



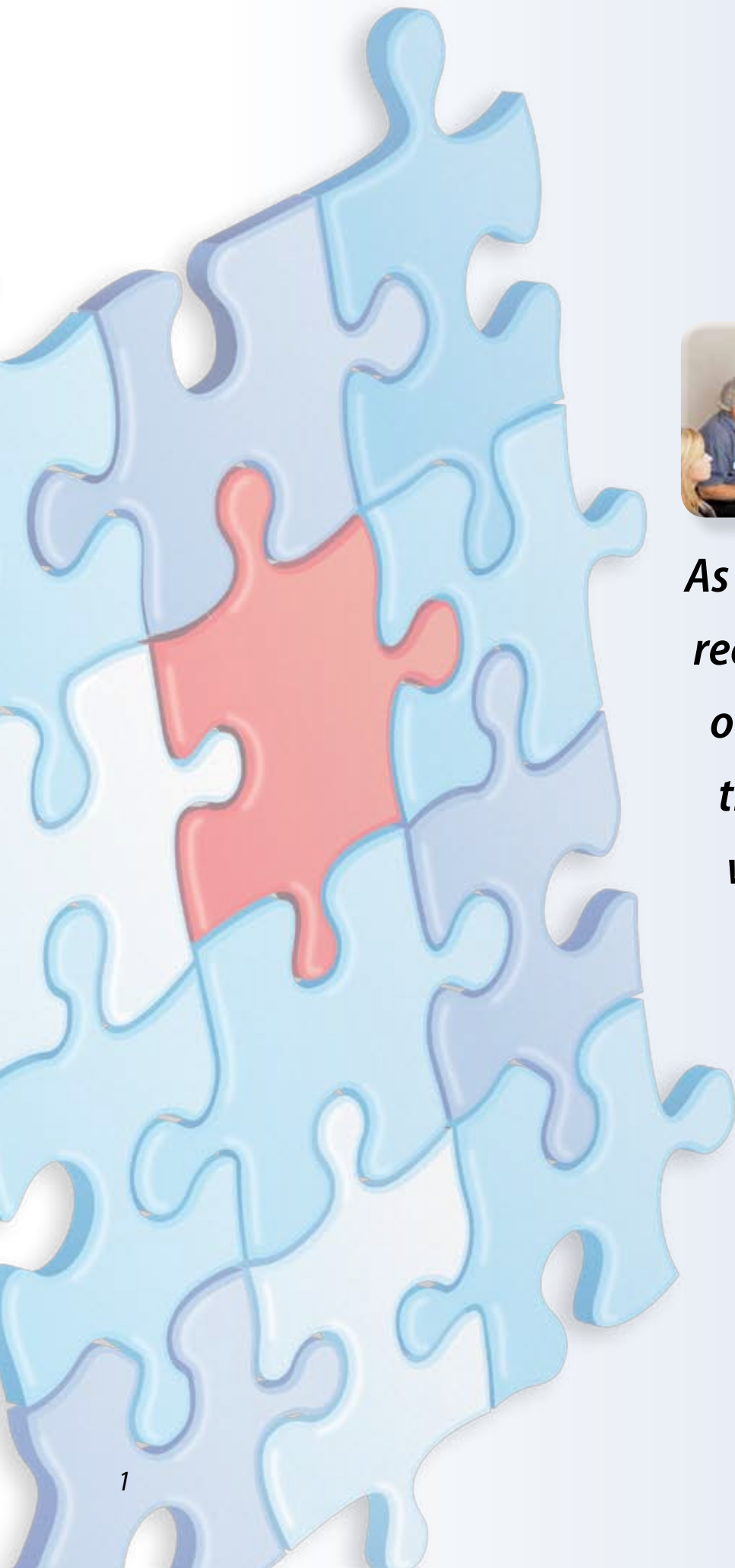
# Strategies for Success:

*Creating  
Inclusive Classrooms  
that Work*

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Produced with funds from the  
PA Developmental Disabilities Council (PA DDC)  
Educational Rights Grant



***As educators recognize the benefits of inclusive schooling, they are beginning to work together to make inclusive placements a reality.***

# Collaborating for Inclusion

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Historically, parents have been at the forefront in advocating for inclusive placements, but as research begins to show positive outcomes for both students with and without disabilities in inclusive classrooms,\* teachers and administrators are moving to create successful inclusive classrooms for students with disabilities.

Although strategies regarding family-school collaboration and successful inclusive placements have been well defined in the professional literature for many years, this practice continues to be new for many schools across the country. This booklet will provide teachers, administrators and families with the key steps necessary to work together as a team when creating successful inclusive placements.

To begin the planning process, it is essential that the team of parents and professionals share a common understanding of inclusive education and best practice strategies. They will need a clear picture of what inclusive classrooms look like so, as they plan, they will have a desired goal in mind.

\* (Causton-Theoharis & Theoharis, 2008; Copland & Cosbey, 2009; Cosier, Causton-Theoharis, & Theoharis, under review; Jackson, Ryndak, & Mathot-Buckner, 2001; Peterson & Hittie, 2003)

## **Defining Inclusion**

When students with disabilities receive special education services in the general education classroom it is called *inclusive education*. Within educational literature, inclusion is described in many different ways. Schwarz (2006) states, "The strategy behind inclusion is to design supports—innovative approaches to learning, differentiated instruction, curricular adaptations—for every student in the classroom, to include the entire spectrum of learners" (p. 35).

In addition to the design of supports and strategies that allow for a successful inclusive classroom, inclusion is also a philosophy where all students are valued and supported to participate meaningfully with each other. When reflecting on what has made for meaningful inclusive practices for himself, Jamie Burke, disability rights advocate and college student with autism writes:

*Teachers must be willing to not just give me a desk and then leave me to fill the chair. I need to be asked questions, and given time for my thoughtful answers. Teachers need to become as a conductor, and guide me through the many places I may get lost.*

(Kasa-Hendrickson & Burke, 2009)

Clearly inclusion is about a set of best practice strategies coupled with the moral view that all students bring value to the general education classroom.

## **What Does a Successful Inclusive Classroom Look Like?**

*In inclusive classrooms students have a variety of ways to access information and demonstrate what they know*

When teachers and families come together to plan for inclusion they often ask, "What does a successful inclusive classroom look like?" When Mrs. Jackson worked to include Kelly (a student with Williams syndrome) in 8<sup>th</sup> grade biology she asked herself, "What skills does Kelly have that will help her to access the curriculum?" Through talking to Kelly's parents, Kelly, and observing her in the classroom Mrs. Jackson found that she was very good at explaining key concepts verbally and also at demonstrating knowledge through hands on materials. Mrs. Jackson decided that she would have the students work with partners to demonstrate the phases of mitosis using clay. The students constructed models of cells and used rice, pasta, and candy to show how

the parts of the cells divide. Kelly was able to show all of the major parts of this process through molding the clay. Mrs. Jackson noted, "I would have never thought of doing this had it not been for Kelly. She has really helped me to find new strategies for teaching that are helping all of the student in my room." Kelly's need for hands-on learning and demonstration led Mrs. Jackson to incorporate strategies that ended up being beneficial for all of her students. Further, when the students in the class took the quiz on cells, Kelly was given her quiz orally; this allowed her to show her knowledge of the content while using her strong verbal skills. Teachers of successful inclusive classrooms utilize student strengths, incorporate creative teaching strategies, and support peer interaction.

### *Inclusive classrooms focus on utilizing strengths*

Educators should remain focused on the strengths of the child instead of areas of weakness. The team should ask, "What skills and strengths does the child have that will help her learn and develop social relationships?" and "How can those strengths and skills be utilized to help my child learn in the classroom?" Some teams have put together a *strength and strategies* profile (Kluth & Diamon-Borowski, 2005) to help their team members see what is possible (See Table 1 on page 14 for a sample strengths and strategies profile). Sharing strategies that work best to provide access to the general education curriculum as well as social relationships can assist the team in working together to focus on *how* the child can be a successful member of the general education classroom (Jorgensen, McSheehan, & Sonnenmeier, 2007).

### *Inclusive classrooms create a sense of belonging*

When Mike moved from the special education classroom and became a member of the general education classroom, his teacher worked to make sure he was an equal member of the class. The teacher ensured that Mike had the same supplies and books that his peers did. He ensured that Mike was seated at the front of the class next to peers who would welcome him and would work with him in cooperative learning groups. The teacher made sure that Mike did not leave the classroom, but that speech, occupational therapy, and physical therapy services came into the classroom to provide services. Finally the teacher made sure that Mike was able to share ideas and questions just as the rest of the members of the class. All of these strategies were welcoming and were their first step to ensuring belonging.

## The Basics on Belonging

1. Communication to the student with disabilities should not be in a loud and condescending tone. Speak to a student with disabilities in the same way you would any student.
2. Do not talk about the student in front of them as if they were not there. Maintain respect and dignity at all times.
3. Peers should be taught to respect and support the students with disabilities. This happens first through modeling.
4. Students with disabilities should be given a chance to share their ideas and answers in similar ways to their peers. Remember to call on the student with a disability too.
5. Students with disabilities should not sit next to each other and should not be in the same group for activities. Spread students out in the class and create heterogeneous groups.
6. Students with disabilities should have the same supplies and materials as all of the other students.
7. Transitions should happen with other students. Students with disabilities should not leave early for recess, the end of the day, or for other activities



# Strategies for Achieving Inclusive Placements

With a shared vision of what inclusive education looks like in practice, the team of parents and professionals can begin the actual planning process of having the student have access to the general education classroom. When the IEP team decides that they want to deliver special education services in the general education classroom, there are a number of steps they can take to achieve an inclusive placement. What follows is a description of strategies that are useful for teachers when they are working with families on inclusive placements. Of course, after the placement decision has been made, there will need to be discussion of best practice strategies for successful inclusive practice (see: Kluth, 2010; Causton-Theoharis, 2009; and Janney & Snell, 2006). Each school and school district hold different practices, therefore some of these ideas will work and others will not—considering the many different members of the educational team.

## 1 Develop a Shared Vision

When working with the IEP team, families often develop visions for their children as a tool for all team members to use as they write the IEP and plan to support the student to access the general education curriculum. The IEP team should carefully listen to the family's vision and also see the family as a resource in developing and implementing the IEP (Soodak & Erwin, 2000). In addition, teachers and other service providers often have ideas regarding the student's strengths and specific strategies that work to support their learning. These resources should be shared at meetings so that the team stays focused on strengths and utilizes many tools for planning and supporting the student. While working to move Seth into an inclusive placement, his teacher lead the team, including his parents in writing a vision statement that would guide their decisions. Together they wrote:

*It is our vision for Seth to receive his education in the general education classroom. We want him to be exposed to and learn the general education curriculum and to participate with his peers. We would like Seth to participate in extracurricular activities and to have the opportunity to make friends. We want Seth to develop a strong self-concept and to be supported in the classroom utilizing his strengths and talents.*

After teachers, service providers, and families craft their vision and/or strength statements they should plan to share this information with the team. This information

could be sent or given to all team members before an IEP meeting, read at the beginning of the team meeting, and/or included in the present level of performance section in the student's IEP. Creating a shared vision allows team members to understand each other's goals and provides a solid foundation for making future decisions.

## 2 Share Resources

**Utilize and share the strengths and experiences of the team members.** Effective IEP teams work collaboratively to learn from each other's experiences with the child and share strategies that support the educational vision for the child. As the IEP team works to plan for an inclusive placement it will be important for them to share information across the team on best practices for inclusive schooling and the strengths of the child (Stoner, Bock, Thompson, Angell, Heyl, & Crowley, 2005; Westmoreland, Rosenberg, Lopez, & Weiss, 2009). The team, including teachers, parents, and therapists, all have an important perspective to share. Through effective communication and collaborative planning with a focus on the child, the team can collectively address any challenges that arise and plan for the success of the student.

**Support the team to learn best practices.** As teams work to develop inclusive placements some members may have more experience than others. It will be important for all team members to have the opportunity to acquire the necessary information needed to successfully support the child with a disability in the general education classroom. This is an important step in the process as understanding best practice strategies for inclusive education will help the team to see that a student with a significant disability can participate effectively in a high school literature class with the appropriate accommodations and modifications. For example, during Cole's IEP meeting, the team was discussing the appropriateness of Cole (a sophomore with Down syndrome) participating in a high school literature class as a part of his inclusive schedule. A member of the team had questioned how Cole would participate. Cole's teacher, having knowledge of how to provide appropriate modifications, was able to share that Cole, for example, could create a PowerPoint presentation with pictures and sentences utilizing a persuasive topic while his classmates wrote their persuasive essay. Showing how the curriculum could be adapted and how Cole would be able to work on goals from his IEP (e.g., writing sentences) while having access to the general education curriculum allowed the team to

understand how Cole would participate and benefit from his placement in the general education classroom.

In order to gain this type of experience, teachers can observe successful inclusive classrooms and talk to teachers and parents who have experience in inclusive placements. Additionally, sharing articles, websites or films with the staff can help build the capacity of the team. See Table 2 on page 14 for a bulleted list of such resources. Scheduling professional development on the topic of inclusion can also be useful (See Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, § 300.704(b)(4)(i), (b)(4)(xi)). There are many resources available for IEP teams to learn more about best practice inclusive education. All members of the IEP team, including the parents, should routinely share resources and exchange information in order to increase their knowledge of best practice strategies.



### 3 Understand the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) clause of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) holds language that guides inclusive education practices. The LRE has been interpreted through case law at many different levels of the judicial system. Although the LRE suggests the availability of a continuum of placements, it also stipulates that students with disabilities have the right to be educated within the general education classroom. Further, this section suggests that students are entitled to supports to help create an educational environment where the students with a disability can have access to their peers without disabilities, the general education curriculum, and the opportunity to work on their IEP goals in a natural environment. Special education law has deemed that special education services are portable services that can be brought directly to individual children (Roncker v. Walter, 1983).

#### Definition of LRE

The LRE clause of IDEA states that to the maximum extent appropriate, school districts must educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports, referred to as “supplementary aids and services,” along with their nondisabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled (IDEA, 2004).

Under LRE, the general education classroom should be where students with disabilities start their education. That is, students with disabilities should be included in the general education classroom with the use of supplementary aids and services before a more restrictive placement is considered. Further, this means that a child with a disability cannot be removed from a general education classroom because of common routines or practices (i.e., the existence of autism centers, classes for students with physical disabilities, or pull out models for students with learning disabilities) 34C.F.R. 300.116 (b) (3)(e). Table 3 on page 15 is a guide of the legal cases in placement decisions that have ruled in favor of inclusive placements. This table is a resource that should provide some information about legal precedent in terms of inclusive placements.

#### Supplementary aids and services are a critical element of the plan

Supplementary aids and services that educators have successfully used include accommodations and modifications to the regular class curriculum.

This includes: preferential seating, large print materials, peer tutors, graphic organizers, use of computers, taped lectures, reduced seat time, assistance of a teacher with special education training, training for the general education teacher, use of computer-assisted devices, a note-taker, communication device, or changes to materials. All these can be used to modify or adapt the general education curriculum or instruction (Browder, Wakeman,

Flowers, Rickelman, Pugalee, & Karvonen, 2007; Matzen, Ryndak, & Nakao, in press).

Teachers will want to work together with the team to make a good faith effort to utilize all of the possible supplementary aids and services before determining that a student needs to leave the general education classroom (see Figure 1 for examples of supplementary aids and services).

**Figure 1** - Supplementary Aids and Services

<b>Types of Supplementary Aids and Services</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<p><b><i>Accommodations</i></b> Does not change the instructional level or performance criteria Provides access to information and demonstration of knowledge</p>	<p>Audio books A note taker Use of a laptop Extended time for assignments or tests Enlarged print</p>
<p><b><i>Modifications</i></b> Changes what the student is expected to learn The content remains the same</p>	<p>Key ideas from a lesson or unit Same only less Representative sample of skills</p>
<p><b><i>Paraprofessional Support</i></b> Support given to the individual student as well as all of the other students in the class by an adult</p>	<p>One on one support Small group instruction Instructional support provided to the teacher Data collection Preparation of materials</p>
<p><b><i>Peer Supports</i></b> Utilizing classmates to provide support in ways that enhance the learning of both the student with and without a disability</p>	<p>Paired reading Quiz review Presentations Group work</p>
<p><b><i>Assistive Technology</i></b> Low tech and high tech materials and software used to provide access to learning and demonstration of content Includes Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) devices</p>	<p>Calculator Reading strips Highlighter tape Book stands Fidget toy Raised line paper Word prediction software Lap top</p>
<p><b><i>Related Service Providers</i></b> Professionals who push into the classroom to provide support with specific goals and/or needs</p>	<p>Physical therapist Speech therapist Occupational therapist Vision specialist Nurse</p>

## 4 Write an Inclusive IEP

The development of the IEP is a critical step that the team can take to communicate goals and share strategies that will support their child to reach those goals. Careful planning of the IEP meeting is essential when designing the services needed to support the child successfully. The team should take time when planning for the IEP to listen and learn from each other. Further, when the team is focused on planning for an inclusive placement, they should focus on including as much information as possible in the IEP on the necessary supports for the child to participate successfully in the general education classroom (Clark, 2000; Kasa-Hendrickson, Buswell, & Harmon, 2009).

### Writing inclusive goals

A student's individual goals should be driven by the student's strengths, assessment data, and what the student and her/his family would like to accomplish over the course of the year. Goals should be individual and directed by the student's needs and should also assist in connecting the student to the general education curriculum and their peers (IDEA, 20 U.S.C. 1414(d) 2004). When drafting IEP goals as a team, be sure to consider how the goals can guide the team in working on academic and social skills in natural inclusive environments, including extracurricular activities.

Goals are inclusive if they:

- 1) Use supports and curriculum that are age-appropriate;
- 2) Lead to meaningful outcomes for the child;
- 3) Support learning the general education curriculum with peers; and
- 4) Occur in natural settings and times throughout the day.



## Sample Inclusive IEP Goals

These models of IEP goals may assist the team in thinking about writing inclusive goals.

While participating in 12th grade biology, Sophie will orally name and describe four big ideas from each unit of study when asked, with 80% accuracy for each unit.

While working in cooperative groups with 2-4 peers without disabilities, Noah will successfully take turns 4 out of 5 times during each group activity.

When signing up for centers, signing out to use the restroom, and writing her name on her paper, Julie will legibly write her name without a model or assistance 4 out of every 5 opportunities.

### Related Services can be inclusive as well

It is common to see a student who is included for the majority of the day, but receives her/his related services (speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, recreational therapy, etc.) in a pull-out model. Pulling students from the classroom can be quite detrimental to learning and social relationships (Causton-Theoharis, 2009; Schnorr, 1990). Instead of removing the student from general education classroom to work on speech and language goals, consider having the particular goal met during reading language arts time with the support of the speech teacher. Or, instead of having a student work on a goal like learning to tell time in a resource room, have the student be responsible for the class agenda or alerting the class when it is time to go to music class. Zipping practice can be done by taking a coat on and off before and after recess, organizational skills can be practiced when gathering materials, and social skills can be practiced in cooperative groups while learning science (Fisher & Frey, 2001; Johnson, McDonnell, Holzwarth, & Hunter, 2004). These are all examples of goals being addressed in natural environments and leading to meaningful outcomes. While focusing on student's individual needs, IEP goals should allow for access to the general education curriculum as well as supporting active participation.



## 5 Tackle Challenges with Optimism

When teams are planning for inclusive placements, the following questions can come up:

- “The child has below grade level reading skills. How will she participate?”
- “The student does not pay attention, gets out of his seat, and taps his pencil all of the time. How will the other students learn?”
- “The student does not speak. How will we know what he is getting out of class?”

These questions can be great tools for problem solving. Instead of asking “*why*” the student is participating in the general education setting, the team can focus on “*how*” the student can best access the general education curriculum. In response to these types of questions the team can take the opportunity to brainstorm responses by coming up with ideas for *how* to adapt the reading material, *how* to prepare and access audio books, *how* to utilize active learning structures, *how* to create augmentative communication systems in the general education classroom, and *how* to collect observational and portfolio assessment data in order to know what a student is learning. With these types of brainstorming sessions the team can be well prepared to provide the types of accommodations and modifications needed for the student to successfully access and participate in the general education classroom.

*When challenging behaviors occur we often react by asking the following questions:*

- How can we get him to behave and to complete work?
- How can we get him to respect others?
- What consequences might be effective in changes in his behavior?
- What reinforcement might be effective in changing behavior?

*Instead we might consider asking different questions:*

- What is he trying to communicate with his behavior?
- Does he feel comfortable, safe, valued, empowered?
- Is the curriculum challenging, motivating, interesting?
- How can we help him connect to others?
- How can this student experience joy in school?

Asking different questions can lead educators to support the student in different ways. These questions can also assist educators in examining the classroom practice and environment that may lead to new supports and strategies that can greatly improve student behavior.

While gathering this type of information, teachers have the opportunity to gain new skills and teaching strategies. It will be important to reach out to other professionals, families, teachers, and professional organizations to gain the needed information on best practices for inclusive schooling. Addressing and resolving these kinds of challenges during the IEP meeting is central to the long-term success of an inclusive placement. Further, commitment to creative solutions and problem solving as a team can keep the IEP team in a productive mode of working towards successful outcomes (Giangreco, Cloninger, Dennis & Edelman, 1994).

# Instruction for All

## Successful Instructional Support in the Inclusive Classroom

By the time the student arrives in the classroom, the team should have a shared vision of what the student's school day will look like and who will be supporting the student's learning. This is the collective responsibility of the educational team. Successful instructional support in the inclusive classroom can be made up of many different approaches including providing adaptations, accommodations, paraprofessional support, collaborative planning and co-teaching. The IEP team, through collaborative problem solving, can design the instructional support strategies that maximize the success of the individual student in the general education classroom.

### **Providing Accommodations and Modifications**

As educators respond to the needs of the learners in diverse classrooms they work to provide instruction that is accessible and challenging to all students. When students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom, their presence is often a catalyst to examine how instruction is taking place. In the process of working to meet the need of all students' teachers will need to ensure that they are adhering to a Universal Design for Learning model (UDL). According to the CAST website (see: [www.cast.org](http://www.cast.org)), "UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs" ("What is Universal", 2011). See Figure 2 for an example of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in the classroom.

When Nick entered 5th grade his teacher immediately thought about how she could ensure that her lessons on plant and the revolutionary war would be accessible to Nick. In doing this, she had the students create 3D visual timelines of key events. In this process, students were able to take in information in multiple ways (through visuals, manipulating objects, and reading/listening to the information in the book), process the information in multiple ways (working in small groups and experimenting with different objects to create their timeline), and share their knowledge in multiple ways (through creating a legend, teaching a novice from another class, or presenting their timeline to the class). Through the process of this redesign, Nick's teacher realized that designing lessons utilizing multiple strategies for learning and utilizing learner strengths allowed for greater engagement and success in this social studies unit.

**Figure 2** - Universal Design in the Classroom

While universal design is the first step in instructional design and will often provide enough instructional support through responding to student learning strengths that all students can be successful many students with disabilities will need further accommodations and modifications in order to access and participate in the lesson.

By definition **accommodations** are changes in how a student accesses information and demonstrates learning. **Accommodations do not substantially change the instructional level, content, or performance criteria.** The changes are made to provide a student with equal access to learning and equal opportunity to show what he or she knows and can do.



**Modifications** are changes in what a student is expected to learn. **The changes are made to provide a student with opportunities to participate meaningfully and productively along with other students in classroom and school learning experiences.**

Providing a student with a digital audio version of a novel, written or visual step-by-step directions for how to complete his model of a cell, raised-line paper, or a modified timeline activity focusing on the three big ideas from the Civil War are all examples of accommodations and modifications that would ensure success for specific students.

Many of these suggestions will support the participation of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Some students, including those with significant disabilities, will need specific considerations in order to involve their participation. For more information on including students who do not speak, see Table 4 on page 16.

### **Paraprofessional Support**

In order to effectively include all students in the general education setting, planning teams may consider the support of a paraprofessional. It is essential that they are being used wisely. Paraprofessionals are assets to inclusive schools and classrooms when they:

- Are well-trained
- Provide only minimal support necessary
- Work to connect students with disabilities to their peers
- Are utilized as a resource for the entire classroom—not only supporting one student

Paraprofessionals need to be included as a member of the team and have time with their supervising teacher so that they can ensure that instruction and supports are being carried out effectively in the classroom. Paraprofessionals need time built into their day to ask specific questions and provide feedback.

#### **Effective Paraprofessional Support:**

- Provide as little support as possible. Be sure to move away and use peers whenever possible. Do not place a seat next to the student.
- Bounce around the room and help all students in the class.
- Support the student with disabilities to work with peers.
- If students are working in partners the student with a disability should always work with a peer in the class. The paraprofessional can support the partnership, but should never be the partner.
- Teach peers to provide support. When providing the support the paraprofessional should ask, can a peer provide this support?

#### **Examples of peer support:**

- Gathering supplies. Para would say, “Can you help Rachel get her supplies?”
- Reading material
- Scribing answers
- Answering questions (providing two or three options for someone to choose from)
- Getting from class to class
- Opening locker

## **Co-Teaching and Collaboration**

IDEA provides a central focus on the collaboration between general and special education when students receive special education services. The intent of the law is that once a student begins to receive special education services the relationship between special and general education should be strengthened as a way to ensure that the student participation in the general education curriculum is enhanced (IDEA, 2004).

The practice of general and special educators planning and teaching together to support the needs of students with and without disabilities in the general education classroom can take on many forms. When co-teaching happens it is most important that all teachers involved utilize their strengths, share roles, and are both seen as leaders in the classroom. Teachers should maximize the benefits of reducing the student-teacher ratio by using co-teaching models such as parallel instruction, station teaching, and teaming (Friend & Reising, 1993) and should minimize the “one teach one assist” model or other arrangements that place one of the teachers in the role of the assistant.

When teachers work together to establish equitable roles and duties, all students in a co-taught classroom benefit from the presence of two teachers who can support their learning.

## **Conclusion**

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Teachers play a central role in determining the placement of students with disabilities. The strategies shared in this article, while not new to the body of literature in special education, provide guidance when working to achieve inclusive placements. Teaching is not an easy activity and all members of the child’s team should be focused on sharing what is working and constructively problem solving around challenges. Each member of the IEP team should recognize the instances of progress no matter how small and communicate these successes with other members of the team (Osher & Osher, 2002).

Inclusive placements continue to be a goal for many families and are increasingly a goal for many educators. As research on the success of inclusive placements continues to show greater gains in achievement for students with and without disabilities, the drive for inclusive placements will continue to rise. It is essential that teams work together to purposefully create successful placements so that students with disabilities have full access to the curriculum alongside their peers without disabilities. Where a child is educated is one of the most important educational decisions a team can make. As teams work together to design and implement inclusive placements for students, it is essential that they do so using collaborative strategies that include the expertise of all of the team members.



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**Table 1:** Sample Strengths and Strategies Profile**Strengths, Gifts, Interests, and Talents for Jordon**

- Loves to read and is a good reader
- Great memory; remembers information about others after meeting them
- Knows a lot of information about cars
- Is very interested in all areas of science
- Loves to travel & has traveled all over the U.S.
- Is skilled at basic internet searches
- Enjoys working to help others
- Loves school
- Likes Physical Education and other physical games
- Enjoys swimming
- Works well with a schedule
- Interested in school clubs and sports
- Is a good public speaker and presents at conferences
- Has many creative ideas for writing
- Is interested in going to college

**Effective Strategies for Jordon**

- Use text reading software or make sure that material is at reading level
- Highlight key points on text using highlighter tape
- Focus on Jordon learning big ideas in science and social studies
- Use buddy notes in all classes
- Color code notebook by subjects
- Dictate a story map prior to writing
- Color code what will go 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.
- Use laptop and co-writer for all writing
- Practice math skills while working in the school store
- Use peer supports
- Teach in naturally occurring general education environments
- Have high expectations

Adapted from "Strengths and Strategies: Assessing and Sharing what Matters" by Paula Kluth & Michelle Diamon-Borowski (see [www.paulakluth.com](http://www.paulakluth.com)).

**Table 2:** List of Useful Resources for Encouraging Inclusion

Type of Resource	Name of Resource
Films	Including Samuel • Autism is A World • Educating Peter
Books	Kluth, P. (2003). "You're going to love this kid": Teaching students with autism in the inclusive classroom. Baltimore: Brookes
	Udvari-Solner, A., & Kluth, P. (2008). Joyful learning: Active and collaborative learning in the inclusive classroom. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press
	Sapon-Shevin, M. <i>Widening the Circle: The Power of Inclusive Classrooms</i> . Boston, MA: Beacon
	Causton-Theoharis, J. (2009). <i>The Paraprofessional's Handbook for Effective Support in the Inclusive Classroom</i> . Baltimore, MD: Brookes.
Websites	<a href="http://www.paulakluth.com">www.paulakluth.com</a> • <a href="http://www.wrightslaw.com">www.wrightslaw.com</a> • <a href="http://www.k8accesscenter.org">www.k8accesscenter.org</a>
	<a href="http://inclusiveschools.org">http://inclusiveschools.org</a> • <a href="http://idea.ed.gov">http://idea.ed.gov</a> • <a href="http://www.taalliance.org">www.taalliance.org</a> • <a href="http://www.nichcy.org">www.nichcy.org</a>
Articles	Kluth, P., Villa, R., & Thousand, J. (2001, December/January). "Our school doesn't offer inclusion" and other legal blunders. <i>Educational Leadership</i> , 59, 24-27
	Causton-Theoharis, J. & Theoharis, G. (2008). Creating Inclusive Schools for ALL Students. <i>The School Administrator</i> . September, 24-30.
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**Table 3:** Inclusion Related Court Cases (Name of Case & Description)

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***Brown v. Board of Education (1954)***

Established that education must be made available to all on equal terms. Separate but equal is inherently unequal. Advocates for people with disabilities transferred this concept of equal opportunity to students with disabilities.

***PARC v. Pennsylvania (1972)***

The PARC plaintiffs argued that children with mental retardation could benefit from educational programs, and that these experiences did not have to be academic and could involve other training. Furthermore, the PARC plaintiffs argued that since the state provided students without disabilities a free education, the state could not deny students with mental retardation this same right.

***Roncker v. Walter (1983)***

This case challenged the assignment of students to disability specific programs and schools. The ruling favored inclusive, not segregated, placement and established a principle of portability. It is not enough for a district to simply claim that a segregated program is superior. In a case where the segregated facility is considered superior, the court should determine whether the services, which make the placement superior, could be feasibly provided in a nonsegregated setting (i.e., regular class). If they can, the placement in the segregated school would be inappropriate under the act (IDEA).

***Daniel R.R. v. State Board of Education (1989)***

In the case of Daniel R. R. v. State Board of Education (1989) the court decided not to follow the Roncker test and developed its own test. First, the court must examine whether, with the use of supplementary aides and services the child could be included in the classroom. Next, if the child could not be included, the court asks whether the child was mainstreamed to the maximum extent possible.

***Sacramento Unified School District v. Rachel H. (1992)***

Sacramento Unified School District v. Rachel H. In this case, the courts developed a four-part test: 1) the educational benefits from the regular classroom; 2) the non-academic benefits of interaction between students with and without disabilities; 3) the impact of the student with disabilities on the teacher and other children in the classroom; and 4) the cost of supplementary aids and services required for mainstreaming the student.

***Rafael Oberti v. Clementon School District (1992)***

Judge ruled that the school had failed to provide a student with supports, resources, and appropriate training to be placed in the inclusive setting. Placed the burden of proof for compliance with the law's inclusion requirements on the school district and state not the family. "Inclusion is a right, not a special privilege for a select few." (Federal Judge)



# Guidelines for Including Students Who Do Not Speak

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## Useful strategies for supporting active participation in school

*“Not being able to speak is not the same thing as not having anything to say”*

—Rosemary Crossley

The strategies below are useful in supporting a student who has an effective communication system or a student who does not have a system in place. If a student does not have a system in place, it is imperative that the team consults with a speech pathologist that is skilled in implementing augmentative communication systems that would meet the need of the individual child.

### Keep respect and humanness first

*Never talk about someone as if they were not there.*

Always acknowledge the person’s presence and make sure that communication that happens around the child is respectful.

Some people may not be able to communicate that they understand what you are saying or that they are listening. *Assume they are listening and understand what you are talking about.*

*Question your stereotypes*—How someone looks, walks, or talks does not tell you about how they think and feel.

If a student uses a wheelchair, stutters, flaps their hands, or does not make eye contact this does not mean that they can’t learn high-level academics, don’t desire to make friends, and do not want the chance to voice their independence. Work to open up opportunities.

In conversation, *refer to the person in a way that includes them in the conversation.* For example, When Ms. Mayfield began to read the book, *Splish Splash* to the class she said, “Maya, you are going to love this book. It is all about swimming.”

Maya is a student who does not speak to communicate. When Ms. Mayfield shared in front of the class that Maya will enjoy this book, she teaches that Maya has interests and ideas that are similar to her peers. In doing this, Maya did not have to respond or say anything, but her active participation and competence were acknowledged and shared by her teachers public acknowledgement.

*Ask permission* to share information with others.

Too often students with disabilities do not have any privacy. Be sure to not share information

on using the restroom, sexuality, health, family, embarrassing situations and/or relationships. Ask first and err on the side of privacy always.

### Embrace a strength-based attitude

*Embrace an optimistic attitude.* Practice saying, “How can this work?” and “How can this child be successful?”

Work with family members to *identify the student’s strengths* and design methods to include the student in the general education classroom using those strengths.

Teach students to identify and use their own strengths.

When the going gets tough, write down a *list of student’s strengths and strategies* to help you spring into action and begin to problem solve (see: [www.paulakluth.com](http://www.paulakluth.com)).

### Please Act my Age—Age appropriate talk and materials

Talk in an *age-appropriate manner*, using age-appropriate content. Using a sing-song voice or a tone similar to that used with a young child should be reserved for babies and toddlers. Be sure to check your tone of voice and the content you are talking about.

Be sure as a teacher to *acknowledge the presence* of a person with a disability in the same way you would acknowledge other students.

*Let students make mistakes*, get in trouble and act out. Be sure they have the opportunity to talk and play with peers without adult interaction.

**Table 4:** continued

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**Learning to talk to someone who does not speak**

While teaching be sure to *acknowledge the non-verbal student's presence often*. You should not go an entire lesson without saying, "Sean I bet you'll like this part. I know you like to ski with your family" or "Megan I see you smiling. I am sure you will like learning about volcanoes."

Take every opportunity to *teach peers* how to talk to people who communicate differently. Talk about current events, age appropriate interests, things you like to do, places to go, events around school, also use their communication strategy to make LOTS of choices throughout the day: choose food to eat, materials to use, where to sit, what to read, what to play, also ask their opinion on topics.

**Use communication methods efficiently and often**

If students use a yes / no communication strategy be sure to use this during a lesson. You can do this during a whole group lesson by saying, "Do you all think that  $5 \times 5 = 25$ ?" Or do this in an individual way, "Was Harry a hero in the story?" This will allow the student to use their yes or no strategy and include them in the lesson. If they answer incorrectly then you can say, "Oh I don't think that is quite right. Does anyone have other ideas?"

If the student uses an augmentative communication system you need to be sure to have them utilize it throughout the lesson. Make sure the device is ready to go with content related to the lesson so that the student can participate.

**Teach peers to support and understand confusing behavior**

Use partners during lesson activities. Model and encourage peers to talk about topics with each other. This can be done in cooperative learning groups or with peer activities such as *think, pair, and share* or *turn and talk*. (see: *Joyful Learning: Active and collaborative learning in inclusive classrooms* by Udvari-Solner and Kluth).

Be sure to include the student in the academic curriculum in the classroom. Assume learning is possible and ask content related questions.

Teach peers and others how to interpret potentially confusing behavior and support each other.

**Assume benefit from academic learning and look for understanding**

Assume that every student will benefit from learning age appropriate academic curriculum.

Look for evidence of understanding. This will occur in unique instances and times.

Support students to show understanding using their strengths.

Design adaptations and accommodations to support access to academics.





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