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# Inclusive Strategies to Address Behavioral Needs for Students with IEPs

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**ABSTRACT:** Classrooms in the 21st century have by law become inclusive, typically comprised of general education and special needs students. Included students are those who present with mild to moderate learning and behavioral challenges. They add another layer of complexity to classroom management, requiring teachers to be highly structured, consistent and reinforcing. Teacher fidelity to behavioral expectations that have been established for the classroom is essential. Classroom management strategies discussed include changing the teacher approval to disapproval ratio, using selective ignoring, focusing on structure and routine, increasing student locus of control, de-escalating student aggression and hostility, and limiting the use of punishment. The IEP describes how the student learns, how the student best demonstrates that learning, and what teachers and service providers will do to help the student learn more effectively. Developing an IEP requires the team to evaluate the student in all areas of suspected disability, consider the student's ability to access the general education curriculum, consider how the disability affects the student's learning, and choose a federal placement for the student. As long as a student qualifies for special education, the IEP is mandated to be regularly maintained and updated up to the point of high school graduation or prior to the 21st or 22nd birthday. If a student in special education attends university upon graduation, they are no longer "children with disabilities" under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and are instead protected under Section 504.

**KEYWORDS:** IEPs, students, strategies, inclusive, behavioral, needs, special, education

## I. INTRODUCTION

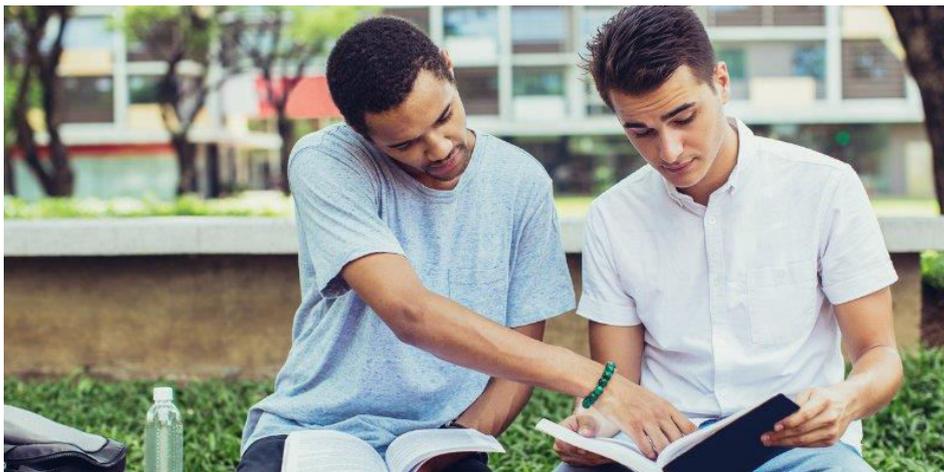
An IEP is meant to ensure that students receive an appropriate placement not only in special education classrooms or special schools. It is designed to give the student a chance to participate in regular school culture and academics as much as is possible for that individual student.[a]



In this way, the student is able to have specialized assistance only when such assistance is absolutely necessary, and otherwise maintains the freedom to interact with and participate in activities to the same extent of their non-disabled/general education peers. An IEP must also meet state regulations. The following must be included:



- The student's present levels of academic and functional performance
- Measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals
- How the student's progress toward meeting annual goals is to be measured and reported to the parents
- Special-education and related services, as well as supplementary aids to be provided to the student [b]
- Schedule of services to be provided, including when the services are to begin, the frequency, duration, and location for the provision of services
- Program modifications or supports provided to school personnel on behalf of the student
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) data which includes calculations of the amount of time to be spent each day by the student in general-education settings compared to special-education settings
- Explanation of any time the student will not participate along with non-disabled children
- Accommodations to be provided during state and district assessments that are necessary to measuring the student's academic and functional performance



The student should attend when appropriate. If the student is over fourteen, they should be invited to become a part of the IEP team. Additionally, when the student is sixteen years of age, a statement of post-secondary goals and a plan for providing what the student needs to make a successful transition is required. This transition plan can be created at an earlier age if desired, [c] but must be in place by the age of sixteen. An IEP must also include other pertinent information found necessary by the team, such as a health plan or a behavior plan for some students.

As outlined by IDEA, students can receive free appropriate education under special education law if they fall under one of 14 categories:

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental delay (for children aged 3–9, varies by state)
- Emotional and behavioral disorders
- Hearing impairment
- Intellectual disability (formerly referred to as mental retardation)
- Multiple disabilities
- Orthopedic impairment



- Other health impairment
- Specific learning disability[d]
- Speech or language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Visual impairment, including blindness

An inclusive classroom is a term used within American pedagogy to describe a classroom in which all students, irrespective of their abilities or skills, are welcomed holistically. It is built on the notion that being in a non-segregated classroom will better prepare special-needs students for later life. In the United States, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 guaranteed civil rights to disabled people, though inclusion of disabled students progressed slowly until the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, after which almost half of US students with disabilities were soon in general classrooms.[e]

This has placed a considerable burden on teachers and school boards, who are often unprepared and suffer from stress and frustration, affecting the success of programs. An advocated solution is co-teaching, doubling teaching staff to support an inclusive classroom.



## II. OBSERVATION

IDEA defines a child with a disability as having intellectual disabilities, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment, a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, another health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities. In many cases, students that are covered under IDEA (2004) have IEPs or 504 plans.



*Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.*

Helen Keller

These students are typically paired with a paraprofessional in the classroom. This person is called also called an aide, paraeducator, or teaching assistant. Research shows that students performed higher when the paraprofessional was trained in inclusive classroom management.[f]

Physical diversities would entail students of all races, cultures, and ethnicities. As English-language learners work on skills to become fluent in English, they also become an important focus of inclusive classrooms. Diversity should be intertwined into the classroom curriculum to teach all students effectively. Community-referenced instruction, a curriculum approach that allows educators to design lessons with multiple roles, challenges, and opportunities for learning, is a tool used to benefit all students in inclusive classrooms. Work experiences, research terms, and service learning are some examples of instruction within these inclusive classrooms.[u]



Therefore, it is best to create "a set of principles to guide support services", even if they are imperfect. These principles should be based on the social, educational, and psychological functions of disabled students in order to best serve their educational and personal goals. Principles will consolidate processes and remove confusion related to school systems. They can also clarify the roles of educators, counselors, and administrators in terms of what each can specifically do for students with special needs.[t]

### III. DISCUSSIONS

Negative attitudes towards inclusion are linked to teachers' frustrations towards their own abilities to teach in an inclusive classroom. While professional development workshops are found to positively impact teachers' abilities to teach student with specific learning disorders, they are not always offered. In addition to frustration, teachers' feelings of fear are linked to not knowing[s] "how best to incorporate students with disabilities into the regular education environment", which serves as a barrier in preventing "full inclusion". It was found teachers who were less inclined to include special needs students in their classrooms also expressed greater concern for students' educational success. This paradox leads teachers "to be less proactive in effectively supporting them".[g]



It has also been suggested that positive teacher attitudes are dependent upon the classroom teachers' beliefs about implementing inclusive educational policy and practice into the classroom. Since the mere acceptance of inclusion is likely to affect the teachers' commitment to its implementation, teachers' beliefs and attitudes are critical to ensure success.[r]

Other factors that influence positive teacher attitudes toward inclusion are pre-service training (i.e., educational or general education courses). It has been suggested that "pre-service training may be the optimum time to address

educators' concerns and change any negative attitudes about inclusive education". [q] When teachers expand their knowledge on special education and the needs of students with special disabilities, they shape their perspectives and confidence in teaching an inclusive classroom.

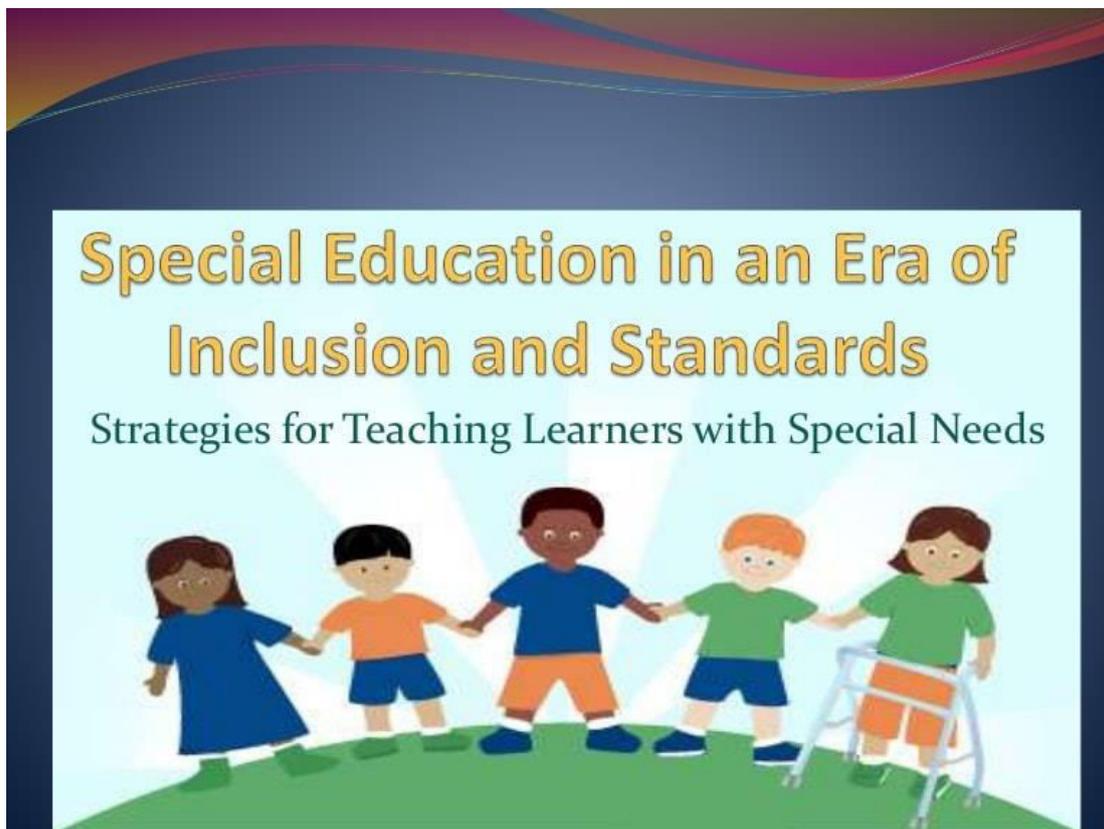
Negative attitudes towards inclusive practices are "attributed to a lack of understanding and a fear of what is unknown".[h]

#### IV. RESULTS

Prepare to teach the students with special needs you may have in your classroom using these suggestions and guidelines for accommodating and modifying your lessons to meet the needs of everyone. New teachers will find this resource particularly valuable.[p]



Includes examples of traits various types of special needs students may exhibit along with strategies to help your special needs students be successful. Teaching learning disabled youngsters will present you with some unique and distinctive challenges. Not only will these students demand more of your time and patience; so, too, will they require specialized[o] instructional strategies in a structured environment that supports and enhances their learning potential. It is important to remember that learning disabled students are not students who are incapacitated or unable to learn; rather, they need differentiated instruction tailored to their distinctive learning abilities. Students of high ability, often referred to as gifted students, present a unique challenge to teachers. They are often the first ones done with an assignment or those who continually ask for more creative and interesting work. [i] They need exciting activities and energizing projects that offer a creative curriculum within the framework of the regular classroom program.[n]



## V. CONCLUSIONS

Teachers working with special educational needs students in mainstream and special education schools. The course has been tailored to meet the needs of teachers by providing teaching and assessment methods, strategies, and tools to address the distinctive learning needs of their students. Through case study discussion and sharing of good practices and ICT tools participants will understand and deal[j] with the key challenges of special education including:

- Recognizing students' special needs (e.g. autism spectrum, intellectual disabilities);
- Identifying and assessing students with special needs (e.g. curriculum-based measurement); [k]
- Designing differentiated activities to access general curriculum;
- Applying teaching methods and strategies (e.g. task analysis, physical guidance) to deliver individual educational plan goals and objectives;
- Using ICT tools to support all learners;
- Professional and home – school collaboration.[l]

By the end of the course, participants will gain a greater insight into issues regarding teaching and learning in special, integration and inclusion settings identifying the barriers and the necessary resources for successfully addressing students' learning educational needs in effective and functional ways that will promote collaboratively students' participation and achievement within the school community.[m]

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