

Inclusive Education... Start with “YES!”

Inclusion remains a controversial concept in education because it relates to educational and social values, as well as to our sense of individual worth. Any discussion about inclusive education should address these three important questions:

- Do we value all students equally?
- Are we preparing all students, including students with the greatest support needs, for further education, employment and independent living?
- Do we make the [Least Dangerous Assumption](#)?

If you have observed or have been a part of an inclusive classroom, you will know inclusion makes a difference to everyone in the classroom – it works! For people who are not familiar with inclusion, they may be surprised to learn the variety of academic, social, and physical benefits of inclusive education.



What does the research say?

If you would like to know what the [research](#) says, here is a helpful list of 5 reputable websites that have compiled years of studies supporting inclusive education.

What does I.D.E.A. say about inclusive education?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ([IDEA](#)), as amended in 2004, does not include the word “inclusion.” Instead, the law requires that students with disabilities be educated in the [least restrictive environment](#) appropriate to meet their unique needs. “Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of the child is such that education in regular classes with the use of [supplementary aids and services](#) cannot be achieved satisfactorily.” – 300.114(a)(2)(ii).

In developing the Individual Education Program (IEP) for a student with disabilities, the IDEA requires the IEP team to consider placement in the regular education classroom as the starting point in determining the appropriate placement for the student. If the ARD/IEP [committee](#) determines that the “least restrictive environment” appropriate for a particular student is not the regular education classroom for all or part of the school day, the ARD/IEP team must include a written explanation in the IEP paperwork as to why the regular education classroom is not appropriate.

Let’s take a closer look:

- Progress in the General Curriculum – [PGC Statewide Network](#): Least Restrictive Environment
- Texas Project First – [Placement](#)
- The Legal Framework – Least Restrictive Environment ([LRE](#))

Guidance

- 10 [Tips](#) to Help You Advocate for Inclusive Education
- [The Arc of Texas](#) Inclusion Works! Conference — held yearly, the only statewide conference focused on inclusive education Texas.
- Schoolwide Integration Framework for Transformation ([SWIFT](#)) — a K-8 technical assistance center that builds school capacity to provide academic and behavioral support to improve outcomes for all students through equity based inclusion.
- [The Inclusive Class](#) — a web-based resource designed to provide information focused on inclusive education.
- Universal Design for Learning ([UDL](#)) — a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn.

Videos, Articles & Blog Posts

Sometimes we need to see examples of inclusion or listen to those closest to the issue to really understand why inclusion is important and that it is possible. The following are recommended articles, blog posts & videos we believe may challenge your thinking about inclusive education.

- 5 [videos](#) (Including Issac, Damian's Inclusion Project, Thaysa, Tana Vogele's Story & Axel) that highlight inclusion in action
- Inclusive Education: From Political Correctness Towards Social Justice [Video](#) by Norman Kunc
- It's time to end segregation of special education students, [professors say](#) - The University of Kansas
- Least Dangerous Assumption [Video](#) by Cheryl Jorgenson
- Living the Least Dangerous Assumption [Blog Post](#) by Kate Ahern
- My Child is Worthy of Inclusion [Opinion](#) by Jennifer Greening
- Thinking Through Extra-curricular Activities [Blog Post](#) by Kelly Mastin
- Transforming Inclusive Education [Video](#) by Shelley Moore
- Why Inclusion Begins in Kindergarten... Or Doesn't [Article](#) by Charlene Comstock-Galagan



Inclusive Thinking

- focuses on strengths
- presumes competence
- celebrates diversity
- uses creative methods to ensure academic & social success