

Provider-Family-Teacher Collaboration & Education: Promoting Inclusion of Children with Disabilities within the General Education Classroom

Madelyn Cannone, MSN, CPNP-AC, NJLEND Nursing Fellow
Manuel Jimenez, MD, MS

Background

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – IDEA: Federal mandate that requires states to provide **free, appropriate, public education (FAPE)** to all students with disabilities within the **least restrictive environment (LRE)**.

LRE – All children with disabilities are to be **educated with children who do not have disabilities**, to the maximum extent appropriate.

Inclusion – Children with special needs have the **right to participate** in the **same community activities and programs** they would attend if they did not have a disability.

Benefits of Inclusion

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <h4 style="color: #0070C0;">Academic</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher grades Higher achievement scores on standardized tests Improved literacy skills Better post-secondary school outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer school absences Better instruction and comprehension Higher academic expectations. | |
| <h4 style="color: #0070C0;">Social</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved peer relationships Improved social competence Improved school satisfaction and sense of belonging Better models for social behavior and communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved functional living & adaptive skills Improved self-esteem Reduction in inappropriate behaviors Greater acceptance in the community Increased community participation & employment as adults | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved acceptance & understanding of people with disabilities Desensitization towards people who are "different" Increased appreciation of individual differences Better preparedness for becoming parents & community leaders. Increased opportunities to teach peers and collaborate Decreased overall stigma toward individuals with disabilities. |

Objective

To better understand the **barriers to inclusive practice** within the **general education classroom**.

To utilize **family-provider-teacher collaboration** to promote the **general educator's knowledge** about the **implications of their student's disability, their student's right to inclusion, and ways to foster inclusive practice** for all children with disabilities.

Process and Methods

- Literature review** to identify factors that contribute to general educators' reluctance or resistance to inclusion.
 - Reviewed 32 peer-reviewed articles, published within the last 20 yrs.
 - Search engines: PubMed, Google Scholar
- Interviews** with disability rights attorneys, families of children with disabilities, CSH faculty and general education teachers regarding disability rights and inclusion.

Identified **three main factors** that **influenced inclusive practice within the general education classroom**:

- The general education teacher's **knowledge about common pediatric disabilities**.
- Teacher **self-efficacy and confidence** in their ability to teach children with disabilities.
- The general education teacher's **understanding of disability-education laws** and the rights of the child.

"Inclusion is a practice, not a place."

References:



Pamphlet:



Resources on Inclusion:



Final Product and Implications

Using these three factors, we identified **interventions & strategies to improve general educator knowledge and confidence** toward teaching students with disabilities.

- Collaboration** between teachers, families, medical providers, and other disciplines within the child's life.
 - Interdisciplinary collaboration amongst the child's care team allows for greater info sharing and knowledge acquisition. (Abeggen and Hessel 2018; Carter, Parner, Jackson, & Marchant, 2009; Giangreco, Edelman, Broer, & Doyle, 2003; Schwab, Hellmich, and Görel 2017; Westling & Fox, 2009)
- Education** and **professional development** opportunities for general educators to learn more about common pediatric disabilities and disability rights.
 - With enhanced education and knowledge about disability, teachers have shown greater self efficacy and more positive attitudes toward inclusion. (Abeggen and Hessel 2018; Crispel & Kasperski, 2022; Dignath, Rimm-Kaufman, van Ewijk, & Kunter, 2022; Feng & Sassi, 2012 ; Van Miegheem et al., 2018)

We then used these strategies to create something tangible

"Tips for Teachers" — a **personalized, educational pamphlet for families & providers** of children with cerebral palsy to **jointly fill out** and **provide to the child's teacher**, with a focus on:

- Educating teachers** about the **implications of the student's disability**.
- Services** the child is **entitled to under IDEA**.
- Student specific techniques** that the teacher can use to **better promote inclusion** of that child within the classroom.

How to Best Support My Child with Cerebral Palsy

Tips for Teachers!

Promoting inclusion through interdisciplinary, education & collaboration

What is Cerebral Palsy?

Disability Rights & Public Education

Inclusion of The Least Restrictive Environment

What Inclusion Looks Like

What is Cerebral Palsy?

Benefits of Inclusion

Inclusive Strategies for Students with CP

Tips from Healthcare Providers

- What is and isn't Cerebral Palsy?
- Overview of IDEA, LRE, & Inclusion
- Benefits of Inclusion
- Inclusion Strategies for Cerebral Palsy
- Fill-in-the-blank portion for personalized recommendations from the child's family and healthcare team.
- Resources for further information about inclusion.

➤ Given to families of patients with Cerebral Palsy during outpatient doctors appointments.

➤ Made available online for Children's Specialized Hospital providers to print for patients, as needed.

Problem Analysis:

Inclusion in Real-World Practice

Despite federal mandates and the known benefits of inclusion, adoption of inclusion within the general classroom has fallen short in practice.

(van Miegheem et al., 2020).

In the 2021-2022 school year, **15% of all public-school students received special education** and/or related services, under IDEA.

- 95%** of those students were enrolled in **regular public schools**.
- 67%** of those students spend at least 80% of their school day **within the general education classroom**.
 - SLP (88%), learning disability (75%), other health impairment (70%), DD (70%), visual impairment (70%).
- Less than 1/3rd** of students with **more specific or involved disabilities** spend the majority their school day **within general education classes**.
 - Deaf-blindness (30%), ID (20%), multiple disabilities (15%).

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2023)