

# Inclusive Education

Many students with disabilities are successfully learning and joining in the same classroom with friends and neighbors who are not disabled. **Inclusion is possible for all students.** The key to success is to build the services and supports necessary to insure a good program.

## **INCLUSION IS:**

- Educating all children with different-abilities in regular classrooms regardless of the nature of their disabling condition(s)
- Providing all students with opportunities to participate and learn from each other's contributions in general education
- Providing necessary services within the general education setting
- Supporting general education Teachers and Administrators (with time, training, teamwork, resources and strategies)
- Having students with different-abilities follow the same schedule as their general education peers
- Involving students with different-abilities in age-appropriate, academic classes and extra-curricular activities (e.g., art, music, gym, school trips, assemblies, graduation exercises)
- Allowing differently-abled students to use the cafeteria, library, playground, and other facilities along with general education peers
- Encouraging friendships between general education and differently-abled students

- Teaching all children to understand and accept human differences
- Placing children with different abilities in their neighborhood schools
- Providing an appropriate individualized educational program

## **INCLUSION IS NOT:**

- "Dumping" students with disabilities into general education programs without preparation and support
- Providing special education services in separate or isolated areas
- Ignoring children's individual needs
- Jeopardizing students' safety or well-being
- Placing unreasonable demands on teachers and administrators
- Isolating students with disabilities in general education schools
- Placing disabled students in schools or classes that are not age appropriate
- Requiring students to be ready and earn their way into mainstream classrooms based on cognitive or social skills

# Inclusive Education

## **NYC Department of Education DISTRICT 75 defines INCLUSION as**

- A METHOD of providing SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES in the LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT.

## **INCLUSION IS DISTINCT FROM MAINSTREAMING**

in that inclusion involves the ongoing support of individual student needs, such as:

- Adaptation and modification of curriculum, activities, materials, and schedules
- Appropriate staffing ratios
- Integrated related services
- Innovative instructional strategies
- Team approach to service delivery

## **INCLUSION IS DISTINCT FROM INTEGRATION**

- In that the student continues to have primary membership in his/her special education class and attends general education classes in numbers that do not reflect natural demographic proportions in the community.

## **INCLUSION IS DISTINCT FROM DECERTIFICATION**

- In that the student continues to need and receive support for any difficulties or differences in age-appropriate abilities. The student's classification remains the same, only the location and delivery method of education and services changes.

# How to Make Inclusion Successful

## **BELIEFS, FEELINGS, PERCEPTIONS**

- It is important to be sensitive to perceptions.
  - What do people perceive?
  - What are peoples' fears?
  - How do general education students react?
- What strategies best address resistance?

## **COMMUNICATION**

- It is important to be conscious and sensitive of how one speaks and what one says.
- Offer constructive criticism and advice.
- Talk about the positive things observed in students and build on strengths and develop areas of weakness. [Good advice to use for all children.]
- Encourage activities that allow general education and "inclusion" students to learn about each other.
- Remember that differently-abled students have feelings. They want friendships and opportunities for social settings like any other child. [Differently-abled children are more alike than dislike children in a general education setting!]
  - They watch or listen to TV, cartoons, and music.
  - They enjoy toys.
  - They laugh, cry, and need.

## **RESPECT**

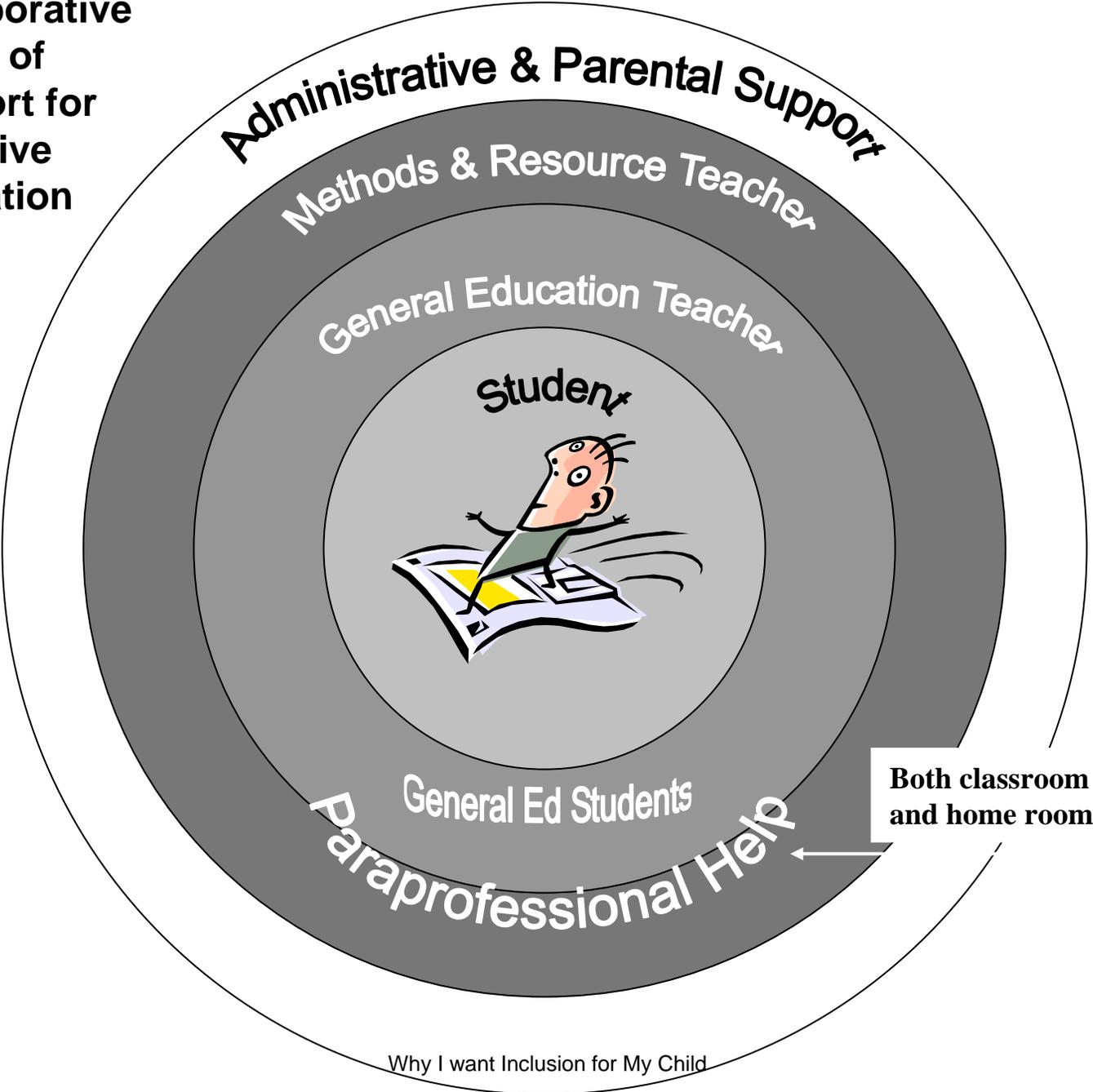
- Children should not be ostracized because they are different.
- Segregation teaches children to be fearful, ignorant and breeds prejudice.
- An inclusive setting does not detract from the usual education program. Rather, it enriches the environment for all children socially and interpersonally.
- All children need an education that helps them develop relationships and prepares them for life outside school.
- Inclusion involves families, students, and professionals from general education and special education in common goals.
- Only inclusion has the potential to reduce fear and to build friendship, respect, and understanding.
  - It is very important for general education students to see others who are different, yet able, as people.
  - It is important for special education students to see how the general population behaves and talks. General Ed students are the best peer role models differently-abled students have.

# It's Legal!

**The Federal Law “INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (I.D.E.A.)” and 1997 amendments make it clear that schools have a duty to educate children with disabling condition(s) in general education classrooms.**

- Free and Appropriate Public Education
- Appropriate Evaluation
- Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.)
- Least Restrictive Environment
- Parent, Teacher, and Student Participation in Decision Making
- Procedural Safeguards

**Collaborative  
Model of  
Support for  
Inclusive  
Education**



# A Parent's Perspective on Inclusion

## CHALLENGES

- Social Interaction with General Ed Students and Peer "Role" Models can be difficult
- Different Interests than Peers (E.g., Dating, Smoking)
- Academic Work and Abstract Thought
- Different Abilities (E.g., Poor Expressive Skills)
- Maintaining Commitment of School Administration and Teachers
- Maintaining Communication between Parents
- Cursing (used appropriately however, and said with proper emphasis)

## SUCCESSSES

- Higher Self Esteem
- Eager to Attend School
- Improved Social Skills
- Improved Daily Living Skills (E.g., Eating, Using the Bathroom)
- More Age-Appropriate Behavior (E.g., Interest in Sports)
- Remediation and Class Work Modification (I.e., Inclusion Student does same work as General Ed Student.)
- Exposure and Tolerance
  - Everyone is different, not strange or scary.
  - Higher Threshold for Noise
  - Greater Acceptance of Behavior

# A Vision for the Future

- Educating Parents, Teachers, and Students
- Building Sensitivity & Tolerance: What to Expect
- Encouraging Parents of Children with Special Classroom Needs to Participate
- Continuing Dialog: Listening to Concerns and Providing Resources and/or Suggesting Possible Solutions
- Expanding the Number of Inclusive Education Settings Available
- Exploring & Creating More Integrative Opportunities and Approaches

# Resources

Advocacy Board  
Center on Human Policy  
Syracuse University  
Syracuse, N.Y. 13244

Office of Inclusive Education  
New York City Board of Education  
District 75  
400 First Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10010  
Ask for Inclusion Supervisor/Coach  
for Borough

Whole Schooling Research Project  
Renaissance Community Press  
c/o Wayne State University  
217 Education  
Detroit, Michigan 480202

Association for Supervision and  
Curriculum Development

## Websites:

- <http://www.pennycorner.com>
- <http://www.coe.edu/CommunityBuilding/RCPress.html>
- <http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion>
- <http://www.nycenet.edu8>