

## What Does Inclusion Look Like?

Ultimately there is no “one-size fits all” to a successful inclusion program. Successful and efficient programs adjust the quantity, type, and activity of resources to meet the requirements of the special needs student/s. The goal is to “meet the student where they are” and provide an environment where they can meet their individual potential by managing the configuration of resources as opposed to making the student fit a system.

**Stakeholders:** Successful inclusion involves cooperation between school administrators, school staff, teachers, specialized resources, parents and students.

**Planning:** Coordinating activity, regularly scheduled progress reviews, goal setting, coordination of resources, defining roles and responsibilities. Goals should include:

- Religious
- Socialization and Peer Relationships
- Gross and Fine Motor Skills
- Verbal and Communication Skills
- Life Skills
- Academic Achievement

**Training:** Most all general education teachers have received some amount of special education training in their formative curriculum. While it is unreasonable to expect all teachers to receive advanced training, familiarity with basic concepts and practices are valuable. The specialized skills required to support a specific student is supplied by the inclusion specialist, special education teacher or teacher’s aide.

**General Ed Teacher:** The general Ed teacher is responsible for all the students in their class. The Gen Ed teacher and specialized resources cooperate on the development and implementation of a special needs students plan. The specialized resource is responsible for carrying out the activities required to “bring the curriculum” to the student such as curriculum modifications, special teaching tools and methods, facilitating socialization with other students etc.

**Specialized Resource:** Specialized resources have the training and experience to facilitate the inclusion of a special needs individual in the classroom on a day to day basis. The specific quantity and type of individual/s required depended on the case load and needs of the students. Some students may need only occasional support, others may need a resource to be with them throughout the day.

Specialized resource might include inclusion specialists that bring specific skills sets to a particular student’s needs, or help coordinate the implementation of an inclusive program. A special education teacher may be used one on one with a student in a classroom, or used for several students depending on the required level of support. A teacher’s aide or para may also be used depending on the case load and needs of students.

It is important to think of these resources as being available for all students. Successful inclusion creates community between typical and special needs students. These resources can be thought of as bridge builders creating a unified social fabric and community.

**Student:** Students in inclusive settings tend to advance at a pace faster than those in self-contained settings. Peer modeling, advancement, higher expectations, and support all contribute to an environment where more is expected, and more is possible. All special needs children, regardless of their level of disability perform better in inclusive environments than segregated or self-contained environments. (Resource rooms, separate schools.)

**Peers:** Studies of Peers of special needs students in inclusive environments have been measured to:

- Have more empathy for special needs students
- More positive attitudes toward those with disabilities
- Higher emotional development
- Develop genuine relationships with special needs individuals
- Improve learning and test higher in math