

INCLUSION...

When ALL Really Means ALL
Promoting Inclusive Communities



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NOTES & SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTERS

- Welcome audience and thank them for being there.
- Tell them you are going to talk to them about something very important.
- Acknowledge that some of them may know a lot about inclusion and others may know very little.
- Some may hold stereotypes about youth with disabilities and biases about including them in all aspects of everyday life and that's okay. Tell them that today they will hear a message that they can use to help people understand how biases and stereotypes change with knowledge and insight.

This presentation has been made possible through a collaboration among three organizations committed to making a difference:

- Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation (MEAF)
- Easter Seals, Inc.
- Kids Included Together, San Diego, Inc. (KIT)

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What is Inclusion?

- A philosophy
- A process
- An honoring of the talents and contributions of each person



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The next two slides highlight what inclusion is and does.

•It is a philosophy—a belief that ALL persons have a right to belong! Inclusion just doesn't happen on it's own—it happens when organizations commit to the philosophy and begin to make efforts to support the inclusion of ALL people.

•It is a process—an ongoing practice; not a program or product—not a one-time event.

•It should be a part of every program and service from its inception, not something to be added to existing programs and services.

Inclusion...

- Embraces and Respects Differences
- Upholds Civil Rights
- Expands Choice for Individuals with Disabilities
- Promotes Unconditional Acceptance
- Creates a Welcoming and Inviting Environment
- Involves Age-Appropriate Peers
- Creates Connections in the Community
- Respects the Entire Family



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- **It is a civil right guaranteed by law.**
- **It is an opportunity to learn about differences.**
- **It gives youth with disabilities opportunities that they may never have experienced.**
- **It means that youth with disabilities don't have to have certain skills in order to participate.**
- **It assures that youth with disabilities are with peers their own chronological age and with whom they will grow up.**
- **It gives youth with disabilities chances to experience being a part of a community and not just their immediate family or a small circle of friends.**
- **It supports the entire family when a child with a disability is included.**

Inclusion is NOT...

- Mainstreaming
- Segregated Programs
- Physical Placement
- Placement with Younger Peers
- Part-time
- A Program
- A Privilege



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This slide highlights what some people call inclusion but is, indeed, not inclusion. Give an example for each of these terms or practices.

- ***Mainstreaming***: including youth with disabilities in activities with people who don't have disabilities on occasion but not full time.
- ***Segregated programs***: placing youth with disabilities in programs that are similar to but separate from programs for youth without disabilities...a 'separate but equal' (though often not equal) philosophy applies here.
- ***Physical Placement***: placing youth with disabilities in a physical program/service setting with youth without disabilities but not allowing or encouraging them to participate.
- Placing youth with disabilities in younger age groups because they may have a developmental delay is not inclusion.
- Placing youth with disabilities in programs based on a "you can come some of the time, but not all of the time" mentality is not inclusion.
- Remind everyone that Inclusion is not a program and that ALL of their programs can and should be inclusive.
- Remind everyone again that a youth with a disability's participation in a program is not a privilege...it's a civil right!

Why Inclusion?



1. It's the **LAW**
and compliance is mandated.

2. It's **MORALLY** and **ETHICALLY**
the right thing to do!



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•Review the facts that

- **first and foremost, they have a legal responsibility to NOT discriminate against youth with disabilities, and**

- **youth with disabilities are protected and guaranteed the same civil rights as every other citizen.**

- **Equally as important as the legal mandate is the fact that programs should embrace inclusion because it is the RIGHT THING TO DO!!**

Legal Basis for Inclusion

- 1973 Rehabilitation Act
- 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142)
- 1986 Amendments to PL 94-142
- 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – the revised and renamed PL 94-142



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•Review for the audience this list of the important federal legislation that affects youth with disabilities.

•Remind them that

•The Rehabilitation Act affected employment and training opportunities for people with disabilities.

•PL 94-142 was the first federal mandate that children with disabilities were entitled to a free and appropriate education (this was in 1975 and years after Brown vs. Board of Education case was decided, and other amendments followed).

•The 1990 ADA was broadest piece of civil rights legislation ever passed, and that at the time it was passed there were 46 million Americans with disabilities and today there are well over 50 million.

United Nation's Charter on Human Rights of Persons with a Disability

Main premises...

- Disability is one of many characteristics, it does not define a person.
- Environment is the cause of barriers, not disability.
- Failure to include is the equivalent of discrimination.



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•This is an opportunity to remind the audience that the United Nations also is working on a Charter on Human Rights that includes premises that pertain to persons with a disability.

•The draft Charter supports the concept that the environment and systems create barriers—the person's disability or limitations do not. For example, if a person uses a wheelchair, steps into a building are the barrier to participation, not the wheelchair. Or, if a person is blind, failure to provide verbal descriptions of what is happening during an activity is a barrier, not the fact that the person is blind.

•Remind them once again that to deny people with disabilities inclusion in any facet of life is to violate their civil rights and it is a form of discrimination based on differences in ability.

Disability Affects Everyone

- 54 million Americans, that is 1 in 5, have disabilities
- Family and caregivers number in millions
- Incidence of disability increases with age
- Nearly all of us will experience disability in our lifetimes
- 5.8% of all school-aged kids have disabilities



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•Remind them that currently 20% of Americans have some type of disability and that number will increase as baby boomers age.

•Here the presenter might ask for a show of hands from those in the audience who have a family member or friend with a disability.

•It is a fact that for the vast majority of Americans, with age comes diminished physical function and often some kind of limitations.

•People are living longer than ever before, which means that ALL of us will likely know or be a person with a disability in our lifetime.

•Almost 6% of children have disabilities and well over 12% of children have special needs.

•Those are significant numbers. Ask if the percentage of kids with disabilities in their programs mirror these percentages.

Excluded Kids Don't Thrive

Compared to youth without disabilities ...

- Twice as many (29%) dropout of high school (and 73% of those end up incarcerated)
- Twice the number live in poverty
- Over twice as many are bullied/picked on (29%)
- Less than 10% leave Social Security roles and become economically self-sufficient



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•These facts provide an opportunity to talk about Quality of Life issues.

•The systems and segregation in this country have caused youth with disabilities to be isolated and dependent on social services.

•Remind the audience that in no other segment of the population are the unemployment statistics so dismal; and what a tragedy it is that youth with disabilities have not been given opportunities to be included in educational and social/recreational settings and activities where they can learn and practice skills needed to become a competent employee.

•Because of limited opportunities to participate, they have not had the experiences and gained the knowledge they need to grow and become competent and confident in their daily lives.

•Excluding any kids with disabilities today might well have life long consequences for them and their families.

The Answer...

- Contact
- Connection
- Community



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•THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE!

•Give youth with disabilities opportunities to have contact with other youth, particularly those WITHOUT Disabilities.

•Give them opportunities to make connections with other kids; real life connections; chances to make friends, not small windows of time to be together.

•Encourage young people with disabilities to be a part of their communities; to really experience community, whether it is school, church, work, or leisure.

Barriers to Inclusion



- Negative attitudes and/or stereotypes
- Fear
- Lack of understanding of legal responsibility
- Lack of training
- Inadequate ratios of adults to children
- Lack of support from leadership
- Lack of a plan to implement and sustain inclusion practices



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•Remind them of how varied the barriers to inclusion are and that all of the barriers CAN and SHOULD be removed.

- Several of these barriers, for example,
 - Negative attitudes, biases, and stereotypes
 - Lack of understanding of legal responsibilities
 - Lack of training

can be eliminated by providing people with information and education about the abilities of youth with disabilities.

•It is also important to remember—ignorance of the law does not justify a program staff's failure to take legally mandated actions to include youth with disabilities.

•It is simply not acceptable to plead ignorance of the laws years after they were passed!

Myths about Inclusion

- Every child with a disability needs a one-on-one aide.
- You have to know everything about a child's disability in order to support that child.
- It costs too much to do inclusion.
- Including children with disabilities will compromise the quality of the program for the other children.



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Many people may have unrealistic impressions of what it takes to fully include young people with disabilities in regular programs. For example:

•Children with disabilities usually do not require 1:1 support. That common assumption is unfair and untrue and only reinforces stereotypes.

•Remind them also that they don't need to know or understand diagnoses or conditions that cause a disability. No two people with the same diagnosed condition (autism, cerebral palsy, down syndrome) are the same. They all have different likes and dislikes, temperaments, experiences, abilities, and gifts. Asking the parent and the young person what they need to fully participate is often the best strategy.

•Although it does cost money to change program staff-to-child ratios, it is not an undue burden in most cases. Think of it as a new way of doing business and each year when planning for the next one to five years, make sure to budget enough money to cover staff and resources necessary to accommodate youth with disabilities.

•Research has shown that programs will be better when they include ALL children.

How to Foster Inclusion?

Just do it – inclusion can start right now!



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- Assure listeners that no one “Cook Book Recipe” for fostering inclusion exists. There are, however, laws, reference materials (books, Web sites, videos), and consultants and program staff with a variety of organizations who are experts on inclusion, that they can seek out and use to help them get started.

- Remind them that

- inclusion is a process and the time to start it was LONG ago (legally) but NOW if they didn’t,
- they need to check any remaining negative or hesitant attitudes at the door and know it’s okay to be a little anxious or unsure about moving forward,
- they should commit to the process and start wherever they are and just do it!

- Suggest that they regularly evaluate how they are doing and make changes as needed.

Start with “Person First Language”

Always put the person before the disability!

- The “child with Down syndrome,” not the “Down syndrome child”
- The “child with epilepsy,” not “an epileptic child”
- The “kids with special needs,” not “the special needs kids”
- It’s not even “the inclusion kids”!



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•Remind the audience that in the 1970’s and 80’s it was persons with disabilities themselves who asked us to stop using words like “handicapped” to describe them.

•They have disabilities or differences in ability. Out of respect, they have asked to be referred to as “persons/youth with disabilities.”

•Ask the audience to use people-first language—that means the first word out of their mouths should not be an adjective defining a person by a condition or disability. Use the examples above.

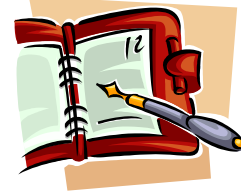
• reference this Web site

<http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/peoplefirstlanguage.htm>

Providers Need to Know...

They should:

- Remember each child is an individual.
- Collaborate with families.
- Commit to train and support staff.
- Ensure adequate ratios of adults to children.
- Identify resources in the community.
- Develop a plan for inclusion.
- Celebrate successes!



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Remind the providers that this is really not that much different from what they have been doing for years, particularly if they work with children and youth.

•Suggest that they all do the following:

•Remember that All individuals, with or without disabilities, have different temperaments, learning styles, abilities, and special needs.

•Remember that families' involvement is critical to the success of inclusion—work with them.

•Commit to low youth participant to staff ratios because it will improve program quality for ALL children as well as support staff.

•Do the homework—look outside the windows, there are lots of places in the community to find resources and support.

•Spend time on developing a plan for inclusion—check regularly to see where their organization is in the process.

•Celebrate successes and let their staff know they celebrate *them*.

An Inclusive Program...

Undertakes required activities to ensure equal access to the facility, programs, and services, including:

- Eliminating or modifying eligibility criteria which discriminate simply on the basis of disability.
- Removing barriers.
- Making reasonable modifications in policies, practices and procedures.
- Providing auxiliary aids and services to ensure effective communication.



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Refer the audience to two ways to get to the government's information on the Americans With Disabilities Act

- **ADA Home Page Web site at [www.ada.gov]**
- **Department of Justice Web site at [www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm]**

to learn more about what is required under the ADA, which includes actions like removing existing barriers and increasing physical or sensory access.

•All facilities staff should have and use ADA guidelines to evaluate environments and ensure they are accessible and, if not, they should find out how to get them and remedy the problem or include a plan that lays out systematic ways to addresses deficiencies. They should invite someone in from the local Disability Access Center to help them if they don't know where to start.

•It is very important to remind them that it is not just facilities that limit access—they need to examine their policies and procedures to ensure they don't discriminate against persons with disabilities.

The Reality is...

- You will likely have to change ratios in your programs (which will benefit ALL children).
- Families will help you learn what you need to know to make accommodations for their child.
- The cost of inclusion is just the cost of doing business and you can plan for it.
- ALL children benefit as they live and play together, learning to appreciate differences.



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These are “the facts”...

- **You MAY have to hire additional staff and you WILL have to provide training for all staff.**
- **Work with families—they are your partners.**
- **Acknowledge that you will have to have additional financial resources in your budget to do inclusion.**
- **Your job is to find the necessary resources or change something in your fiscal planning.**
- **Commit to the process—find the resources and get to work doing it!**
- **Don't forget to measure the positive outcomes of your investment!**

Who Benefits?

- Organizations—more youth served
- Kids without disabilities—diversity sensibilities increased, heightened compassion for self and others
- Kids with disabilities—new opportunities, expanded horizons
- Parents/families—more options for kids; raised expectation/ see kids in new light
- Community—better child outcomes

Everyone!



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•When organizations commit to inclusion it DOES help support everyone involved.

•Children with and without disabilities benefit as they learn from one another and grow in so many ways. They develop genuine respect for differences—they learn they need one another.

•Families of both children with and without disabilities also benefit as they watch their children learn and grow into the kinds of young people who will make a difference.

•The whole community benefits when we invest in children and youth, particularly ALL children and youth.

Thoughts from Four Young People with disabilities

- “We can only grow as much as there is room. The space to grow is key.”
- “Though you may have the same disability as someone else, you may have different needs.”
- “It takes a lot to change peoples’ attitudes so you have to do it repeatedly and in an attention getting way.”
- “A good attitude is not *can* you, but *how* can you?”



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•These quotes from young people speak for themselves.

•It is a good idea to read each one out loud slowly and pause in between to allow the audience time to process each person’s statement.

INCLUSION Means...

**Creating Communities where Everyone
is Welcomed and Valued.**



Remember...It's the Right Thing to Do!



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- Thank your audience for being there and for listening to the message.**
- Ask them to go home and reflect on what inclusion is and what it means to their organization and their community. Suggest they come up with at least one action they can take to**
 - **begin to make their organizations, programs, and activities more inclusive, and/or**
 - **expand the level of inclusion in their organizations, programs, and activities.**
- Ask them to look ahead and see what we (i.e., our community) can do together to make a difference.**

Resources for Providers

Training and Technical Support for Inclusion:

Kids Included Together – San Diego, Inc
(858) 320-2050 www.kitonline.org

Disability Awareness:

Easter Seals www.easterseals.org
United Cerebral Palsy www.ucp.org
National Association for Down Syndrome www.nads.org
Autism Society of American www.autism-society.org
Kids on the Block www.kotb.com
Braille Institute www.brailleinstitute.org
Canine Companions for Independence www.caninecompanions.org

ADA Information:

Department of Justice www.usdoj.gov/disabilities.html
Child Care Law Center, San Francisco www.childcarelaw.org



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•This is a very short list of resources. They can and should continually add to it.

•Many of these organizations have local and regional offices with which they may want to contact for information and to initiate potential collaboration.

•They should find out who in their community could help them.

•Remind the audience to collaborate with organizations who have more experience in working with and serving people with disabilities as they are building trust and credibility with the disability community, and to ensure that inclusion is a good experience for all participants.