing Options and Accommodations for Children (COACH): A Guide to Planning Inclusive Education*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. Thousand, J., and R. Villa. (1993). "Strategies for Educating Learners with Severe Handicaps Within Their Local Home Schools and Communities." In *Challenges Facing Special Education*. Denver: Love Publishing.

Creative Problem Solving Can Make The Difference!

Sometimes adults get so stuck on a problem that they actually create roadblocks for a child that may reduce the benefits of participating in more inclusive settings. Brainstorming sessions, like the one described below, can help a team move beyond barriers to meaningful solutions. When teams begin to rely on facts rather than past assumptions, participants can identify real supports or adaptations that will provide avenues for learning opportunities.

Creative Problem Solving for Kevin

The Sub-Mess or Problem: There is a mismatch between some of the facts about Kevin and the facts about a fourth grade Science class.

Fact-Finding:

Facts About Student	Facts About Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevin is a fourth grade student. • He reads and writes independently at a second grade level. • He likes being in a leadership role • He relates well with younger children • He walks out of the classroom when he is frustrated. • He never does homework. • He makes appropriate choices when he is given opportunity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science textbook is written at a fourth grade level. • Published tests and teacher designed quizzes are used in the classroom. • Students take turns reading the textbook orally. • Short answers to text questions must be written and turned in during class or completed as homework. • Small group activities and projects are done on a monthly basis. • Students complete an independent research paper during the year on a related top of their choice.

Results of Brainstorming. Here are just a few of the adaptations suggested:

- Give Kevin a legitimate reason for leaving classroom such as a class errand.
- Provide opportunities for choices.
- Consider using books on tape w/headphones for tasks involving textbook.
- Provide homework buddy/peer tutor
- Let Kevin read to younger children as a part of school Reading Buddy program.

What adaptations can you think of for this situation?

Unlocking the Mystery of School Funding In New Mexico

A Guide to Understanding the New Mexico Funding Formula 2009-2010



School funding is a complex process. Families of children with disabilities, educators and others often ask: “How do schools get their funding and what does that mean for services to support student success?” The truth is that services are not allocated on funding--services are based on need. In New Mexico, some students generate more funding than they use—while others generate less than they use. The challenge for schools is to make the best use of funds to meet the NEEDS of all students!

Q. How are schools funded?

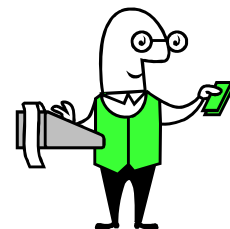
A. Schools request funds from the state through a complex mechanism called the funding formula.

Q. What is the unit value?

A. The unit value for the **2009-2010** school year is: **\$3606.40**.

Q. How does the funding formula work?

A. All students generate a unit value according to their grade level. The legislature decides which factors will be equalized among all 89 school districts and how much money will be available for funding public education. These factors are specified in statute. The New Mexico Public Education Department collects data to determine the number of units per district. The unit value is basically determined by dividing the amount of money allocated for education by the number of units of each district. (Sect. 22-8-19, Sect. 22-8-20 NMSA 1978)



*The funding unit value for the **2009-2010** school year is as follows:*

- Students in 3-4 year old programs are funded at the rate of .72 of the unit value. $\$3606.40 \times .72 = \2596.61
- Each Kindergarten student in a half-day Kindergarten program generates a .72 unit value. $\$3606.40 \times .72 = \2596.61

Note: Each student in a State Approved full-day Kindergarten program generates a 1.44 unit value. $\$3606.40 \times 1.44 = \5193.22

- First graders generate a 1.2 unit value. $\$3606.40 \times 1.2 = \4327.68
- Second and Third graders each generate a unit value of 1.18. $\$3606.40 \times 1.18 = \4255.55
- Fourth, Fifth and Sixth graders each generate a 1.045 unit value. $\$3606.40 \times 1.045 = \3768.69
- Seventh through Twelfth grade students each generate a 1.25 unit value. $\$3606.40 \times 1.25 = \4508.00

Q. How do schools receive and use the funds generated by the students?

A. Schools generate funds according to their allocations based on information they give to the Public Education Department. Funds are dispersed through a monthly Cash Request from the district that must reach the SDE by the 25th of the month prior to dispersment. The distribution of funds is a decision of the local school board. Funds are generally used to operate the school district programs and services, including salaries.

Q. What is "Prior Year Funding"?

A. Due to the high drop out rate, the legislature set up "Prior Year Funding" to encourage school districts to try harder to keep kids in school. School districts are funded for this year based on the child count for the 40th, 80th and 120th day of the previous year. (The legislature put in a safety net in case a district's enrollment goes up or down drastically.)

Q. Do our children generate funds in addition to the money that districts receive through the funding formula?

A. Schools receive other funds from sources based on strict guidelines and eligibility requirements. These include: IDEA, Title I, Bilingual and a host of other entitlement programs. Under IDEA, each student receiving Special Education Services generates between \$600-1200 in additional federal funds.

Q. What happens when the legislature increases salaries for teachers?

A. Generally, it means that the legislature is increasing the amount of state funds dedicated to education. The Public Education Department is responsible for following the statutes to apply these funds using unit values in the funding formula. At the local level funds are distributed through the district budget in areas such as: curriculum materials, supplies, electricity, services, and other items including teacher salaries. On rare occasions, the legislature takes action for a specific appropriation outside of the funding formula for items such as teacher salaries.

Special Education Add-On Funds



Q. How is special education funded?

A. In addition to the funding that all students generate, students who receive special education or gifted services generate add on funding (Section 22-8-21 NMSA 1978) as follows:

- Students who are in the 3-4 year old program generate 2 add on units to offset the cost of services they receive. $\$3606.40 \times 2 = \7212.80
- Students in grades K-12 who receive minimum level (1) services (not exceeding 10% of the school day/week) generate .7 add on units to off set the cost of the services. $\$3606.40 \times .7 = \2524.48
- Students in grades K-12 who receive moderate level (2) services (less than 50% of the school day) generate .7 add on units to off set the cost of the services. $\$3606.40 \times .7 = \2524.48
- Students in grades K-12 who receive extensive level (3) services (50 % or more of the school day) each generate 1 add on unit to offset cost of the services they receive. $\$3606.40 \times 1 = \3606.40
- Students in grades K-12 who receive maximum level (4) services (an amount approaching a full school day) generate 2 add on units to offset the cost of the services. $\$3606.40 \times 2 = \7212.80

Here is the Key . . .



This formula is used to determine the amount of money generated by a student who receives special education or gifted services in New Mexico. Neither funding nor the level of service is attached to the location in which services are provided. Special Education is a service, not a place!

Step 1	Unit Value	x	Grade Unit	=	Basic Funds
Step 2	Unit Value	x	Add On Unit (Service Level)	=	Add On Funds
Step 3	Basic Funds	+	Add On Funds	=	Total

Third Grade Student - Moderate Service Level (services greater than 10%, but less than 50% of the day)

1. $\$3606.40 \times 1.18 = \4255.55
2. $\$3606.40 \times .7 = \2524.48
3. $\$4255.55 + \$2524.48 = \$6780.03$

Example: Tom is a student with a specific learning disability. He receives an hour daily of specialized instruction with a tutor in reading and math. He receives speech/language therapy for 30 minutes twice a week. The therapist consults with the teacher for 30 minutes every other week

Tenth Grade Student - Extensive Service Level (services/supports more than 50 % of the day)

1. $\$3606.40 \times 1.25 = \4508.00
2. $\$3606.40 \times 1 = \3606.40
3. $\$4508.00 + \$3606.40 = \$8114.40$

Example: Sandy attends regular education classes all day. During three classes a day, a special education teacher supports the regular classroom by providing specialized instruction to four of the students (including Sandy), some daily supervision of the same students and daily consultation. Sandy goes to the cafeteria, PE and homemaking with the natural support of peers.

Sixth Grade Student - Maximum Service Level (services and/or supports approaching a full day)

1. $\$3606.40 \times 1.045 = \3768.69
2. $\$3606.40 \times 2 = \7212.80
3. $\$3768.69 + \$7212.80 = \$10981.49$

Example: John is a student with low cognitive abilities. He attends regular education classes all day. He attends three classes daily that have a teaching team of a general educator and a special educator who jointly plan lessons, teach, prompt students, and problem solve. He attends two other daily classes with the support of an educational assistant that supports John and two other students by overseeing specialized instruction & facilitating peer involvement.

Q. How are therapists funded?

- A. Each full FTE (full time equivalent) therapist or therapist assistant generates 25 units regardless of the size of their caseload ($25 \times \$3606.40 = \$90,160.00$). Many districts use several part time therapists to generate a full FTE. Funding should encourage school districts to hire enough therapists to meet the needs of students and maintain reasonable caseloads. However, the School Board is responsible for distributing these funds as part of the district budget. (*PRO Note: A reasonable caseload for a fulltime therapist would be 30-35 students of varying levels of service.*)



Web Sites for Inclusive Practices

www.inclusion.org

www.circleofinclusion.org

www.inclusion.com

www.island.net/~bridges/

quasar.ualberta.ca/ddc/incl/intro.htm

www.caltash.gen.ca.us

www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/index.html

www.projectparticipate.org

Special Needs, Special Gifts: <http://www.specialneedsadvocate.com/>

Parents Reaching Out Resource Center

The following materials may be checked out from our *free* lending library:

Restructuring for Caring and Effective Education, 2000 Villa & Thousand

The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners, 1999 Tomlinson

Creativity and Collaborative Learning, 2002 Thousand, Villa, and Nevin

The New Circles of Learning: Cooperation in the Classroom and School, 1994 Johnson, Johnson, Holubec

Inclusive Schooling Practices: Pedagogical and Research Foundations, 1998 McGregor and Vogelsberg

How Difficult Can This Be? Richard Lavoie (video)

A Handbook for Classroom Instruction That Works, 2001 Marzano, Norford

Standards & Inclusion, Can we have both? Lipsky and Gartner (video)

Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement, 2001, Marzano, Pickering, Pollock

Collaborative Planning: Transforming Theory into Practice Richard Villa (video)

How To Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms, 2001, Tomlinson

Collaborative Teaching: The Co-Teaching Model Richard Villa (video)

Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom, 2000 Armstrong

Research You Can Use to Improve Results, 1999 K. Cotton

The Book of Ideas, developed by Parents Reaching Out, is a great resource for planning inclusive instruction!



Parents Reaching Out

Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family

As a statewide non-profit organization, we connect with parents, caregivers, educators and other professionals to promote healthy, positive and caring experiences for New Mexico families and children. We have served New Mexico families for over twenty five years. Our staff and Family Leadership Action Network volunteers reflect the unique diversity of the communities throughout our state.

Children do not come with instructions on how to deal with the difficult circumstances that many families experience. Parents Reaching Out believes that families' needs go beyond the bounds of formal services. *What we can offer to each other is uniquely ours. We have all been there.*

Our Mission

The mission of Parents Reaching Out is to enhance positive outcomes for families and children in New Mexico through informed decision making, advocacy, education, and resources. Parents Reaching Out provides the networking opportunities for families to connect with and support each other. This mission supports *all families* including those who have children with disabilities, and others who are disenfranchised. Parents Reaching Out achieves this by:

- ♦ Developing family leadership
- ♦ Connecting families to each other
- ♦ Building collaborative partnerships
- ♦ Providing families knowledge and tools to enhance their power

Our Beliefs

- ♦ Families need support where ever they are in their journey.
- ♦ All families care deeply about their children.
- ♦ Families may need tools and support to accomplish their dreams.
- ♦ All families are capable of making informed decisions that are right for their family.
- ♦ Families in the state benefit from our organization having the staff and materials that meet their diversity.
- ♦ Systems that listen carefully to the family perspective improve outcomes for our children.

We invite all families and those serving families and children in New Mexico to make *Parents Reaching Out your one stop resource for a stronger family.* Our publications, workshops, and Resource Center offer tools for informed decision-making and building partnerships in communities. Our trained staff and network of volunteers are here to serve you.

Parents Reaching Out is the home of:

- NM Parent Information and Resource Center (NMPIRC)
- NM Parent Training and Information Center (NMPTIC)
- NM Family to Family Health Information Center (NMF2FHIC)

Parents Reaching Out

1920 B Columbia Drive, SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106
1-505-247-0192 ♦ 1-800-524-5176
www.parentsreachingout.org

From I-25—take the Gibson Blvd Exit 222 and go East on Gibson. Turn left at the third stop light (Girard). Turn left on Vail. Go one block to Columbia. Turn left on Columbia. Parents Reaching Out is on the east side of the street. Welcome!

