

# What is Inclusion?

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Inclusion means educating students with and without disabilities together. But inclusion involves more than placing students with disabilities in the same room with same-age peers without disabilities. Real inclusion means students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum, classrooms, and other typical school settings and activities. They receive specially designed instruction and supports to meet IEP goals and succeed as learners.



## Inclusion IS

- all students together for instruction *regardless of their labels.*
- an atmosphere of acceptance and belonging.
- education teams working collaboratively.
- supports and adaptations to make the general education curriculum and classroom accessible to all.
- good teaching using research-based instructional and assessment strategies.

## Inclusion is NOT

- expecting all children to do the same thing, at the same time, in the same way.
- sacrificing the education of students without disabilities.
- dumping children into general education classrooms without the necessary support for teachers and students.
- watering down curricula—most students with disabilities in Florida will take the FCAT and will work toward a standard diploma so we can't afford to water down the curriculum!

## Some Benefits of Inclusion

- Students with disabilities spend more time on academic tasks.
- Students with disabilities show increased academic achievement as well as social and communication skills.
- Students with disabilities participate in more school activities and develop relationships with peers.
- Students without disabilities benefit from teaching strategies employed for students with disabilities.
- Children without disabilities learn to value differences.
- Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and general education teachers develop new skills.

## Mainstreaming vs. Inclusion

Mainstreaming and inclusion are two very different approaches to educating students with disabilities. Mainstreaming was typically for students with disabilities who were performing at or near grade-level and who could learn in a general education classroom with minimal support. In contrast, inclusion does not require students to perform at any specific level to be in the general education classroom. Necessary supports and services follow the student across general education settings throughout the day.

## What Does the Law Say?

Both No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) provide guidance about how to educate students with disabilities. Neither of these laws, however, specifically mentions the word inclusion. Instead, they say that students with disabilities should be placed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and that they should have access to general education curriculum and settings.

### Highlights From NCLB

- High standards for all students
- Special emphasis on implementing research-based, effective, educational programs and practices
- Teachers highly qualified in the subject areas that they teach
- Increased accountability measures for schools, districts, and states, including measures for students with disabilities.

For more information about NCLB please visit the Department of Education's Website at <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml?src=pb>

### Highlights From IDEIA

- Preference for educating students with disabilities in general education classes *with appropriate aids and services*
- Requirement that the general education classroom be the **FIRST** placement considered by the IEP team
- Removal of a student from the general education classroom *only* when the nature of the student's disability makes education in that setting unsatisfactory, even with supports and services

For more information about IDEIA, please visit the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) Website at <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/index.html>



## Accessing the General Education Curriculum

According to NCLB and IDEIA, students with disabilities must have access to the general education curriculum. In Florida, that means all students must receive instruction driven by the Sunshine State Standards.

Students with disabilities are provided access to the general education curriculum in a number of different ways:

- Differentiated instruction
- Unique accommodations to support learning and participation in statewide assessments
- Modifications to course requirements or content

Each student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) provides details about the supports and services that the student receives and indicates accommodations or modifications that are needed.

## What's the Difference Between Accommodations and Modifications?

### Accommodations

- change how students are taught and demonstrate what they have learned.
- use the Sunshine State Standards to set student goals and expectations.
- allow students to work toward a standard diploma.

### Modifications

- change what students are expected to learn and demonstrate.
- focus on different objectives.
- lead to a special diploma.
- align with Sunshine State Standards Access Points.

## Models of Support

There is no single “right” way to include students with disabilities. Schools practicing successful inclusion use a variety of service delivery models. Teachers and administrators examine the levels of support needed by all students with disabilities and determine suitable service delivery models. The Florida Department of Education has identified the following models that can be used by ESE teachers to support students with disabilities in general education classrooms:

**Consultation**-General Education and ESE teachers meet regularly to plan, implement, and monitor instructional methods designed to ensure success for students with disabilities. ESE teachers are required to maintain detailed records of the teachers and students they serve.

**Support Facilitation**-An ESE teacher provides direct support for students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Support facilitators may work and move among two or more general education classrooms, working with general education teachers and assisting *all* students. The frequency and intensity of support varies based upon students' and/or general educators' need for assistance.

**Co-Teaching**-Two teachers, one ESE and one general education, share responsibility for planning, delivering, and assessing learning for *all* students, with and without disabilities, in a class. Co-teaching means both teachers work together for the entire period a class is taught.



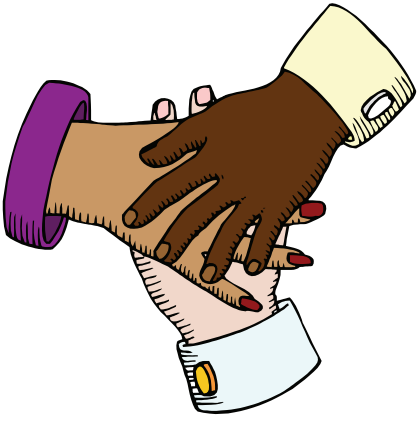
For more information about service delivery models, including certification requirements, please visit the Florida Department of Education's Website at [www.firn.edu/doe/curriculum/ccd.htm](http://www.firn.edu/doe/curriculum/ccd.htm).



## The Importance of Collaboration

Each support model requires collaboration and teamwork. Collaborative teams can include general education and ESE teachers, paraprofessionals, related services providers, family members, and others. Collaborative teams consult, plan, problem-solve, and work together to address student needs. To be effective, these teams must have regularly scheduled time to meet and discuss the progress and needs of their students.

## What Makes Inclusion Work?



- Support from the principal and other administrators
- A school vision that values diversity
- A plan for inclusion that allows for flexibility and continuous improvement
- Collaborative education teams that include parents as partners
- Flexible approaches to scheduling, teaching, and learning
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment adapted to meet individual student needs
- On-going opportunities for faculty, staff, families, and students to learn about inclusion
- A variety of instructional practices for different learners (see below)

## Best Practices to Support Inclusion

- Differentiated Instruction
- Multiple Intelligences
- Multi-sensory Instruction
- Interactive Learning
- Cooperative Learning
- Flexible Grouping
- Integrated Curriculum
- Scaffolding
- Accommodations and Modifications
- Tiered Lessons
- Partial Participation
- Positive Behavioral Supports
- Assistive/Instructional Technology
- Peer Supports

## For More Information

Please visit our Website:

[www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com](http://www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com)



To contact your local FIN Facilitator, click on “Meet the FINs” and select your county from the pull-down menu.

Or call our toll-free number:  
**1-888-232-0421**

