

TATS eUpdate
Inclusion

Inclusion: Not Just a Change of Setting
2007

The number of young children with special needs included in classrooms with typically developing peers is on the rise. Children with special needs are now being served in a variety of community-based settings such as and child care, Head Start, and VPK programs, as well as district general and special education classes, and having special education services provided on an itinerant basis in settings other than school buildings. In order for inclusionary practices to be successful, planning for the appropriate level of support for the child and teacher is an important part of the decision making process. Inclusion is more than just a change of educational setting, it also entails providing supports and services for children, teachers and families to ensure success.

Understanding this, a variety of different service models may be offered to young children with special needs and their teachers as they move towards service delivery in the natural environment. Expanding inclusive educational opportunities include, but are not limited to, itinerant services with direct instruction, itinerant collaborative consultation, team teaching, co-teaching, or the use of a one-to-one assistant. Ensuring successful inclusion opportunities also requires additional training and professional development of teachers and other staff.

Best Practice:

A study by Cook, Klein and Tessier in 2004 determined that collaboration and shared goals by the inclusion team are essential components of successful inclusion initiatives. In order for teachers and students to benefit from the inclusive placement, there should be consensus related to the goals of the child, the purpose of the inclusion, the support that will be provided, and intended outcomes and expectations.

They also identified several additional factors that should be present to support inclusion (p. 372):

- Genuine mutual respect between early childhood educators and the special education or therapeutic personnel
- Well-trained early childhood education staff
- High-quality early childhood education programs with small numbers of children in each classroom
- Well-planned physical environment; organized and calm
- Individualized, competent support, with access to appropriate resources
- Ongoing team collaboration and problem solving

- A person willing to play the role of team coordinator
- Time for careful planning
- Family involvement
- Administrative support

Reflections:

1. What are some of the potential barriers to implementing a broader continuum of services for young children with special needs within your district or program?
2. Who are the key players involved in district-wide decision making or support?
3. What agencies, service providers, or support staff may be interested or available to provide for service delivery in the natural environment?

“It’s not that some people have will power and some don’t. It’s that some people are ready to change and others are not.” – James Gordon

References and Resources:

Circle of Inclusion

For early childhood service providers and families of young children, which contains various resources related to inclusion for young children (to age 8). Spanish, Korean and Japanese in addition to English. Includes articles, adaptations and modification ideas, children’s literature relating to disabilities, ideas for inclusive classrooms and links.

<http://www.circleofinclusion.org/>

Cook, R.E., Klein, M.D, & Tessier, A. (2004). *Adapting Early Childhood Curricula for Children in Inclusive Settings* (6th ed). Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

[*Facilitating Inclusion in Community Setting: Creating Environments that Support the Communication and Social Interaction of Young Children*](#)

Circle of Inclusion

<http://circleofinclusion.org/english/formsarticles/Articles/articleindex.html#6>

Technical Assistance & Training System (TATS)

Statewide project providing technical assistance and training to programs in Florida serving prekindergarten children with disabilities. Website provides information and resources on curriculum and instruction, evaluation and assessment, family involvement, inclusion, program effectiveness/quality, and transition, as well as, linking early childhood partners. www.tats.ucf.edu

Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Erwin, E. Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionalities: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership and Trust 5th Edition*. Merrill Prentice Hall, Saddle River, New Jersey.



TATS eUpdates are a service of the Technical Assistance & Training System Communities of Practice. The TATS eUpdates are intended to provide current information related to best practices or trends in the education of young children with special needs in the areas of Transition, Program Effectiveness, Inclusion, Curriculum & Instruction, Evaluation & Assessment, and Family Involvement. For more information about the TATS Communities of Practice and the TATS eUpdates, please log on to www.tats.ucf.edu.