



# Inclusion: Attitudes, Beliefs and Benefits

IDEA 619 Preschool

# Today's Objectives

- Explore attitudes and beliefs for inclusion of preschool children with special needs
- Review of evidence and guidelines in support of preschool inclusion
- Consider modifications and accommodations to support individual preschool children

# IDEA 619 Preschool

- IDEA 619 preschool director: Gary Smith
- IDEA 619 preschool consultants:
  - West: Phara Williams
  - Middle: Dolly Gerregano
  - East: Colleen Van Dyke
- Provide training, technical assistance, and support to school districts to implement programs and special education services for children with disabilities ages three through five

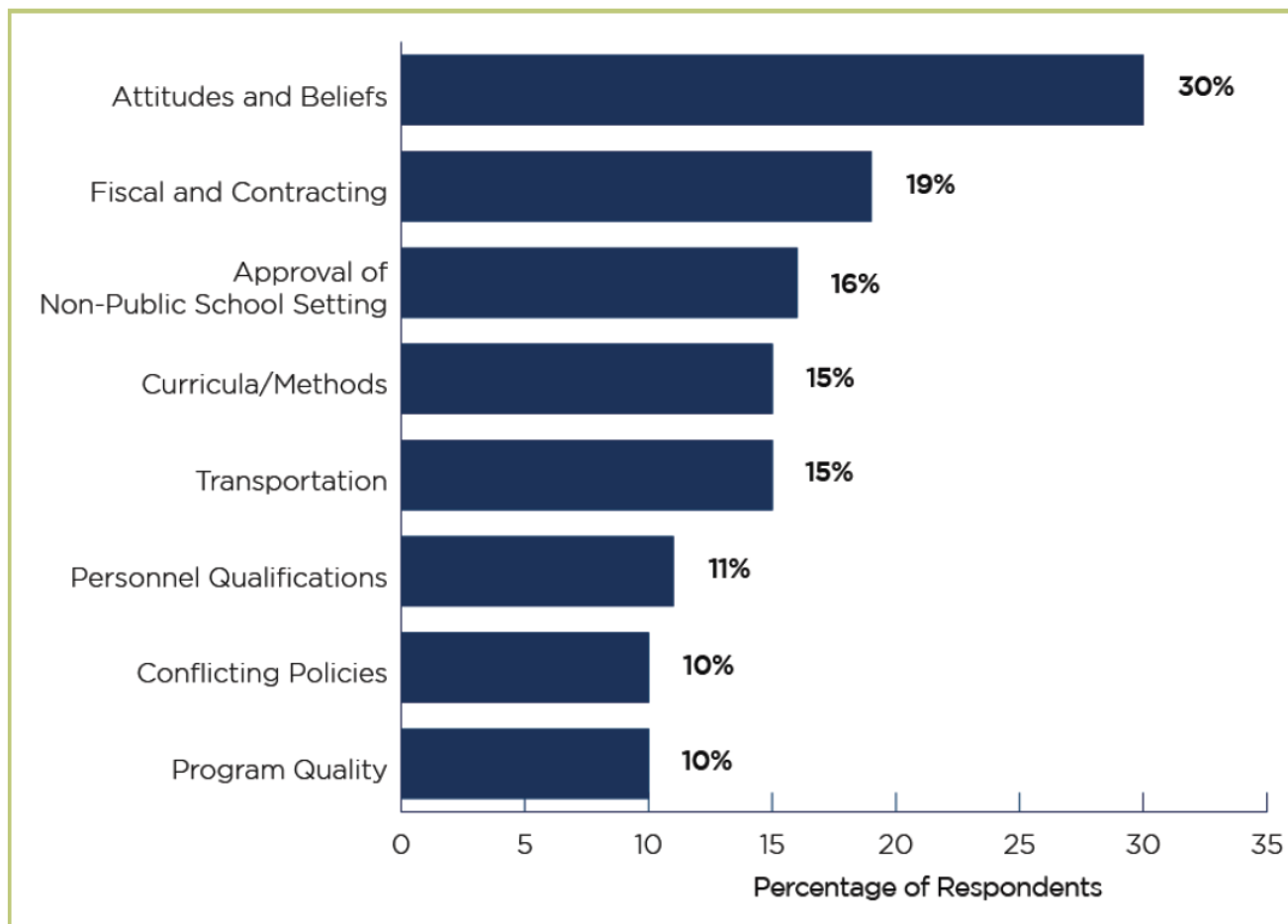
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**Identifying our  
Beliefs and Attitudes  
about Inclusion**

# Preschool Inclusion Survey: Challenges



# Identifying Beliefs and Attitudes

## Likert Scale

- Provides some information about beliefs
- Not forced to prioritize – can give every statement a 5

## Q-sort

- Method to make beliefs explicit
- Forced prioritization
- Not looking for individual reliability
- Sorting statements into limited categories

# Typical Likert Scale – How much do you like each of these TV show categories?

■ Awards Shows	1	2	3	4	5
■ Reality Shows	1	2	3	4	5
■ Crime/hospital dramas	1	2	3	4	5
■ Sitcoms	1	2	3	4	5
■ Sports	1	2	3	4	5

1 = Do not like

5 = Like a lot

# Q-sort of TV Show Categories

Do not like	Like Very little	Like Somewhat	Like	Like a lot



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**Inclusion Q-sort**

# Q-sort Goals

- To consider beliefs and attitudes toward inclusion
- To facilitate a discussion about inclusion and the importance of being aware of one's own beliefs and those of others when working as part of a group

# Inclusion Q-sort

- Take a matrix page and a set of statements related to inclusion
- Spread statements in front of you and begin sorting them onto the Q-sort matrix page
- Place one statement in each box without adding additional boxes
- Base your sort on how you really feel

# Discussion Question

- Which statements were you most unfamiliar with or did you wonder about?
- Which statements did you feel most strongly about—positive or negative?
- Which statement(s) do you think might resonate strongly with others in your district, either as a potential barrier or facilitator of preschool inclusion?

# Least Restrictive Environment

- (A) In general.--To the maximum extent [REDACTED], children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not [REDACTED], and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs [REDACTED] when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

**Statute: TITLE [I](#) / [B](#) / [612](#) / [a](#) / 5**

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

# Definitions of Inclusion

- Inclusive education happens when children with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classes.
- “Inclusion is not a set of strategies or a placement issue. Inclusion is about belonging to a community—a group of friends, a school community, or a neighborhood.” Allen & Schwartz, 2001



# Research, Guiding Principles, and Recommended Practices

## Q-sort statement:

- Most children with disabilities need one-on-one instruction.

## Research:

- Children with disabilities can be effectively educated in inclusive programs using specialized instruction.
- Specialized instruction does not always mean one-on-one instruction.
- Consider the potential negative impact of providing a one-on-one assistant.



## Q-sort statement:

## Research/Principles:

- Regular education preschool teachers have the expertise to provide modifications and accommodations to meet the needs of children with disabilities.
- Children with disabilities are children first and foremost and are more like their typical peers than they are different.
- Children without disabilities also have a wide variety of needs and abilities that regular education teachers address regularly.
- High quality classrooms and good teaching already includes differentiation, modifications, and accommodations to meet the needs of all children.

## Q-sort statement:

- Serving children in a regular education setting is not as important for three- and four-year-old children.

## Research/Law:

- IDEA mandates LRE for preschool children
- Being in an inclusive setting in preschool may influence the trajectory of future placements and the type of diploma earned
- Birth – 5 is the most critical time in child / brain development
- Easiest time for inclusion in terms of academic demands

## Q-sort statement:

- Related service providers (SL, OT, PT) and special educators should collaborate with regular education teachers to embed services in classroom activities and routines.

## Research:

- Individualized embedded instruction can be used to teach a variety of skills, including those related to early learning standards and promote participation of children with and without disabilities.
- Integrated therapy is supported by research and is a DEC recommended practice (more on this later)
- Successful inclusion requires intentional and effective collaboration and teaming

## Q-sort statement:

- When children with disabilities are included in a regular education program, typically developing children make as much progress as they normally would.

## Research:

- Equal or greater cognitive and language skills
- Fewer challenging behaviors
- More advanced social skills
- More accepting attitudes toward individuals who are different
- Developing leadership, helping skills, self-esteem, and confidence
- Opportunities to master activities by practicing and teaching others

## Q-sort statement:

## Research/ Collective Knowledge:

- Children with special needs present more behavior management challenges than typically developing children.
- “Any child can exhibit challenging behavior. To begin with, it is developmentally appropriate early in life, and all children continue to use it as they grow—once in a while, when they’re angry or having a bad day.”
- Many young children exhibit challenging behavior in response to stressors

## Q-sort statement:

- Providing special education and related services (SL, OT, PT) in regular education settings cost more than having a separate special education class.

## Research:

- Inclusion is not more expensive than having separate programs for children with disabilities.

## Q-sort statement:

- Children with disabilities do not need to be “ready” for enrollment in inclusive programs, having mastered certain skills (like potty training)

## Guiding Principles/ Collective Experience:

- Children do not have to “earn” their way in
- Programs need to be “ready” to support all children
- IDEA requires to the maximum extent possible supplementary aids and services be provided to meet the child’s needs in a setting with peers who do not have disabilities

## Q-sort statement:

- The activities that teachers plan for children with typical development will not work for children with disabilities.

## Guiding Principles/ Collective Experience:

- If teachers plan developmentally appropriate activities and have a high quality classroom environment and materials, most activities will work for children with disabilities, with supports and accommodations provided as needed
- If not DAP, the activity probably will not work well for all the children without IEPs either



## Q-sort statement:

- A child must be in a special education classroom in order to meet their IEP needs.

## Research:

- Children with disabilities can be effectively educated in inclusive programs using specialized instruction.
- High quality inclusive settings are the only environments with data consistently supporting children's superior learning
- Fully inclusive options have been shown to work for children across disability groups and levels of severity

## Outcomes of Inclusion

- a sense of belonging and membership
- positive social relationships and friendships
- development and learning to reach full potential



# Increasing federal emphasis on the importance of early childhood inclusion

- Joint Policy Statement Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs
  - US Dept. of Health and Human Services
  - US Dept. of Education
  - Issued Sept. 14, 2015
- “It is the Departments’ position that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive, high quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized and appropriate supports meeting high expectations.”
- <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/earlylearning/joint-statement-full-text.pdf>

# OSEP Dear Colleague letter: Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

- Dear Colleague Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) letter
  - Issued Feb. 29, 2012
  - Reissued to reaffirm and clarify Jan. 9, 2017
  - <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/preschool-lre-dcl-1-10-17.pdf>

# All Children Can Learn

- Curriculum Modifications – used to help a child participate

Environmental  
support

Materials  
adaptation

Activity  
simplification

Child  
preferences

Special  
equipment

Adult  
support

Peer  
support

Invisible  
support

# Environmental Support



Here a children have difficulty arranging themselves at group time so everyone has enough space with a mat and their name behind them.

des  
rt.  
nation  
erials  
ty are



# Materials Adaptation



By building this puzzle on a tray, this child is able to put the puzzle away intact, and continue working on it at a later time.

Here a child is not able to hold a functional group of materials adaptation is created by using a table easel to help her keep her hand in the appropriate position.



# Activity Simplification



# Child Preferences

This teacher u  
preference to he  
child to circle



Child prefers dinosaurs, teacher uses  
dino puppet to attract him to circle





# Special Equipment



This Rifton type of chair provides more stability to support this child's trunk so that she can fully participate in meal times along side her peers.

Wooden cube placed under his feet allows his legs to be stable, while still sitting in a chair high enough to be at the table with his peers

# Adult Support



A teacher provides support by modeling play skills in the house area.

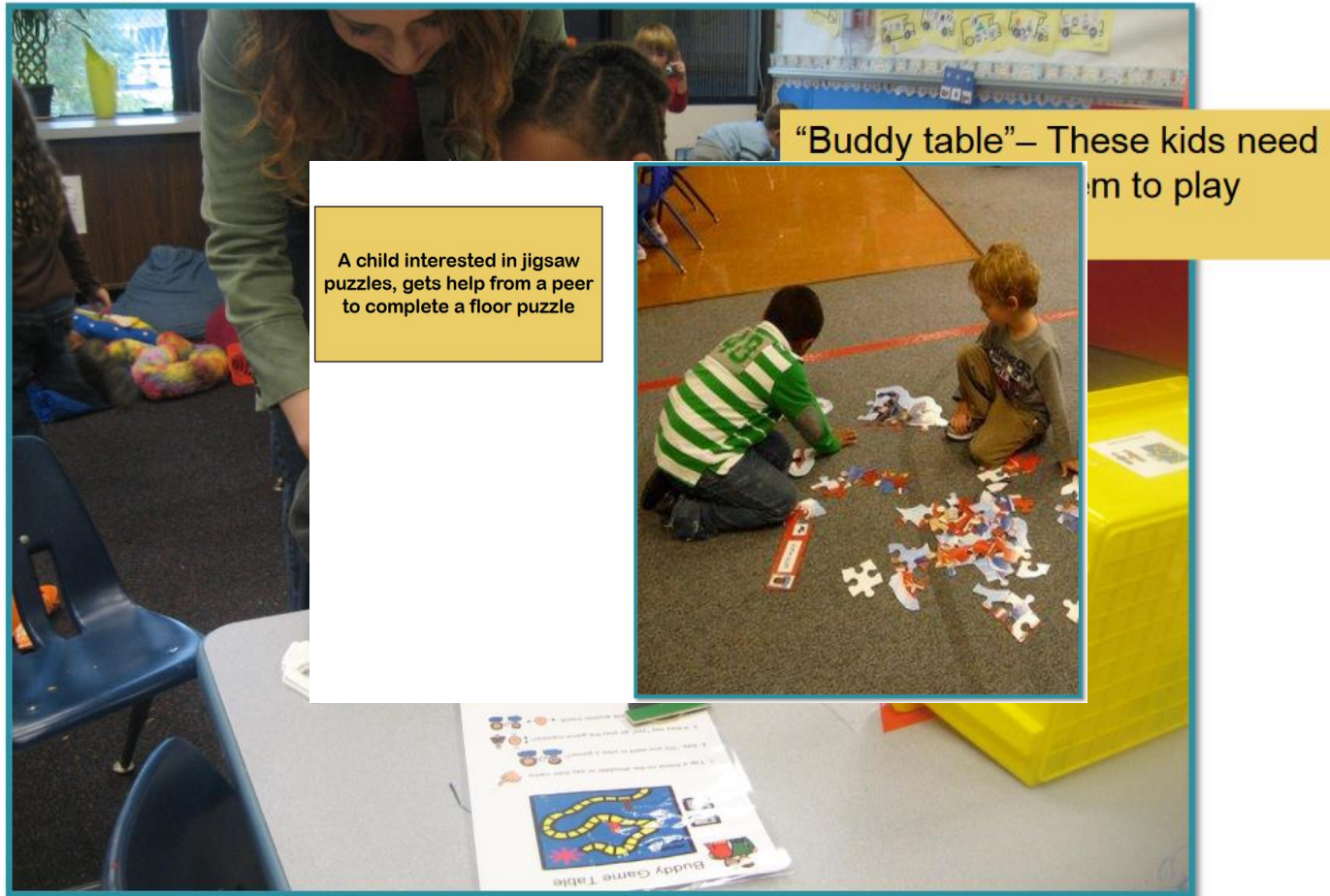


When a child has trouble engaging with materials, a teacher provides adult support by modeling play skills in the house area and demonstrating how to use the materials.





# Peer Support



# Invisible Support

Having children hold hands in a circle during an active song, helps some kids stay with the group.

A child having difficulty putting away their coat and backpack, easily complies when they are placed next to two preferred friends.



# A Moment on Individualization . . .

- What if all the kids want it?
  - Provide access to modifications during other times of the day.
- Is it fair?
  - Yes. You can present a modification as something that will “help” a child be able to do something that another child already knows. Keep in mind that you are “individualizing,” not giving a special prize to a child. You can say, “You already know how to do this! She is still learning, and this ball helps her learn.”
- What if it becomes distracting?
  - Typically the child’s non-participation is already distracting and taking a teacher away from the rest of the group. If the modification works, it will work fast. After the child has learned how to use it, greater independence in this area will be achieved.

# A Different Perspective

- Read the standard and scenario on the yellow paper on your table
- List how you could use one or more of the curriculum modifications to help this child be successful
- Be prepared to discuss



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# Department of Education

## Special Populations and Student Support