



Inclusion in Preschool Classrooms

Preschool programs include young children with disabilities and developmental delays in their classrooms. The goal of inclusion is to help all children learn to the best of their abilities. Here are some questions that parents often ask about inclusion.

What does inclusion mean?

Inclusion means teaching all children together, regardless of ability level. Inclusive programs celebrate children's similarities as well as their different abilities and cultures. In inclusive classrooms, children with disabilities and developmental delays take part in the general education curriculum based on their age. They are not assigned to a separate classroom; rather the curriculum and classroom activities are adapted to meet children's needs.

What does an inclusion team do?

The inclusion team plans ways to provide access, participation, and supports so all children can experience success in preschool. People on an inclusion team are expected to have good communication skills. They are flexible and creative about meeting all children's needs. An inclusion team consists of people from inside and outside the school who work together to support children with disabilities and developmental delays:

- **General education teachers** teach the curriculum to all students.
- **Special education teachers** help general education teachers embed individual children's goals and objectives into classroom routines and activities.
- **Related service providers** may include speech therapists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. They help the classroom staff work with children who have disabilities in areas such as communication and motor skills. They help children develop skills needed to participate in the classroom, home, and community.
- **Parents** provide important information about their children's progress and needs. They also support their child's learning activities at home and in the community.
- **Administrators** lead school programs. They also make sure that classroom staff members have the resources they need to work successfully with all children.

How does inclusion work?

A child's inclusion team meets regularly to plan how to make the curriculum, physical space, and special services fit together smoothly. The teacher makes changes based on input from the team. An inclusive preschool classroom might have

- wider classroom pathways so children with physical challenges can move around easily
- picture schedules so children with language delays can follow the daily routine
- adaptive crayons and scissors that are made for children with fine-motor delays
- assistive technology to ensure each child's full participation in program routines and activities
- specialized equipment for children with hearing and/or vision challenges

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