

INCLUSIVE RESOURCES

- **Perceptions of A Teacher working in an inclusive environment -** <http://filebox.vt.edu/users/jlay/math/inclusion/paper.html>
- **Planning for Inclusion** - A comprehensive overview from the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities of the necessary information to plan for an inclusive classroom. <http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/outprint/nd24txt.htm> See the following summaries:

** Involve the principal as a change agent. The presence of a proactive, visible, and committed principal is often crucial to successful inclusion (Working Forum on Inclusive Schools, 1994). If the principal is not already involved in the inclusion movement, then his or her support must be enlisted. O'Brien and Forest (1989) provide a number of suggestions for how to do this. Through the principal's leadership, a model of accepting and welcoming students with disabilities can be established, collaborative teaming encouraged, planning time for inclusion sanctioned, resources made available, parents involved, and progress made.

** Involve parents. By law, parents are entitled to be fully involved in planning the education of their child with a disability. Beyond the requirements of law, however, including parents in efforts to plan for and implement the inclusion of their child makes eminent good sense -- parents have expert, in-depth knowledge of their child's personality, strengths, and needs and can make substantial contributions to the inclusion effort. As primary stakeholders in inclusion, parents should be included throughout the entire planning and implementation process -- in the early information-gathering and planning meetings, where decisions are made about the shape and scope of the inclusion program; in the IEP meeting where decisions are made about their child's education; and beyond, when concerns or questions arise during the course of a school day or semester. Professional members of the team planning for inclusion can promote involvement of parent team members by appreciating and valuing the type of knowledge that parents bring to the planning table, by communicating openly and honestly with parents, by respecting the family's cultural patterns and beliefs, and by listening carefully to the suggestions and concerns that parents have (Orellove & Sobsey, 1991, pp. 418-419).

** Develop the disability awareness of staff and students. Teachers, classroom aides, and other students in the classroom and their parents need to have an understanding of disabilities and the special needs that having a disability can create. Teachers and aides need in-depth knowledge, in order to understand and meet the student's needs. This will also help teachers establish an atmosphere of acceptance and to plan activities that foster inclusion.

** Notwithstanding the fact that "young people have an amazing capacity for acceptance of differences and tend to see students with disabilities as people first" (LeRoy, England, Osbeck, 1990, p. 9), students in general education classes also need information. A discussion of disability -- what it means to have a disability, what it does not mean -- can

help students understand and interact with their peers with disabilities. It is important, however, for the teacher (and other school staff) to know and observe the district's policies regarding confidentiality and to not reveal personal information about an individual student -- including the specific nature of his or her disability -- without the permission of that student's parents. Many teachers have found that the student's parents are valuable partners in developing the awareness of other students and school staff in regard to disability issues in general and their child's disability in particular. Depending on the nature of the student's disability, classmates may also need information about classroom routines that might change, equipment that might be used by the student, safety issues, and any additional individuals who may be in the class assisting the student.

** Those involved in planning for and implementing inclusion should also recognize that developing the disability awareness of staff and students needs to be an ongoing activity. Staff leave and new personnel are hired; students leave and new ones arrive. Disability awareness training and activities, therefore, must be provided on a continual basis.

** Provide staff with training. It is unrealistic and unfair to expect general education teachers to creatively and productively educate and include students with disabilities in their classrooms in the absence of adequate training. General educators must be provided with the training they need in order to meet the special learning and behavioral needs of students. This training can come in many forms: seminars at local universities; in-service sessions provided by special educators; and materials specific to the nature of students' disabilities. It is also vital that general education teachers have frequent opportunities for collaborative planning with other teachers, especially special educators, and have ready access to the "disability" network and inclusion specialists who can address specific questions educators might have.

** Provide structure and support for collaboration. Collaboration between stakeholders and participants is seen as "the key to successful inclusion of all students in a regular class" and "involves a nonhierarchical relationship in which all team members are seen as equal contributors, each adding his or her own expertise or experience to the problem-solving process" (Stainback & Stainback, 1990, p. 96).

** Collaboration needs to occur all along the path of inclusion: during the initial planning stages, during implementation, between home and school, between all members of the student's individual planning team, between general and special educators during the course of the school day, between teachers and administrators, between students. Indeed, the importance of collaboration can not be overemphasized. It is especially important that time be built into teachers' schedules to allow for collaboration; the principal can be of great assistance in making this possible.

** Establish a planning team for each included student. Each student with disabilities included in the mainstream needs to have an individual planning team that meets on a regularly scheduled basis and collaboratively discusses and problem-solves the specific details of including that student. This team may look similar to the IEP team and will probably include many of the same members, but its purpose is to "maintain program

quality throughout the year...[and] provide a vehicle for creative problem-solving, regular home-school communication, proactive rather than reactive planning, collaborative consultation, and program coordination" (Bodensteiner, 1992, p. 8). Again, collaboration between team members is essential; each member brings to the table expertise and creativity. Working together and pooling their knowledge, team members can do much to ensure that a student's inclusion is successful.

- **The Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center announced the release of “Questions That Educators Can Ask About the Participation of Students With Disabilities in School Reform and Improvement Models.”** This is a checklist for educators to assess the capacity of school reform and improvement models to address the needs of students with disabilities. To download this document, please visit the Resources page at www.csrq.org/resources.asp.
- **Kids Quest On Disabilities And Health** - This Internet site, maintained by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is designed for students in grades four through six. It offers several free Web quests that introduce students to disabilities that they may have or may encounter in their lives. As virtual investigators, students use an inquiry approach to research fetal alcohol syndrome, autism, and other disorders. Students search for information by exploring not only resources on the Internet, but also in their own schools and neighborhoods. This Web site is intended to get kids to think about people with disabilities and some of the issues related to daily activities, health, and accessibility. The site has detailed directions for how parents or teachers can implement the Web quests. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/kids/kidhome.htm>