

# Inclusion in Preschool Classrooms



*Many preschool programs include young children with special needs in their classrooms. The goal of inclusion is to help all children learn to the best of their abilities. Here are some questions that parents often ask about inclusion.*

## What does inclusion mean?

Inclusion means teaching all children together, regardless of ability level. Inclusive programs celebrate children's similarities as well as their different abilities and cultures. In inclusive classrooms, children with special needs take part in the general education curriculum based on their ages and grades. They are not put into a separate classroom, but rather the curriculum and the room are adapted to meet children's needs.

## What does an inclusion team do?


The inclusion team plans ways to adapt the curriculum and the classroom so all children can learn as independently as possible. People on an inclusion team are expected to have good communication skills. They are flexible and creative about meeting all children's needs. An inclusion team consists of people from inside and outside the school who work together to support children with special needs:

- *Regular education teachers* teach the curriculum to all students.
- *Special education teachers* help the regular education teachers plan how to make the curriculum work for children with special needs.
- *Classroom assistants* work with the teachers to help children be as independent as possible in the classroom.
- *Related service providers* may be speech therapists, occupational therapists, or physical therapists. They help the classroom staff decide how to work with children who have special needs. They also help children develop skills and abilities needed to function well in the classroom.
- *Parents* give the team important information about their children's progress and needs. They also help with learning activities at home.
- *Administrative staff members* help to run school programs. They also make sure that classroom staff members have the resources they need to work successfully with all children.

## How does inclusion work?

A child's inclusion team meets regularly to plan how to make the curriculum, physical space, and special services fit together smoothly. The teacher makes changes based on input from the team. An inclusive classroom might have

- wider aisles so children with physical disabilities can move around easily
- picture schedules so children with language delays can follow the daily routine
- adaptive crayons and scissors that are made for children with fine motor delays
- technology to aid children who have vision or hearing problems
- special furniture for children with physical disabilities

 For related Web resources, see "Inclusion in Preschool Classrooms" at <http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tips.htm>.



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