

# A Community For All Children



## A Guide to Inclusion for Out-of-School Time

Kimberly D. Miller  
Stuart J. Schleien, Ph.D., CTRS

in collaboration with

The North Carolina School-Age Solutions Committee

Sponsored by the Developmental Disabilities Section  
of the NC Division of Mental Health/Developmental  
Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services with additional funding  
support from the NC Division of Child Development.





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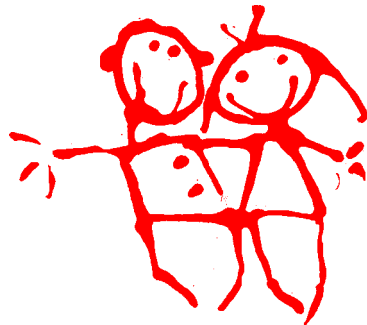
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By one definition, the word include means “to take in or comprise as part of a whole” (Webster, 1991, p. 609). This definition has a great deal of appeal when thinking about the inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in out-of-school community programs because the addition of these youth makes the experience whole for all of the youth involved. When people with disabilities are not included in these activities, the activities do not represent the whole community. Everyone suffers when certain parts of a community are excluded because each of us has something of value to share. Real inclusion comes only when programs and individuals welcome and include all persons who wish to participate, recognizing their talents and not their disabilities.



Although there has been a great deal of emphasis across the nation on the inclusion of youth with disabilities in school activities, in many parts of the country there has been less emphasis on the inclusion of youth in community activities. This guide is an attempt to provide useful information for parents, community members, and youth who are interested in developing and promoting such activities for children.

The guide begins by describing what inclusion is and why it is important. The authors’ definition of inclusion as a philosophy, process, and result, is one of the most powerful statements in the guide. It is extremely important that our society move beyond the belief that inclusion is something done one time for someone with a label of “disabled.” These authors view inclusion in a much broader perspective, encompassing how we think and operate everyday with every person to create a world where all are welcome.

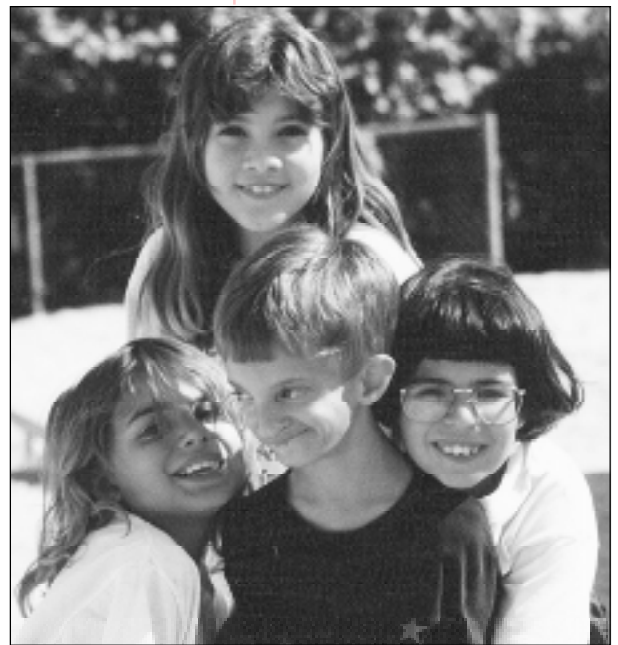
However, the developers of this guide are clearly aware of the challenges to implementing and maintaining inclusive settings for youth with disabilities. Throughout this guide, they provide strategies for dealing with many issues that may arise including attitudes, physical environments, matching activities, etc. These strategies are extremely practical suggestions for both providers and parents.

One special feature of the guide is the use of real life stories throughout to authenticate the benefits for all children and youth who have experienced community activities that are inclusive. The stories of Justin, Ted, Nathanael, and the others poignantly demonstrate to the reader the incredible benefits of inclusive situations for youth with a disability as well as youth without a disability label. Other stories effectively highlight a specific point or strategy regarding how to implement these activities in a real life situation. These stories serve to motivate the reader as well as enrich the reader’s understanding of the suggestions provided.

Kimberly Miller and Stuart J. Schleien, Ph.D., along with the guidance of the School-Age Solutions Committee, have provided communities a very useful tool for both starting and continuing inclusive school-age community opportunities.

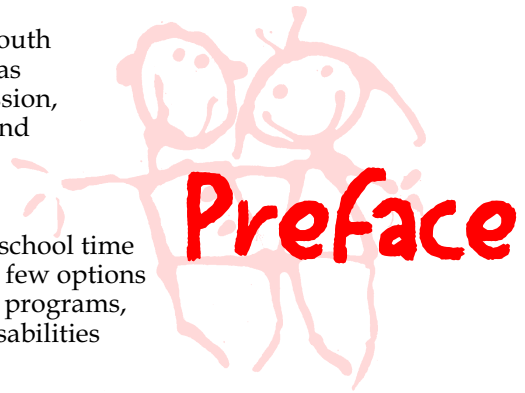
Carol M. Trivette, Ph.D.  
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Mish, F.C. (Ed.). (1991). Webster’s ninth new collegiate dictionary (9th ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc.





Out-of-School Time (OST) for school-age children and youth (ages 3-21) occurs during non-traditional school hours such as teacher workdays, holidays, before and after school, intersession, and summer months. The need to provide quality activity and supervision during out-of-school time has recently gained a great deal of attention nationwide and many groups are currently addressing this problem. But for children and youth with disabilities and their families, options for out-of-school time activities remain very limited. These families are faced with few options when it comes to before and after school programs, summer programs, and even weekend activities in which their peers without disabilities readily access.



In September of 1998, a group of parents and professionals who shared the same concern about the lack of out-of-school time opportunities for school-aged children and youth with disabilities gathered for the first time to do something about the problem. Individual members brought first-hand experience, both parental and professional, from such diverse work organizations as United Cerebral Palsy, Division of Child Development, Division of MH/DD/SAS, Easter Seals, Department of 4-H Youth and Development, Child Care Networks, Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC), and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The group named itself School-Age Solutions and began to address the need for inclusive out-of-school time programs within the state of North Carolina. This guide is our first product.

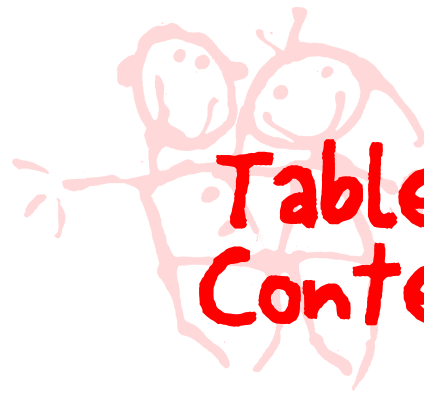
School-Age Solutions' purpose for this guide is to help parents, childcare providers, camp directors, and other community members learn more about including children with disabilities in out-of-school time programs. We hope to share enough information so that you will understand why it is important to offer children with disabilities the same experiences as their peers who do not have disabilities and how to begin. The first section of the guide explains that inclusion moves beyond the mere presence of people with disabilities in a program, to full acceptance of all individuals into the community. The second section gives a brief overview of the benefits of inclusive out-of-school time programs to youth with and without disabilities, families, agencies, and the community. These benefits are further exemplified by real-life stories that demonstrate the impact of social inclusion.

Indeed, we hope that, if you provide a service or program, after reading this guide, you will choose to offer programs in which **all** children can participate and belong. And if you are a family member or friend, we hope that you will think about pushing the envelope and asking a local program to consider including your youngster with a disability. The remainder of this guide is designed with the intent of giving you initial information for starting such a movement. You will find tips on overcoming fears, adopting a new way of thinking, having basic disability etiquette, structuring environments, recruiting participants, forming cooperative interactions, developing friendship skills of participants, and understanding the concept of partial participation.

If you are interested in helping us to achieve "zero exclusion" in programs and activities for children and youth, we encourage you to consider the concepts and strategies discussed in this guide and then seek further information and training through School-Age Solutions. You can be a key ingredient in creating **A Community for All Children**.

Cynthia K. Parkey  
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## The Voice of Nathanael

Nathanael is a 5-year-old boy who attended summer camp for the first time last summer. Being nonverbal, his mother struggled to find a summer camp that would include Nathanael. Time and time again, camp directors hesitated at accepting Nathanael because they “had never done that before.” Finally, his mother, Barbara, contacted Millbrook Country Day in Raleigh, NC. Without hesitation the camp director, Laurie, welcomed Nathanael into their program. Barbara was so taken back after months of hearing “no” from other camp directors, that she had to ask Laurie to repeat her words of acceptance.

Nathanael attended camp with his peers and a personal aide. Two weeks into the program, something was heard that seemed unbelievable. One by one, Nathanael’s peers accepted a sticker from the teacher for work well done and each child politely said, “thank you.” Now it was Nathanael’s turn to receive his sticker. Out of Nathanael’s mouth and heart came words for the first time; a simple, “thank you.” Nathanael’s personal aide shared this experience with his parents. Their disbelief came to an end when, the next day outside of camp, Barbara heard her son’s voice with her own ears for the first time. Nathanael’s personal aide had picked up a cup that he had dropped and, appropriately and unprompted, Nathanael said, “thank you” once again. Those were not the only words that Nathanael said that summer. Summer came to a close and camp ended. Nathanael returned to his special education class where his classmates are also nonverbal, and the voice of Nathanael has not been heard since.

As told by: Barbara Germiller, parent

This is one child with a disability that is desperately trying to tell us that:

### **The Benefits of Inclusion are Real.**

The School-Age Solutions Committee would like to dedicate this guide to the voice of Nathanael and those of the many children who go unheard and whose talents go unnoticed without opportunities to participate in out-of-school time programs with their peers.

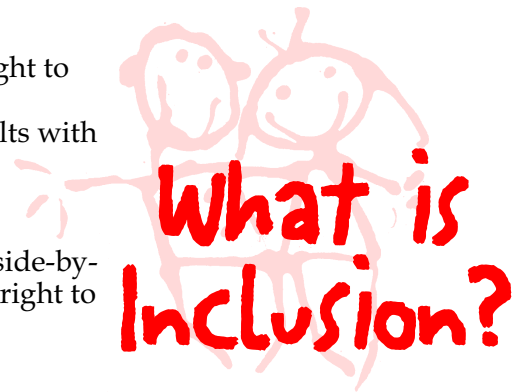


Take a moment to imagine a late-spring afternoon. It is 4 p.m. and Ms. Tyler is on her way to pick up her 8-year-old son, Justin, from the after-school program after a busy day at work. She smiles as she pulls up and sees Justin with the other children playing in the playground. He and his friends are obviously having fun. Laughter fills the air and Justin is enjoying himself so much that he doesn't even notice that his mother is calling for him. Justin finally notices his mother's arrival and appears excited to see her, yet disappointed that the time has come for him to say goodbye to his friends. As he joins his mother, there is a chorus of voices shouting, "Goodbye, Justin. See ya' tomorrow in class." Driving home, Ms. Tyler and her son discuss his day at school. He can't wait to tell her that during lunch, Jesse had asked him over to his house for a pool party this Saturday.

Now, imagine that Justin was born with Down syndrome.

**Now you have a picture of inclusion.**

Inclusion is the philosophy that all people have the right to be included with their peers in age-appropriate activities throughout life. It is a process in which children and adults with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in all community activities offered to people who do not have disabilities. Inclusion is what results when people with and without disabilities live, learn, work, and play side-by-side. Inclusion is the philosophy that all people have the right to be included with their peers in age-appropriate activities throughout life.



Out-of-school time (OST) for school-age children and youth, ages 3-21, occurs during non-traditional school hours such as teacher workdays, holidays, before and after school, intersession, and summer months. Indeed, out-of-school time comprises a majority of a child's day. Quality, supervised programming during OST can therefore have a tremendous impact on a child's development and quality of life. It is for this reason that the need for quality, supervised OST programs has gained national attention during recent years.

**Inclusion is the philosophy that all people have the right to be included with their peers in age-appropriate activities throughout life.**

For out-of-school programming to be inclusive implies that it is accessible to all youth, including youth with disabilities. Programming that is physically integrated, or physically accessible and legally accepting of individuals with disabilities, is only the beginning. A socially inclusive program goes beyond physical accessibility and fosters a sense of belonging, feelings of being valued, and support for all participants. It requires that youth feel accepted for simply being themselves and that they have the opportunity to establish friendships and other social relationships with peers without disabilities.

### **Social inclusion implies more than:**

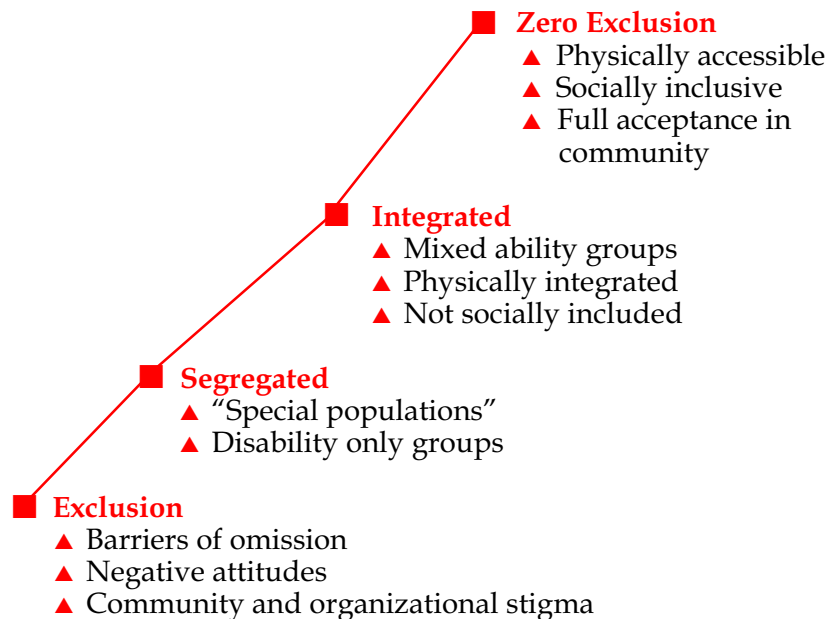
- ▲ Being in the same facility as other participants.
- ▲ Doing the same activity as other participants.
- ▲ Participating in community activities only with people who are paid to provide the youth with support.

### **Social inclusion implies:**

- ▲ Experiencing a sense of belonging.
- ▲ Feeling that others value you and desire to be around you.
- ▲ Knowing that support will be available if it is needed.
- ▲ Having regular access to the community and those within it with whom you desire to be with.

These are concepts that are accepted by most to be inherent within a community. But, for individuals with disabilities, the past has been riddled with discrimination and exclusion from programming. When programming has been offered, it has more often than not been in segregated programs. These programs provided service to people with disabilities, but in isolation from their peers without disabilities. Due to recent changes in philosophy, along with new laws, programming is becoming more integrated. Integrated programming places youth and children with disabilities in the same environments and activities as their peers. These programs are physically accessible to such youth, but often lack social accessibility. It is time to make social inclusion fundamental to all individuals and to be accepting of nothing less than “Zero Exclusion.”

### **A continuum of services for people with disabilities**



Adapted from: Schleien, S.J., Ray, M.T., & Green, F.P. (1997). Community recreation and people with disabilities: Strategies for inclusion (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., p. 23.

### **Inclusion is:**

- ▲ Having the same choices and opportunities that other people have.
- ▲ Being accepted and appreciated for who you are.
- ▲ Being with friends who share your interests, not your disability.
- ▲ Being a valued customer and a welcomed participant in community programs, regardless of ability level.
- ▲ Having facilities and areas that are accessible and easy to use by everyone.
- ▲ Providing the necessary individual adaptations, accommodations, and supports so every person can benefit equally from an experience in the community with friends.

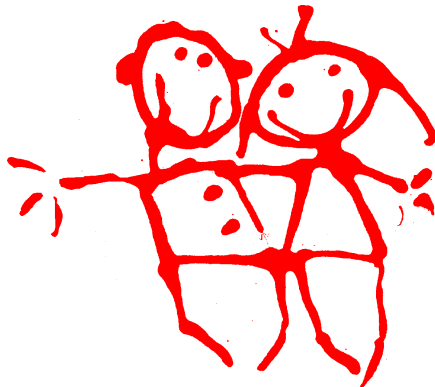
Adapted from: Anderson, L., Brown, C., & Soli, P. (1996). Inclusion: strategies for including people with disabilities in parks and recreation opportunities. Bismark, ND: North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and the University of North Dakota.

### **Chapter Resources**

Anderson, L., Brown, C., & Soli, P. (1996). Inclusion: Strategies for including people with disabilities in parks and recreation opportunities. Bismarck, ND: North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and the University of North Dakota.

Schleien, S.J., Ray, M.T., & Green, F.P. (1997). Community recreation and people with disabilities: Strategies for inclusion (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

The Community Inclusion Project (no date). Inclusion, A Right, Not a Privilege. Farmington, CT: University of Connecticut Health Center.



## Success at A.G. Middle School, Charlotte, NC

For the second year in a row, 15-year-old Ted Robinson served as manager of the boy's soccer team. His duties included carrying equipment and filling water bottles for daily practices and at home and away games. This year's coach was both new to the game and to the school. Not knowing about Ted's passion for sports and his love of sideline participation, Coach Kessler was initially skeptical. He suggested a "phase-in" schedule to see how Ted would do. He was openly concerned about having to "watch" Ted while trying to coach the team, but since he knew Ted from his 7th period social studies class, he was willing to give it a go.

As it turned out, Ted, who has Down syndrome, required no "phase-in" at all. He adapted quickly to his assigned duties and was a spirited fan from the sidelines, through rain and shine, win and loss. The mother of one of the team co-captains spoke of how the players all benefited from Ted's participation during soccer season – and in the school community at large. And, at the end of the 12-game season, Coach Kessler commented about the consistently positive impact of Ted's presence and support.

With no extra money, complicated preparation, or disruptions to coaching or schedules, Ted Robinson participated in an extra-curricular activity that was not only a good match for his interest, but also connected him further with members of his school community. All in all, a success story that can be easily replicated anywhere, in any season, with virtually any school sport for any kid with a disability that wants to participate, as he/she is able.

By: Judy Higginbotham, ECAC (Exceptional Children's Assistance Center)

“All children are special and have unique needs whether they do or do not have a disability. Because of stereotyping, most people don’t realize that children with disabilities may be as different from each other as they are from children without disabilities. Including all kinds of children in child care and school settings encourages the celebration of these individual differences. Similarly, diversity in children’s abilities and backgrounds enhances and enriches their learning experiences. A nurturing environment provides all children with opportunities to explore and develop their unique abilities and gifts.”  
(Doggett & George, 1993, p. 23).



## Everyone Benefits From Inclusion

A major misconception of inclusion is that it only benefits the participants with disabilities. It is true that youth with disabilities benefit from inclusive programming. But it is also true that youth without disabilities, parents, agencies, and the community all benefit from inclusion. Through inclusion, everyone learns to accept and appreciate the diversity that exists around us everyday.

### Benefits of Inclusion for All Children

- ▲ Make new friends.
- ▲ Learn by modeling others.
- ▲ Build interdependence and ability to deal with obstacles.
- ▲ Notice how people are similar to each other.
- ▲ Develop interpersonal skills.
- ▲ Learn to accept others as they are.

A major misconception of inclusion is that it only benefits the participants with disabilities.

### “There’s where it happened”

I recently took Joe out on a community outing, which included a bus trip across town. As we were riding on the bus, Joe suddenly burst out, “There’s where it happened!” As I asked Joe to further explain what he meant, I braced for the worst. I was pleasantly surprised when Joe excitedly told me about sitting at that corner with his family during a parade. After the parade had passed, several children without disabilities had come by to talk to him and ask what he thought of the parade. These were all children that Joe had met through an inclusive experience. “There’s where it happened” was the street corner where Joe had truly been included into his community for the first time. What an impression it had on him!

Submitted by: Courtney Woollaston, middle school teacher

## Friendship

Summer camp at Holly Spring Elementary in Raleigh, NC was coming to a close. The camp director gathered the children around to discuss the memorable moments of the summer camp. Mixed in the group of 40 children was 7-year-old Jesse who was one of two special needs children attending the camp. When the camp director asked the children what they got out of their camp experience, one of the most exciting responses was: "I got to meet Jesse and have him as my friend."

As told by: Dawn Dolson, parent

### Benefits of Inclusion for Families

- ▲ Enable parents to work because they have access to inclusive child care service and after-school care.
- ▲ Opportunity for respite.
- ▲ Discover that others can provide a secure and nurturing environment for their children.
- ▲ Learn to accept their own child's strengths and needs.
- ▲ Share common experiences.
- ▲ Develop relationships with other families.



### Benefits of Inclusion for Program and Care Providers

- ▲ Develop networks of professional services and community resources.
- ▲ Develop an awareness that all people have unique strengths and needs.



“My son, Kyle, who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, was enrolled for a brief time at the A.E. Finley YMCA After School and Tracking Out program offered in Raleigh, N.C. His experiences there allowed him the opportunity to enjoy the activities with typically developing children his own age. I would really like to see programs across the state provide trained staff to allow children with special needs to participate in their programs on a regular basis.”

Ms. Janet Leshko, parent

- ▲ Create an enriched setting to encourage understanding and flexibility in including all children.
- ▲ Realize and appreciate differences.

## Inclusion Enhances Quality of Life

Without opportunities to interact with their peers, the social opportunities for children with disabilities are typically limited to parents, caregivers, therapists and teachers. No matter how kindly this is done and regardless of whether it is in the child’s “best interests,” the reality is that these children are always being acted upon and have little control over their own lives. They have limited choices and are given limited options. Relationships with peers not only expand the social opportunities that youth have, but also present a number of choice-making opportunities that are normally not available.

“It was a wonderful experience having Taylor in our summer program. The experience showed all of us - staff and kids - that just because you are different, doesn’t mean that you cannot participate. I hope that Taylor will be back with us next year.”

Charlene, Camp Director  
Creech Road Elementary, Wake County Public Schools, NC  
Reporting on the camp’s experience of including a child with Cornelia DeLang Syndrome

Interactions with others enrich our lives and provide us with opportunities to develop friendships which we will enjoy across our lifespan.

Interactions with others enrich our lives and provide us with opportunities to develop friendships which we will enjoy across our lifespan. We typically regard these interactions, relationships, and friendships as central to our personal well-being. It is time for children with disabilities to share these experiences so that they will no longer be isolated from what is perhaps the most essential component of what we elusively refer to as "quality of life."

## Inclusion is the Law

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made discrimination on the basis of color, religion, national origin, and gender illegal. Discrimination based on disability was not included in this landmark legislation. Despite advocacy for the addition of disability discrimination to the act, civil rights supporters decided that amending the act would give opponents a chance to weaken the law. The basic right to freedom from discrimination based on disability went unattended until 1986. It was at this time that Congress asked the National Council on the Handicapped to review all federal laws, programs, and policies affecting people with disabilities. Widespread discrimination based on disability was revealed. The Council recommended a more complete law that would grant basic civil rights and eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities in the areas of employment, transportation, public accommodations, public services, and telecommunications. In 1990, Congress passed the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** providing individuals with disabilities the same freedoms as Americans without disabilities.

Also in 1990, Congress once again reauthorized the Education for All Handicapped Children Act under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This mandates "free and appropriate education and related services" for all children with disabilities in the "least restrictive environment." Recreation is one area included in related services. It also mandates:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides individuals with disabilities the same freedoms as Americans without disabilities.

- ▲ Early intervention program plans for infants and toddlers (from birth to 3 years) with disabilities and their families.
- ▲ Preschool programs for 3-to-5 year-olds with disabilities.
- ▲ Identification of transition services, which include independent living and community participation.

# We Must Move Beyond the Law

The fact that the law requires organizations and agencies to open their doors to people with disabilities is not enough. As practical, warm-hearted humans we must recognize that inclusion is about much more than meeting the requirements of the law. Inclusion is about:

- ▲ Treating others with the dignity they rightfully deserve.
- ▲ Recognizing that all humans have talents and gifts to share with others.
- ▲ Valuing diversity.
- ▲ Creating community.

Inclusion is about much  
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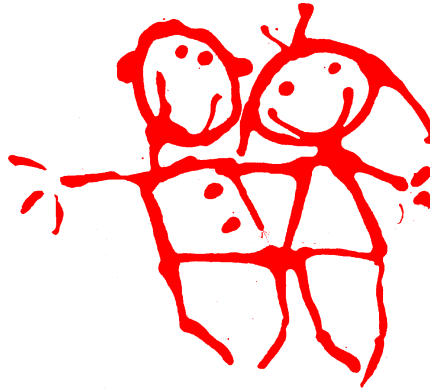


## Chapter Resources

Doggett, L. & George, J. (1993). All kids count: Child care and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Arlington, TX: The Arc.

Meyer, L.H. (1987). Why integration? (unpublished paper).

Schleien, S.J., Ray, M.T., & Green, F.P. (1997). Community recreation and people with disabilities: Strategies for inclusion (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.



The most important point for everyone to remember is that inclusion takes time and preparation. There are no quick ways to turn general or segregated out-of-school time programs into socially inclusive ones. Inclusion requires the efforts of everyone involved. The following are suggestions for beginning the inclusive process.



## Overcome the Fear of the Unknown

**Often, the most significant barrier to social inclusion is a negative attitude. The most common attitudinal barrier is fear. Fear is a natural reaction when:**

- ▲ We do not understand something.
- ▲ We have little or no experience with something.
- ▲ We are not sure how to act in a situation.

**For example: If you never worked with a child who uses a wheelchair, you may be afraid to give it a try. You may:**

- ▲ Be afraid of doing or saying the wrong thing.
- ▲ Not understand what is 'wrong' with the person.
- ▲ Not know how to interact with a person with a disability.
- ▲ Not know that the child likes to play in much the same way as other children with whom you work.

**Our natural reaction to such fear is:**

- ▲ Avoidance.
- ▲ Creation of excuses.
- ▲ Exclusion from programming.
- ▲ Physical integration without social interaction.

**Removing attitudinal barriers allows an agency to experience the uniqueness that every child has to offer in our lives. Agencies can overcome attitudinal barriers by:**

- ▲ Acknowledging the negative views that you and your staff might have toward people with disabilities and designing a plan to improve them.
- ▲ Keeping in mind that children can come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and ability levels.

**Focus on similarities and strengths.**

- ▲ Focusing on similarities and not differences. What is more important – the fact that Anisha looks different than some other children in my program because she uses a wheelchair, or the fact that Anisha likes the same kind of games, crafts, or activities that other children in my program enjoy?
- ▲ Focusing on strengths and not limitations. Anisha may not be able to run like some children can, but she sure has a great basketball shot.
- ▲ Forgetting about stereotypes and labels. Enjoy a person for who he/she is, not what category he/she “fits” into.
- ▲ Talking to people that you might have considered “different” in the past. You will probably find out that they are not so different from you after all.
- ▲ Recognizing the value in all people.

**Parents can overcome their fear and hesitation of allowing their child to participate in inclusive programs by:**

- ▲ Watching other children interacting in inclusive environments.
- ▲ Understanding that many individuals in our society still need to be educated on disability awareness and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- ▲ Recognizing that others are capable of giving your child quality care.



- ▲ Providing as much information to the agency about your child's interests, needs, and abilities as possible.
- ▲ Remaining in touch with program staff and volunteers and providing ongoing evaluation and feedback.
- ▲ Setting up play opportunities with children of diverse ability levels in what you consider to be safe environments (e.g., your home, a friend's home, or a neighborhood playground) to give inclusion a chance under comfortable circumstances.

Watch children  
interacting in  
inclusive  
environments.

## Adopt a New Way of Thinking

### Let it Show in Your Mission Statement and Your Advocacy

For inclusive out-of-school time programming to be successful, everyone involved must adopt a new way of thinking about youth with disabilities and how they are served. Everyone from the top of the agency down must begin to recognize the importance of making programs inclusive of all children.

One of the crucial elements of such a "systems change" is the development of a mission statement that is reflective of your agency's desire to provide programming for children of all ability levels. This mission statement should be clearly stated so that staff, as well as customers, understand the basic purposes that guide the organization. A commitment to serve all youth, regardless of ability, should be communicated clearly, sincerely, and repeatedly.

Everyone involved must adopt  
a new way of thinking about  
youth with disabilities and  
how they are served.

## Two Sample Mission Statements that Reflect an Inclusive Belief

As a division within Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation (MCPR) Department, it is the mission of the Therapeutic Recreation Division to assist in fulfilling the provision of leisure services to all citizens. The Therapeutic Recreation Division is committed to providing services to all residents with a disability or special need, regardless of severity, and to facilitate the inclusion of these persons into their MCPR neighborhood recreation facilities and leisure programs. We believe in independence and CHOICE and will work with each person to foster success in the community and programs of their CHOICE.

The mission of Community Partnerships, Inc. is to support the full involvement of people with disabilities or other challenges in education, career and community opportunities, and in meaningful personal relationships. To achieve this mission, Community Partnerships, Inc. works in partnerships with individuals, their families, and others in their lives to design and provide a personalized array of services in the community.

Parents must also develop a new way of thinking about how children of diverse abilities are served. If parents of children of all ability levels demand services in an inclusive manner, agencies will react. Parents need to band together to advocate for the benefits of inclusive programming. Hamre-Nietupski, Krajewski, Nietupski, Ostercamp, Sensor, and Opheim (1988) suggest the following strategies for advocating for inclusive services:

If parents of children of all ability levels demand services in an inclusive manner, agencies will react.

- ▲ **Organize an advocacy group.** Forming a group with similar concerns is an important first step.
- ▲ **Become better informed on inclusion issues.** It is essential for you to obtain accurate information concerning the legal rights of people with disabilities and successful methods of including youth with disabilities into out-of-school time programming.
- ▲ **Inform others of inclusion benefits and strategies.** Speak with other parents, practitioners, agencies, board members of organizations, influential persons in the media, and other interested citizens. Consider giving presentations that discuss what inclusion is, the benefits of inclusion, and strategies for making inclusion successful.

- ▲ **Work with the media.** Provide media representatives with a list of resource persons who are both knowledgeable and supportive of inclusion to serve as “sources” of accurate information about inclusion issues.
- ▲ **Meet frequently with influential agency personnel.** Initiate meetings with individuals that have decision-making power in an agency. Cooperatively discuss the most effective ways to meet goals for inclusive services.
- ▲ **Work within other advocacy associations.** Volunteer to serve as an officer, on committees, or write newsletters in such organizations.
- ▲ **Contact other parents and advocates.** Contact other parents in your community to discuss the importance and benefits of inclusion. Encourage them to join your advocacy efforts.

## Be Physically Accessible

Federal laws mandate that public facilities and services be architecturally accessible for people who have disabilities. If an individual is unable to enter or make her way around facilities, she cannot participate successfully. Examples of physical barriers could include stairs, narrow doors, curbs, steep ramps, hills, sand, thick vegetation, and rocks.

### Architectural barriers can be minimized by:

- ▲ Conducting architectural accessibility surveys of indoor and outdoor facilities using the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG).
- ▲ Contacting state and national boards and commissions for standards and recommendations.
- ▲ Seeking the service of an “accessibility specialist” who can conduct surveys, make recommendations, and prepare reports on their findings.
- ▲ Identifying federal and state funding that may be available for removing existing physical barriers.
- ▲ Applying for low-interest loans that exist in some communities for renovations needed in order to comply with accessibility standards.

If an individual is unable to enter or make her way around facilities, she cannot participate successfully.

**If facilities and areas cannot be made totally accessible, don't give up. There are some options left, including:**

- ▲ Modifying your program to avoid inaccessible areas (e.g., staying on paved paths for a nature trail adventure instead of venturing down unimproved trails).
- ▲ Providing staff that can assist the child in overcoming physical barriers (e.g., having a staff person available to help a participant with a wheelchair negotiate a patch of thick sand).
- ▲ Problem solving for creative solutions (e.g., coordinating with a golf course for the use of one of their golf carts so that a participant who uses a wheelchair can negotiate unimproved nature trails with peers).
- ▲ Working with other agencies and organizations for facility space that is more accessible.

## Beyond Political Correctness



We are all made up of many characteristics. Few of us want to be identified by only one of our many characteristics. For example, you wouldn't want to be identified solely on the basis of your ability to play softball ("Softball Playing Kisha") or your love of pizza ("Pizza Eating Janice"). These characteristics are only one part of your whole self. This is true of individuals with disabilities as well. When speaking or writing, remember that children or adults with disabilities are like everyone else — except for the fact that they have a disability. Sometimes how you say something communicates more than what you say. This is why we need to use "person first" language. And this is why "person first" language is about much more than being "politically correct."

**Here are a few helpful hints about disability etiquette.**

- ▲ **Speak of the person first**, then the child's disability (e.g., a child with Down syndrome, instead of the Down syndrome child).
- ▲ **Emphasize abilities, not limitations** (e.g., Cody is a wonderful artist, instead of Cody uses crutches).
- ▲ **Do not label people** as part of a disability group (e.g., Dorlissa who likes dancing, instead of Dorlissa, the blind teenager).
- ▲ **Remember that a person is not a condition** (e.g., identify Shelby as Shelby, the 8-year-old, instead of Shelby, the epileptic).

- ▲ **Don't give excessive praise or attention** to a person with a disability; don't patronize them (e.g., Would you want to be praised for something that you do every day, like go to work?).
- ▲ **Avoid treating people with disabilities as if they want to be the recipients of charity or pity.** They want to participate equally with the rest of the community (e.g., ask Jasper if he wants to play, instead of saying how sad it is that Jasper needs help with lots of things).
- ▲ **Let the person do or speak for herself** as much as possible (e.g., if one child asks why another uses a wheelchair, let her answer for herself, instead of answering for her).
- ▲ **Don't assume** that an individual with a disability needs help. Offer assistance, but wait until your offer is accepted before you help (e.g., ask an individual with a disability if he would like you to hold the door open for him, instead of assuming that he needs you to do it for him).
- ▲ **Remember that a person who has a disability isn't necessarily chronically sick or unhealthy** (e.g., a person with mental retardation is not sick or unhealthy, she may experience difficulty in learning at times).
- ▲ **Make certain that activities are accessible**, both architecturally and programmatically, to all participants (e.g., programs, as well as buildings, need to be welcoming and accommodating).
- ▲ **Remember that a disability is a functional limitation** that interferes with a person's ability to walk, hear, talk, learn, etc. A handicap is a situation or a barrier imposed by society, the environment, or oneself (e.g., an inaccessible facility is a handicap to the individual with a disability to participate in an activity at that facility).
- ▲ **Relax!** Don't be embarrassed if you use common expressions such as "see ya later" or "gotta run," to an individual who has a visual impairment or uses a wheelchair, respectively (i.e., continue on with your social conversation).

Sometimes how  
you say something  
communicates  
more than  
what you say.

## Using 'person first' language

Say	Instead of
a child with a disability	a disabled (or handicapped) child
person with cerebral palsy	palsied, CP, or spastic
person with a hearing impairment	deaf and dumb
person with mental retardation	retarded
person with epilepsy	epileptic
person who has...	afflicted with, suffers from, victim
uses a wheelchair	confined to a wheelchiar
nondisabled	normal or healthy
has a physical disability	crippled
of short stature	dwarf or midget
accessible parking	handicapped parking

Source: PACER Center, Inc. (1991).

## Balancing Making Friends and Learning New Skills

When skill development is the focus, the program must be organized so that participants with, and without, disabilities are able to pursue that objective...

Most activities will probably promote both skill development (learning to do new things) and socialization (making new friends and just having fun), but there will also be times when one objective is given priority over the other. For instance, a 4-H club leader may designate certain periods of the year primarily for project completion, such as the months preceding the spring fashion show or county fair. These will be times when participants – especially those without disabilities – will be intent on finishing their individualized projects. At times such as these, socialization should not be the emphasis.

When skill development is the focus, the out-of-school time program must be organized so that participants with and without disabilities are able to pursue that objective.

### This can be accomplished by:

- ▲ Recruiting a volunteer or providing a personal aide that will assist the participant with the disability with more extensive needs and will therefore relieve any pressure that might be placed on participants without disabilities.
- ▲ Giving participants the opportunity to work on their own projects prior to the session with a partner who has a disability.
- ▲ Asking members without disabilities to take turns devoting their time to helping the child with a disability with his or her project using a cooperative “round-robin” system.

## Recruit Participants

A helpful tool for recruiting participants — as well as adult volunteers — is a slide or video presentation that illustrates people with and without disabilities interacting in natural and interesting ways. This provides a positive image for prospective participants, many of whom may have negative mental pictures of inclusive programs. Recruitment presentations that depict persons with and without disabilities having fun together help create the expectation that they will have a positive experience in an inclusive program. When people come into a program with a positive picture of what to expect, the chances of them actually having a good experience is increased.



When people come into a program with a positive picture of what to expect, the chances of them actually having a good experience is increased.

## Recruiting Individuals of Varying Abilities

Some helpful tips for recruiting individuals of all ability levels include:

- ▲ Consider marketing in a variety of formats. Examples include: fliers, brochures, newspapers, posters, audio, video, electronic mail, and other media, as appropriate.
- ▲ Develop community relations with agencies that provide social and health services to individuals of differing ability levels (e.g., advocacy groups, allied health professionals).
- ▲ Communicate with parents, other care providers, teachers, or advocacy agency personnel concerning the benefits of your inclusive program.
- ▲ Give examples of how activities can be adapted to meet individual needs of participants.
- ▲ Ensure that promotion takes place early enough for all potential participants to receive your promotional material.
- ▲ Include nondiscrimination statements on promotional material that are welcoming and inviting (instead of legal and stiff-collared). For example: The Westland Department of Parks and Recreation actively seeks and supports participation by all people with a variety of interests and abilities in recreational programs and services. Please call us so that we will know how to serve you better. (Schleien, Ray, & Green, 1991, p. 36)

## Choosing Companions or Tutors

According to Rynders and Schleien (1991), it is important to not only be clear on the primary purpose of the activities, but also on how participants are expected to interact. Will the peers without disabilities be interacting as companions, tutors, or both companions and tutors?

It is important for a child with a disability to experience a giving role as well as a receiving role.

- ▲ **Peer tutor:** a peer without a disability teaches a skill to a peer with a disability. An example of a peer tutor would be a 12-year-old child without disabilities working one-to-one on a craft project with a 6-year-old child with a disability.

You must remember that even though the peer tutor structure is valuable in certain situations, the child with a disability should not always be involved in activities as the one who receives “help.” It is important for a child with a disability to experience a giving role as well as a receiving role. This can be made possible through a structure that allows for a peer companion.

- ▲ **Peer companion:** a peer without a disability buddies up with a peer with a disability to help develop a closer relationship and introduce them to their own network of friends.

For peer companionship, peers should be approximately the same age. It is fine if the child without disabilities is one or two years older, but it is not desirable for this age match to be reversed. Research shows that this can create a socially awkward situation.

Making a choice between the peer tutor or peer companionship role is not always necessary. By initially concentrating on friendship development (peer companionship) it then becomes natural for one friend to take the lead in teaching something new to the other (peer tutor). This allows both roles to flow naturally.

### Remember to Maintain Proper Age Matches

- ▲ It encourages a more cooperative environment.
- ▲ It encourages peer relationships.
- ▲ It allows youth with disabilities to have age-appropriate models for behavior, social skills, activity participation, dress, and interests.
- ▲ It assures that individuals with disabilities maintain self-efficacy and dignity.

## Working Together

Activities can be structured in three ways: Competitive, Individualistic, or Cooperative. Each is legitimate and has strengths in particular situations. In inclusive out-of-school time settings, cooperative activities tend to work best.

Success in cooperative activities is determined by the group's ability to include all group members in the completion of the activity.

- ▲ **Competitive:** Competition in its traditional application leads to one person in a group winning, with all other group members losing.
- ▲ **Individualistic:** In individual activities each member of a group works to improve his or her own past performance.
- ▲ **Cooperative:** In order for the group to succeed, every member of the group must contribute to the best of his ability.

Success in cooperative activities is determined by the group's ability to include all groups members in the completion of the activities.

### How the Same Activity can be Structured Competitively, Individually, or Cooperatively

Suppose there are a group of children, with and without movement disabilities, at your summer camp. Today's activity is canoe paddling. Line the canoes up at the edge of the lake.

**Competitive Structure:** Place each child in a canoe with a paddle. Instruct the children to paddle across the lake as fast as they can. The first one across that lake gets the camp prize for "Best Canoe Paddler."

**Individualistic Structure:** Place each child in a canoe with a paddle. At the beginning of the day, have the children paddle across the lake as fast as they can and record each camper's crossing time. At the end of the day, after instruction and practice, have the children paddle across that lake as fast as they can again. Instruct the children that anyone that improves their crossing time will get a "Certified Canoe Paddler" certificate.

**Cooperative Structure:** Place a set of buoys up marking a lane across the lake for a canoe to stay between. Allow enough room in the lane for some error. Place a team of children in a large canoe and give each child a paddle. Tell the children that they are to paddle as well as they can across the lake and that they will all get a "Certified Canoe Paddler" certificate if they work together to get the canoe across the lake and stay between the set of buoys. Paddle alongside to determine that everyone is paddling, and that they are encouraging and assisting one another. To keep the canoe straight, they will have to work together. Teamwork is a must in order for the children to succeed.

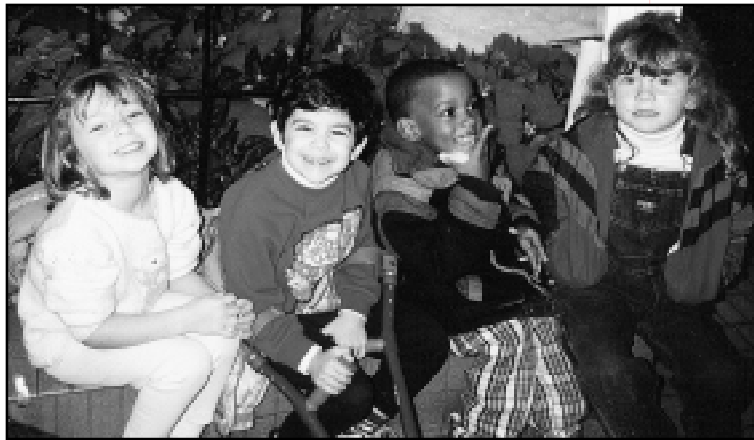
Adapted from: Rynders, J.E., & Schleien, S.J. (1991). *Together successfully: Creating recreational and educational programs that integrate people with and without disabilities*. Arlington, TX: ARC-USA.

Although a cooperative structure is the preferred format for fully inclusive programs, this is not to imply that competitive formats are without value. We should not assume that a child with a disability is not capable of participating in a competitive activity. If this is the child's choice and she has the basic skills necessary, the child should have every opportunity to do so. For instance, a child that uses a wheelchair due to mobility limitations might have outstanding upper body strength and coordination. If this is the case, this child could possibly do very well in the competitive canoe experience example used above.

## Additional Strategies for Promoting Cooperative Interactions

- ▲ Seat participants in small, integrated groups.
- ▲ Make sure that all participants are positioned reasonably close to other group members.
- ▲ Provide an adequate amount of space that is easily accessible so that all members of the group can work together on a project.
- ▲ Make sure that all materials for a project are easily accessible to all members of the group.
- ▲ Emphasize the importance of enjoying an activity with another person rather than the speed and/or accuracy with which it is done.
- ▲ Adapt the activities to the ages and ability levels of all participants.
- ▲ Develop directions for the task in such a way that they require an interdependent (cooperative) effort, rather than independent or competitive effort.
- ▲ Model cooperative behavior.
- ▲ Reinforce cooperative interaction and encourage it when it does not occur.

Adapted from: Rynders, J.E., & Schleien, S.J. (1991). *Together successfully: Creating recreational and educational programs that integrate people with and without disabilities*. Arlington, TX: ARC-USA.



## Chapter Resources

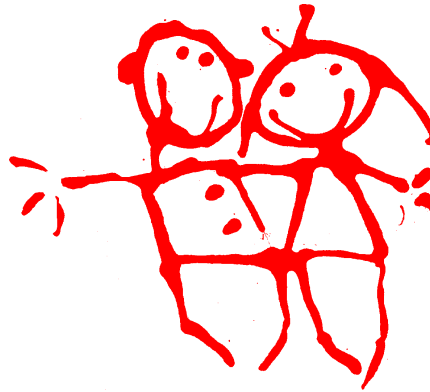
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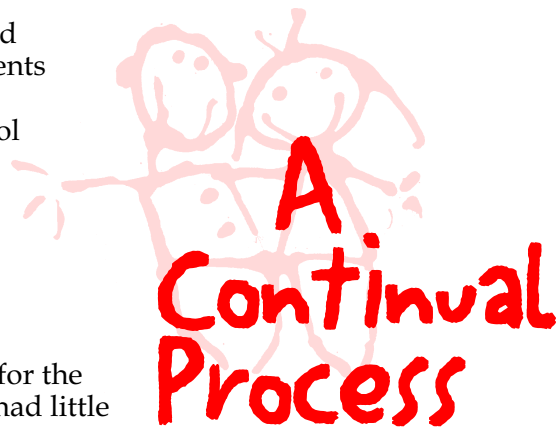
## Success at YMCA

Brian is a vivacious 10-year-old who has been successfully included in the YMCA program in Raleigh for the last two summers. He is a valued member of his huddle and participates fully in all activities with his peers. Brian has Wolf-Hirschorn Syndrome, which has resulted in him being quite a bit smaller than his peers. When Jacqueline, the Inclusion Specialist, went to meet with the kids at the YMCA about things they could do to include Brian and to answer questions that they might have, they asked only one. A child raised his hand and said, "Why is Brian so short?" The kids weren't concerned about Brian's disability and he quickly became one of the gang.

By: Cathi Drinkard, Community Partnerships, Inc.



Inclusion is an ongoing process that is best achieved and maintained when agencies, staff, participants, and parents work cooperatively together. This section contains suggestions for how to maintain successful out-of-school time inclusive programming.



## Breaking Down Myths

It is important to prepare youth without disabilities for the inclusion of youth with disabilities. Many youth have had little or no exposure to peers with disabilities. One of the best ways to assist children in understanding one another is to create an atmosphere designed for open communication about issues that may concern them. It is important that children are given a chance to satisfy their many curiosities and receive assistance in answering their many questions. An open atmosphere that allows the children to ask questions will make a big impact in overcoming fear and embarrassment. Examples of topics to consider include:

- ▲ **How do we play together?** Discuss how companions take turns, say nice things to each other, help each other out when a task is difficult, stay close to each other, smile, and so forth.
- ▲ **How do we communicate?** Discuss communication tips, such as talking slowly, allowing time for a response, trying another way to communicate if a companion does not understand, and not giving up. The use of simple manual signs can be introduced. Alternative forms of communication (e.g., communication boards, sign language) could be demonstrated.
- ▲ **What is a prosthesis?** Discuss the use of tools that people without disabilities need in order to do certain tasks. Discuss how individuals with disabilities sometimes need to use specially designed tools in the same manner and show examples.
- ▲ **How does a person with a disability live in the community?**  
Invite individuals with disabilities to talk about how they travel from home to work, go camping, go grocery shopping, see a movie at a movie theater, etc. Allow the children to ask questions.
- ▲ **What is a friend?** Discuss the nature of friendship. Ask participants to think about similarities and differences in their relationships with a friend with a disability and a friend without a disability (Rynders & Schleien, 1991).

An open atmosphere that allows the children to ask questions will make a big impact in overcoming fear and embarrassment.

## Why Disability Awareness?

By educating peers about people with disabilities (disability awareness), you can:

- ▲ Break down stereotypes.
- ▲ Answer children's questions about disabilities and people who have them.
- ▲ Reinforce positive images of people with disabilities.

## Strengthening Friendship Skills of Participants Without Disabilities

Don't children without disabilities naturally interact in a friendly way with children who have disabilities? Yes, and no. Yes, they usually know how to interact in a friendly manner (although they may need to have their usual friendship skills sharpened or expanded). And no, peers without disabilities do not often have the knowledge and skills to interact easily with a person who may be different in some manner.

Frequently, a disability presents interaction challenges never experienced by peers without disabilities. Participants without disabilities will need instruction in how to cope with communication, movement, and other types of challenges. Allow youth without disabilities to look for solutions to problems and for ways to enhance the participation of a partner with a disability.

Allow youth without disabilities to look for solutions to problems and for ways to enhance the participation of a partner with a disability

Meetings involving group members without disabilities and adult leaders should occur frequently. During these meetings, discussion can focus on:

- ▲ How particular problems can be overcome.
- ▲ New ideas for interacting.
- ▲ Specific techniques that can be used during one-to-one activities. Allow them to look for solutions to problems and for ways to enhance the participation of a partner with a disability. This builds empathy, self-awareness, and maturity.

### How to Act as a Companion to a Peer With Disabilities

- ▲ Welcome your partner and stay close to her during the activity.
- ▲ Smile, talk pleasantly, and try to maintain eye contact when talking.
- ▲ Divide up tasks to encourage your partner to be involved.
- ▲ Make the activity enjoyable and let your partner know you are having a good time.
- ▲ Take turns. Your partner may not be used to this, so be patient. Don't help too much or too soon. But, if she appears to be confused, losing interest, or frustrated, step in.
- ▲ Say something pleasant about your time together as the activity ends.

Adapted from: Rynders, J.E., & Schleien, S.J. (1991). *Together successfully: Creating recreational and educational programs that integrate people with and without disabilities*. Arlington, TX: ARC-USA.

By setting a tone of acceptance, modeling positive interactions toward participants with disabilities, setting up situations in which children can readily interact, and keeping activities child-centered, staff and volunteers can be vital catalysts for inclusion. The following is an illustration of how a leader might facilitate cooperative interactions offered by Rynders and Schleien (1991). Suppose that the group is engaged in an art activity. The leader could do the following:

- ▲ **Prompt positive interactions** when they are not occurring. For example, "Mary, I'll bet that Jennifer would like to paint with you."
- ▲ **Reinforce positive interactions** when they are occurring. For example, "Bill and Jim, you both did a really nice job with the mural."
- ▲ **Redirect behaviors** if either partner gets off task or is behaving inappropriately.
- ▲ **Step in if a situation is deteriorating**; e.g., a child has a tantrum. Sometimes a child will need to be removed for a cooling-off period.
- ▲ **Explain** to peers without disabilities the nature of a participant's disability, but only if the participant is not able to do so for himself.

Research shows that the quality of a program is improved by continual staff training.

Of course, as is true with all forms of staff and volunteer training, inclusion training should occur on a regular basis. Research shows that the quality of a program is improved by continual staff training.

- ▲ Every new staff member or volunteer should be trained on the concept of inclusion and ways to promote cooperative interactions prior to beginning work with children in inclusive programs.
- ▲ “In-service” training that is scheduled on a regular basis will allow staff and volunteers to continually fine-tune their knowledge and techniques.

## Parents and Providers Working Together

As is true for all children’s programming, the ability of parents and agencies to work together is potentially the most vital key to the success of out-of-school time inclusive programming. Building this bridge is the responsibility of both parents and providers.

Wesley, Dennis, and Tyndall (1997) suggest that parents and providers consider the following strategies for building partnerships:

- ▲ **Take time to get to know each other.** It is important to build rapport and trust between providers and families as the basis for mutual respect, but it takes time.
- ▲ **Respect and accept diversity.** Show concern for all the people in the child’s life. Develop an understanding of the cultural and social issues that may effect these relationships.
- ▲ **Show sensitivity toward the emotional needs of people including the need for privacy.** Develop your ability to listen carefully without interrupting or judging others. Respect the right to confidentiality at all times.
- ▲ **Design flexible schedules.** Consider family schedules when inviting participation in your program’s events. Parents must also be willing to be flexible in order to meet the schedules of quality programs.
- ▲ **Frame your concerns positively.** Be prepared to develop solutions cooperatively.
- ▲ **Communicate frequently using a variety of opportunities.** For example, agencies could consider open houses, newsletters, group meetings, individual conferences, samples of the child’s work, bulletin boards, advisory or policy committees, phone calls, questionnaires, or a web site. Parents could consider site visits, letters to the provider, and informal discussions with the provider at drop-off or pick-up times.

The ability of parents and agencies to work together is potentially the most vital key to the success of inclusive programming.

- ▲ **Help each other find resources in the community.** No single program will meet all the needs of all families. Work together to identify and access other community services.
- ▲ **Support each other through transitions.** Each day the child routinely makes a transition from one setting to another (home, neighborhood playground, school, and/or after-school programming). Be aware of these transitions and think of ways to make the transitions smoother.

The people who know a child best are typically family members. **Agencies** should get to know families and use their perspectives and ideas to plan meaningful experiences for the children in your program. Wesley, Dennis, and Tyndall (1997) suggest that agencies consider asking parents the following questions:

- ▲ What do you hope your child will gain from this program?
- ▲ What are your child's special interests and talents?
- ▲ How would you like to see us help your child?
- ▲ What are some things you enjoy doing with your child?
- ▲ How do you expect your child to react to the program?
- ▲ How is your child adjusting to the program?
- ▲ What types of information and support would you like from the program?

### **Strategies for gaining feedback from families**

- ▲ Develop a questionnaire asking family members to rate program quality.
- ▲ Invite families to develop suggestions for ways in which their child's experience could be enhanced.
- ▲ Use a suggestion box, informal conversation, or evaluation form to capture family member's ideas about improving programming.
- ▲ Establish a monthly discussion group in which family members suggest ways to make the program policies and practices more inclusive.

When everyone works together, everyone wins!

**Parents** should take the responsibility of asking important questions to ensure that quality programming is continually offered. The first question that should be considered is whether the agency is following the suggestions in this guide. Schleien, Baldwin, and Light (1989) suggest the following questions for parents to consider when reflecting on their child's inclusive participation:

▲ **Are the activities being offered consistent with my child's current ability level?** Offer suggestions on how this can be accomplished if it appears that your child is not being appropriately challenged.

▲ **Are your child's interests and preferences being considered?** You can provide helpful information concerning the interests of your child.

▲ **Are activities relevant and age-appropriate?** Activities that your child is participating in should be both useful to and age-appropriate for your child.

▲ **Are effective activity adaptations being used?** Parents are often familiar with creative ways to adapt materials and routines for daily living. Offer suggestions when necessary.

The key to asking these questions is to not simply look for faults with the out-of-school time inclusive program in which your child is participating. Instead, by considering these questions, you are in a better position to assist an agency in improving the inclusive program that it offers. When everyone works together, everyone wins.

## Making Individual Contributions

The reality exists that all individuals will not be able to participate fully in every activity. An alternative to excluding an individual from an activity, or completely canceling an activity, is to aim for partial participation. Partial participation is an approach that calls for adjustments to an activity and/or environment that allows for some partial degree of involvement, to one's maximum extent possible.

Adjustments or adaptations of the activity could be minor or more significant, depending on the needs of the participant and should always be viewed on an individual basis.



Suppose you are leading a group of youth volunteers in the activity of painting over graffiti on a school wall. Partial participation in this activity could be accomplished by:

- ▲ Changing or adapting the materials used in the activity (e.g., placing padding around the handle of a paint roller to make the handle larger and easier to grasp for the volunteer that has difficulty holding the smaller handle).
- ▲ Altering the sequence of steps used in the activity (e.g., having paint already poured into roller pans before participants begin activity).
- ▲ Adapting the rules of an activity (e.g., physically marking the area of the wall that the participant is allowed to paint for the participant that struggles to maintain focus).
- ▲ Providing personal assistance to an individual when adaptations are not feasible (e.g., allowing a friend, companion, tutor, or parent to assist the participant with holding the paint roller handle by placing their hands over the hand of the participant's on the roller handle).
- ▲ Providing alternative, yet essential, roles for individuals that may otherwise be excluded from the activity (e.g., having the individual, that is physically incapable of climbing a ladder, be responsible for assisting with the acquisition and preparation of the painting materials rather than painting a high spot on the wall).

As long as emphasis is placed on participants contributing to the best of their own abilities, every participant becomes a successful contributor to the program.

The inclusion of an individual in a partial participation role in no way decreases the success for the individual, activity, or group. Success is a matter of perspective. As long as emphasis is placed on participants contributing to the best of their own abilities, every participant becomes a successful contributor to the out-of-school time program. Again, parents can be key in assisting in the identification of strengths and interests that will help to make partial participation a success for children with disabilities.

# Avoiding Quick Fixes

As mentioned earlier, making out-of-school time programs inclusive takes time. There are no “quick fixes.” The following are quick fixes that need to be avoided:

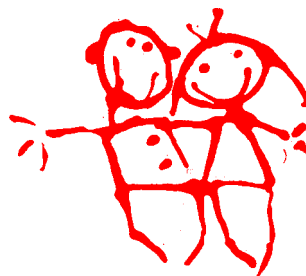
- ▲ There are no short cuts to inclusion. Take your time and do it right.
- ▲ Integrating too quickly. Inclusion requires preparation. Take the time to do it right.
- ▲ Not maintaining natural proportions. Your program should represent the natural proportions that occur in your community. If 10-15% of your community has a disability, then 10-15% of the participants in your program should as well.
- ▲ Tokenism. Quickly including one child with a disability in order to publicize your inclusive efforts is more of a detriment to the inclusive movement than can be imagined.
- ▲ Lack of individualization. Treating each child with a disability as an individual with individual needs is essential.
- ▲ Sacrificing participant safety in the name of inclusion. Emphasizing the safety of all participants as your first concern will reap benefits for everyone in your program.
- ▲ Peers assuming adult teaching or aide roles. A peer without a disability should not be expected to teach a peer with a disability about personal hygiene or to take care of their more personal needs.

## Chapter Resources

Rynders, J.E., & Schleien, S.J. (1991). Together successfully: Creating recreational and educational programs that integrate people with and without disabilities. Arlington, TX: ARC-USA.

Schleien, S.J., Baldwin, C.K., & Light, C.L. (1989). Play time: Meeting the needs of your child. *Exceptional Parent*, 19(2), 28-33.

Wesley, P., Dennis, B., & Tyndall, S. (1997). *QuickNotes: Inclusion resources for early childhood professionals*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center.



For inclusion to be successful in out-of-school time programming it is essential that everyone takes responsibility for its success. That means that children and youth, their family members, practitioners, programmers, staff, volunteers, and general community members take an active role in advocating for inclusion and demonstrating its success.



## Agencies Need to Ensure Quality

Programmers and staff have the responsibility of maintaining quality in their programs. Rynders and Schleien (1991) suggest the following as being indicators of a quality social inclusion program. How are you measuring up?

- ▲ Mission and philosophy reflect a belief in inclusion.
- ▲ Architecture of program site is accessible according to guidelines set by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- ▲ Staff training emphasizes continuing education in topical areas, such as innovations and techniques in inclusion, use of on-site community inclusion consultants, etc.
- ▲ Activities are chronologically age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate.
- ▲ Programming allows for personal challenge and participant choice.
- ▲ There is an emphasis on cooperative activities instead of competitive or individual activities.
- ▲ Activities allow for modifications and adaptations (or partial participation, if needed).
- ▲ Activities are offered at convenient and appropriate times and in the least restrictive environment as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- ▲ Ongoing assessment and evaluation is conducted that allows for vital feedback from all participants.

Measuring how successful your program is goes beyond adding your attendance numbers or counting the number of satisfactory answers received on your participant and parent questionnaires. Appropriate outcomes to measure could include:

Agencies...  
...How do  
you  
measure  
success?

- ▲ How many times the individual is involved with others in performing an activity?
- ▲ How many times their peers actively invite them to participate in an activity?
- ▲ How much cooperative interaction is occurring?
- ▲ How many times the individual with the disability is asked by their peers to participate in play or other activities outside of your program?

## Seeing is Believing

Doggett and George (1993) offer the following suggestions for ways that agencies can let the community know that inclusion works.

- ▲ Collaborate with other organizations, centers, and agencies to offer a tour of programs to community leaders and/or press.
- ▲ Organize regular meetings for parents to provide more information exchange.
- ▲ Offer information to parents about other child-related conferences and workshops.
- ▲ Conduct an annual open house to showcase your program to both families and the community.
- ▲ Cultivate television/radio/newspaper reporters who might need seasonal stories, and offer your center for photos at holidays to the press.
- ▲ Many areas have formed inclusive networks. Get involved with your local network. If there is not a group in your area – start one!

Show others that inclusion  
can not only work, but can  
make positive contributions  
to the community.

# Parents Need to Ensure Quality

Parents must continue to take steps to ensure that quality programming is maintained. Parents should continue to:

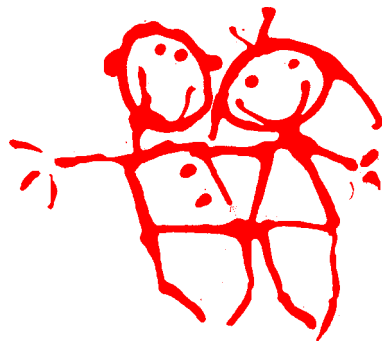
- ▲ Advocate for their child.
- ▲ Educate individuals and agencies concerning disability awareness, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and inclusion.
- ▲ Provide their child with opportunities to practice at home the social skills and task skills gained through inclusive programming.
- ▲ Work on age-appropriate skill development at home.
- ▲ Serve on advisory boards that will improve and maintain quality of programming.

Parents...continue  
to advocate for  
your child.

## Chapter Resources

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Rynders, J.E., & Schleien, S.J. (1991). Together successfully: Creating recreational and educational programs that integrate people with and without disabilities. Arlington, TX: ARC-USA.



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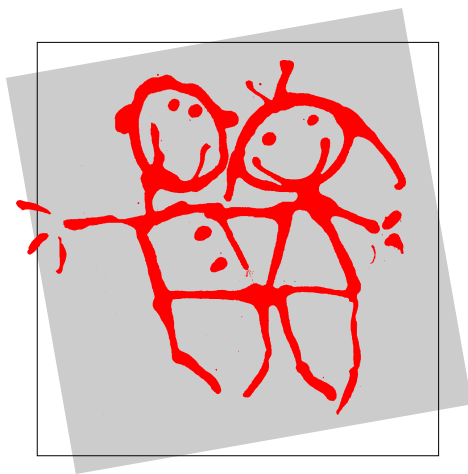
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For more information  
about School Age Solutions  
or about including children  
with disabilities in programs  
or activities, call:

**1-800-962-6817**