



Excerpt From:

*From the Center's Clearinghouse ...**

An introductory packet on:

***Least Intervention Needed: Toward
Appropriate Inclusion of Students with
Special Needs***



This document is a hardcopy version of a resource that can be downloaded at no cost from the Center's website (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>).

The Center is directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspice of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA. Center for Mental Health in Schools, Box 951563, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563 (310) 825-3634 Fax: (310) 206-8716; E-mail: smhp@ucla.edu

Support comes in part from the Office of Adolescent Health, Maternal and Child Health Bureau (Title V, Social Security Act), Health Resources and Services Administration (Project #U93 MC 00175) with co-funding from the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Both are agencies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.





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Copies may be downloaded from: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

If needed, copies may be ordered from:
Center for Mental Health in Schools
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The Center encourages widespread sharing of all resources.

Least Intervention Needed: Toward Appropriate Inclusion of Students with Special Needs

“Of course, there are limits to what different people are capable of achieving, but we should make no uninformed assumptions about what these limits are.”
Stevenson & Stigler, 1992

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What is Inclusion?

"Inclusion is the practice of educating children who have disabilities in classes together with their nondisabled peers. Although the term "inclusion" does not appear in any federal law, it has unified efforts to broaden educational opportunities under three different federal laws. Some efforts have used the language of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which requires that children be educated in the "least restrictive environment" with whatever supplementary aids and services are needed so that the child can benefit. Others have used the language of regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which gives a preference to the school and classroom the child would otherwise attend if not disabled. The Americans with Disabilities Act has similar provisions. Recent federal court decisions in New Jersey and California have interpreted the law to mean that even children with severe disabilities must, in most circumstances, be included in their local school classrooms with nondisabled peers.

... whether or not one agrees with those who advocate inclusion, the practice is spreading so rapidly that practical need usually compels educators to inform themselves about what inclusion is and how it is done."

Some programs are no more than nominally inclusive. For example:

- 1) cluster-site programming, where all the children with disabilities from a wide geographic area are brought to a single school and 'included' in that school's classes;
- 2) traditional mainstream programming, where children with disabilities can attend classes with their nondisabled peers only if they can 'keep up' with their classmates' level of performance, and
- 3) 'dumping,' where children with disabilities are simply placed in general-education classrooms without supportive services.

A truly inclusive program is one that ensures each special education student is "provided with specially designed instruction to meet his or her unique needs. However, unlike 'traditional' special-education models, instead of sending the children to a specialized site . . . the children remain in the schools and classes they would otherwise attend, and the services are brought to them. "

From J. R. Rogers' (1994) Introduction to *Inclusion: Moving Beyond Our Fears*. One of the *Hot Topics Series* published by Phi Delta Kappa's Center for Evaluation, Development, and Research.

Least Intervention Needed: Toward Appropriate *Inclusion* of Students with Special Needs

*Society defines what is exceptional or deviant, and appropriate treatments are designed quite as much to protect society as they are to help the child...
“To take care of them” can and should be read with two meanings: to give children help and to exclude them from the community.*

Nicholas Hobbs, 1975

Appropriate inclusion of students with special needs begins with ensuring that only those who cannot be helped effectively in the mainstream are referred to special placements.

When data indicate that a person is not making appropriate progress, whatever the cause, the tendency is to consider use of special services and placements. Such a decision often includes the profound move of transferring an individual out of a mainstream setting into a special environment.

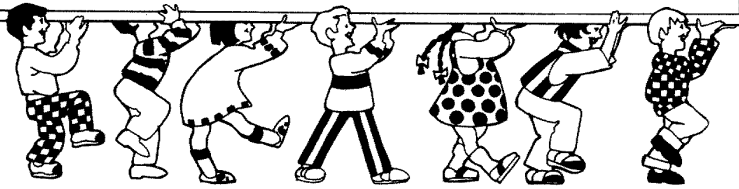
The decision usually is based on whether the person's problem is viewed as mild to moderate or severe and pervasive, and whether it is related to learning, behavior, emotional, or physical functioning. Persons with severe and pervasive problems often are placed in specialized treatment settings such as remedial classrooms and institutions. Mild to moderate problems are supposed to be dealt with in mainstream settings -- either through modifying the setting somewhat or adding extra (ancillary) services or both.

Ancillary assistance can involve a variety of interventions: (1) extra instruction such as tutoring, (2) enrichment opportunities such as pursuit of hobbies, arts and crafts, and recreation, (3) psychologically oriented treatments such as individual and family therapy, and (4) biologically oriented treatments such as medication. Placement decisions focus first on major intervention needs, then on which, if any, extra assistance seems indicated. In many cases, decisions about secondary ancillary activity are best made after primary interventions are given an adequate trial and found insufficient.

*The material included has been abstracted from H.S. Adelman & L. Taylor (1993). *Learning Problems and Learning Disabilities: Moving Forward*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

One School District's Approach to Least Intervention Needed

Information for Parents on Least Restrictive Environment



What Does Least Restrictive Environment Mean for Your Child?

The District's policy is that students with disabilities should be educated on general education school sites if at all possible and that they should be provided services and support as appropriate. Decisions about where a student attends school are based on the student's needs and not on the type or severity of the student's disability.

Why is Least Restrictive Environment Important?

By attending school on a general education campus, students with disabilities have the right to participate in academic, nonacademic, and extra-curricular activities. These activities include use of the cafeteria and playground and participation in assemblies, field trips, social activities, and graduation activities. Students with disabilities will also have the opportunity to develop friendships with their non-disabled peers.

What are the Different Placement Options?

Most students with disabilities should attend general education school sites. They may be in a regular class full time. Some may receive additional help from a special teacher for speech or adapted physical education, etc. Others may be assigned to a special education Resource Specialist Program for part of the day or they may be in a Special Day Class for most of the day. Some students attend special education centers and others may go to a nonpublic or residential school, when appropriate. A few receive instruction in the home or in the hospital.

How is the Least Restrictive Environment Determined?

The least restrictive environment for your child will be discussed at each IEP* team meeting. It is important that you attend, if at all possible, so that you can participate fully as a member of the IEP team.

The IEP team will determine whether:

1. The student should be placed in an age-appropriate general education classroom. For this type of placement, supplemental aids and services, such as adaptation of the curriculum, will be determined at the IEP team meeting.
2. The student should participate in the Resource Specialist Program or attend a Special Day Class on a general education school site. Integration into general education classes and activities will also be specified on the IEP.

If the IEP team determines that placement at a special school site is necessary, the IEP will include the reasons why. For students transitioning back to a general education school, the IEP will include a transition timeline and support activities.

*IEP is Individualized Education Program

Please note: For additional information on Least Restrictive Environment you may request a copy of Bulletin No. 49 from the Los Angeles Unified School District/Division of Special Education.

INCLUSION

The benefits and costs of the policy of **inclusion** are explored in a PBS *Merrow Report* entitled "What's So Special About Special Education?" To underscore just how hard it is to turn inclusion policies into practice, the program focuses on two children in the Denver schools.

One student, Darcy, is diagnosed as autistic. She hits others and is hard for her teacher to handle. Her parents want her kept in regular classes because they believe special education classes have lower expectations and will fail to develop the child to her full ability. School officials argue that the girl is becoming too disruptive.

The second student, Tara, has Down Syndrome, and her mother wants her in special classes with teachers who are specially trained. In regular classes, she argues her child is given short shrift. She is convinced that keeping her in the mainstream is unrealistic.

As a program review in *The New York Times* notes:

This thoughtful report brings home just how much is expected of schools. For example, supporters of inclusion say that being in a classroom with a handicapped child is good for the other pupils, and Mr. Merrow's interviews with two of Darcy's classmates do indicate that being with her every day has made them more understanding. But Tara's mother says that although her daughter's classmates were not unkind, they never included her in their games. And Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, cautions against emphasizing socialization at the expense of the school's academic mission. [The program] draws attention to the difficulties of making educational policy where children's needs, parents' expectations, teachers' limitations and school budgets are bound to collide.



Some Model Programs for Serving All Children Well



Collaborative Teaching Model (CTM): Virginia and Kansas

The CTM was developed by local personnel in Virginia and Kansas to improve services for students with learning disabilities. This model was defined as "a proactive approach with general and special educators maintaining joint responsibility for instruction in heterogeneous, integrated settings." Only children whose IEP goals could be met in a full inclusion program participate. Students with Learning Disabilities in the CTM program are all assigned to the general education class appropriate to their grade level, in which the special education and general education teachers co-teach. In Virginia, special education teachers spent 90 minutes a day in each general education class, and participated in the co-planning and materials modification for these classes.

References:

Inclusion in Virginia: Educational Experiences of Students with Learning Disabilities in One Elementary School. J. M. Baker (1995). *The Journal of Special Education*, 29, 116-123.

Inclusion in Kansas: Educational Experiences of Students with Learning Disabilities in One Elementary School. N. Zigmond (1995). *The Journal of Special Education*, 29, 144-154.

Instructional Support Team Project



The Instructional Support Team Project, an initiative of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, is a state-wide effort to transform the structure and goals of special education services. There are two major aspects of this transformation: 1) the focus of special education shifts away from categorizing services to utilizing services in a manner that supports effective regular education services before students are referred for evaluation, and 2) the focus of interventions is on the instructional needs of students rather than on the internal deficiencies of students. The core mechanism for implementing these changes is the Instructional Support Team (IST) which serves as a bridge between special and regular education programs. At each school IST's function as pre-referral intervention groups that link all school resources and provide peer-support and problem solving assistance for teachers; provide initial screening; assist teachers in developing accommodations to help students with disabilities; and help the regular education teacher to make better use of support services.

Reference:

Bridging Special and Regular Education: The Pennsylvania Initiative.

J.F. Kovaleski, J.A. Tucker, & L.J. Stevens (1996). *Educational Leadership*, 55(3), 44-47.



Mainstreaming Experience for Learning Disabled (MELD): Inclusion in Pennsylvania

MELD is a full-time mainstreaming model developed by the University of Pittsburgh. The MELD model involves all school personnel in the education of all students with LD. Pull-out programs are eliminated and LD students are reassigned to full-time general education classes and participate in all class activities. These students are distributed across many classes to reduce load. Special education teachers co-teach all classes and participate in co-planning, even for those classes that do not have LD students. All students have the opportunity to work with modified materials originally designed to help those with LD.

Relevant Reference:

Inclusion in Pennsylvania: Educational Experiences of Students with Learning Disabilities in One Elementary School. N. Zigmond (1995). *The Journal of Special Education*, 29, 124-132.

Project Achieve:

*An Integrated Student-Centered
Service Delivery Model for Public School Systems*



Project Achieve is a school reform program that targets academically and socially at-risk students. Project Achieve places emphasis on improving academic and social behavior of students in order to, among other things, maintain integration and reduce placement into special education. This is done through an integrated process that involves systemic changes in the domains of organization, resource development, in service training, and parent-community involvement.

For more on this model, see: Project Achieve: A collaborative, school-based school reform process to improve the academic and social progress of at-risk and underachieving students. H. M. Knoff & G. M. Batsche (1995). Information Packet. School Psychology Program: Institute for School Reform, Integrated Services, and Child Mental Health and Education Policy: University of South Florida, 4202 East Fowles Ave. Tampa, FL 33620-7750



School Building Model for Inclusion: University of Washington

Originally developed by researchers at University of Washington, the School-building model requires intensive restructuring of the curriculum. All students with LD's are placed in general education classes. Pull-out services are made available to all students, not only those with LD's. In addition, special instruction and tutoring is provided before and after school and during lunch breaks, and peer tutoring is also made available outside and during class.

Relevant Reference:

Inclusion in Washington: Educational experiences of students with learning disabilities in one elementary school. J. M. Baker (1995). *The Journal of Special Education*, 29, 155-162.

Adaptive Learning Environment Model (ALEM)



ALEM was designed to make school a place where each child can effectively master skills in academic subjects and to foster self-responsibility for learning, coping, and, managing behavior in the classroom. This multifaceted approach includes a prespective learning component consisting of heirarchiacally organized basic skill curricula that students pursue at their own pace; an open-ended exploratory learning component; classroom management procedures emphasizing teacher feedback, reinforcement, and positive interactions with students; a flexible prganizational structure that allows for multi-age grouping and team teaching.

References:

The Adaptive Learning Environment Model: Design, implementation, and effects by M. Wang, P. Gennari, & H.C. Waxman. In M. Wang & H. Wahlberg (Eds.) (1985), *Adapting instruction to individual differences*. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

A Special Resource

Project Ride

Responding to Individual Difference in Education



This program designed to link behavioral and academic interventions with teachers of at-risk and difficult-to-teach students in regular classrooms. RIDE involves a series of steps, beginning with a well-articulated description of the behavior, followed by three options: Effective Classroom Practices, Computer Tactics Bank and Video Library, and School-Wide Assistance Teams or SWAT.

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