



Me, Too!

Inside Preschool Inclusion

The Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion

Teaching all children: Challenges to providing early intervention services in inclusive settings

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act guarantees a free, appropriate public education for all three to five year old children with disabilities. This influential law states that special education services will be provided in the least restrictive environment, including community settings in which children without disabilities participate. Previously, most children with disabilities were served in segregated schools or classrooms. Combining children with and without disabilities has greatly benefited both sets of children. At the same time, it has created unique challenges for school administrators and teachers attempting to incorporate all children and promote an appropriate and satisfactory educational experience for a classroom full of children with varying abilities and needs. An article by researchers with the Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion examines the particular ways in which professionals successfully provide educational services in inclusive classroom settings.

"...a challenge for the field of ECSE is how to facilitate, support and maintain the meaningful participation of children with disabilities in the activities of inclusive ECE programs"

Despite the differences among children, many of the educational goals remain the same. These include:

- **Becoming more confident learners**
- **Learning to interact positively with peers**
- **Learning to respect others**
- **Learning to communicate effectively**
- **Acquiring and using problem-solving skills.**

Through a review of the research and state of the practice, we've identified certain strategies that facilitate, support, and maintain the meaningful participation of children with disabilities, and address the children's individual goals and objectives. These are:

- **Providing environmental support** by arranging the physical space, offering materials that promote learning, and encouraging proximity to peers
- **Adapting materials** by stabilizing, enlarging, or otherwise modifying materials to increase participation by all children
- **Simplifying activities** by dividing a routine into smaller parts or reducing the number of steps to accomplish a task

- Using children's preferences in identifying materials and activities that are of particular interest to individual children
- Providing adult and peer support through feedback, prompts, or hand-over-hand assistance
- Providing special equipment such as adaptive equipment or technology that allows more participation by all children.

About ECR II

The Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion (ECR II) is a national research project funded by the U.S. Department of Education for a five-year period to study the inclusion of preschool children with disabilities in settings with typically developing children. The goal of ECR II is to identify factors that help inclusion work, factors that hinder inclusion, and strategies that may support the inclusion of young children with disabilities in classrooms and communities. This comprehensive study of preschool inclusion is being done by researchers at five universities in different regions of the country: San Francisco State University, the University of Maryland, the University of North Carolina, the University of Washington, and Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee.

About this brief

Information provided comes from an in-depth look at inclusion in 16 preschool programs across the country. The programs studied represent urban, suburban, and rural communities, culturally diverse adult and child participants, and many different ways of including young children with disabilities in typical settings. ECR II researchers have tried to describe and learn about inclusion from the viewpoint of the people most involved in it—children with and without disabilities, families, teachers, administrators, and policymakers. Data collection included interviews, classroom observations, and analysis of relevant documents. **This ECR II brief may be freely reproduced and disseminated, provided appropriate reference is given.**

Brief source

Lieber, J., Schwartz, I., Sandall, S., Horn, E., & Wolery, R. A. (in press). Curricular considerations for young children in inclusive settings. In C. Seefeldt (Ed.), *The early childhood curriculum: A review of current research*. New York: Teachers College Press.

The ECR II Researchers

Paula Beckman, Marci Hanson, Eva Horn, Susan Janko, Shouming Li, Joan Lieber, Jules Marquart, Sam Odom, Susan Sandall, Ilene Schwartz, Ruth Wolery

To learn more and join our mailing list contact

**The Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion
Box 328, Peabody College
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37203**

Visit our World Wide Web site at <http://www.inform.umd.edu/EDUC/Depts/ecrii/>