



Adapting the Curriculum to Support Children with Special Needs



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Best Practices

Fundamental issues related to “best practices” in inclusive preschool classrooms:

- All children should be included no matter the type or level of their diverse abilities.
- Families are partners in the educational process to meet the needs of their child.
- Early intervention is essential.





- The curriculum should be challenging, developmentally based, and appropriate for each child.
- It is important to focus on a child's strengths as a way to work toward positive outcomes.





Scientific Research

Evidence supports the connection between early learning experiences and later school and work performance. As scientific research supporting the benefits of a quality preschool education grows, so does evidence reflecting the positive effects of including children with special needs in classrooms with their same age peers.

NAEYC. "The Benefits of an Inclusive Education: Making It Work."

Sandall, Hemmeter, Smith, McLean (2005). *DEC Recommended Practices: A Comprehensive Guide for Practical Application in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education*. Division for EC of the Council for Exceptional Education, MT.

United State Department of Education (2007). "Thirty Years of Progress in Educating Children with Disabilities through IDEA."



***"Inclusion,
as a value,
supports the right
of all children, regardless
of their abilities,
to participate actively in
natural settings within
their communities."***

-- Division for Early Childhood Position Statement, Endorsed by NAEYC



Welcoming All Children

Put the emphasis back on the person instead of the disability by using "People First" language. It is a way to describe what a person has, not who a person is.

You Can Say	Instead Of
Children with disabilities or children with special needs	the disabled or the handicapped
Jamal has autism	he's autistic
Bob has a cognitive disability	He's mentally retarded
Angie has cerebral palsy	she suffers from C.P.



Create a Welcoming Environment

- Organize and arrange all classroom materials so they are easily accessible.
- Provide books, dolls, posters, and other materials to include children with disabilities.
- Provide adequate space for a child using a walker or wheelchair to maneuver easily.
- Create and maintain a predictable environment.
- Provide adaptive crayons, Finger Paintbrushes, Easi-Grip Scissors and other materials.



- Replace a computer mouse with a trackball.
- Display a schedule with picture clues and labels.



- Place mirrors in the room.
- Place a ramp or support bars in the bathroom.
- Place a ramp against the side of the sandbox.
- Keep the room as clean as possible, eliminating dust, mildew, and other allergens.



Practical Applications for Adapting the Curriculum

- Background information about diverse abilities
- Practical, hands-on activities
- Adaptive learning materials
- Lesson modifications





Opening Circle Time/Closing Circle Time

Chronic Illnesses:
"Safety Tip"

Autism:
"How Am I Feeling?"

Attention Deficit:
"Animal Rhyme"

Notes:



Literacy

Hearing Impaired:
"What's Missing?"

Vision Impaired:
"The Letter B"

Gifted and Talented:
"Compare Musical
Instruments"

Notes:



Mathematics

Communication:
"All Sorts of Shapes"

Physical Limitations
and/or ADD:
"Number Hopscotch"

Vision Impaired:
"Sorting"

Notes:



Science

Autism:
"Float or Sink?"

Attention Deficit or
Communication:
"Cha Cha"

Specific Learning
Disability: "Living or
Non-living?"

Notes:



Fine Arts and Dramatic Play

Attention Deficit:
"Tire Track Prints"

Physical Limitations:
"Finger Painting"

Vision Impaired:
"To Be a Bee""

Notes:



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