

INCLUSION

ISSUE

Children with Disabilities are Segregated in Schools

SUMMARY

All children, regardless of learning style or ability, have the right to an appropriate education in regular classes, with students without disabilities, in their neighborhood schools and within the general education curriculum.

BACKGROUND

According to PA. School Code- Chapter 14.145 (2)- Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of a student with a disability from the education class occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in the regular education class, with the use of appropriate supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Pennsylvania ranks 39th in the nation in students receiving special education in separate settings, according to OSEP report of 2008. The Arc of Pennsylvania was the driving force behind the PARC Consent Decree of 1972, which ensured the right to education to all students with disabilities. The Third Circuit Court of Appeals in the 1992 Oberti case said “ Inclusion is a right, not a privilege of the select few”

POSITION

Children with disabilities have a right to all of the supplementary aids and services needed to ensure a successful appropriate education in regular classes with their peers, without disabilities. Special education is a service, not a place. The purpose of education as a whole, special, elementary and secondary is to prepare children to lead productive and independent lives as citizens and members of the adult community. Children who are successfully included are more likely to become valued members of their communities. We must do better to ensure the spirit of the PARC is upheld.

The term inclusion implies more than physical proximity to peers without disabilities; it encompasses full participation and equality within a school community, leading to a sense of belonging within the community at large.

The Arc of Pennsylvania Position Statement

We advocate, in order to provide inclusive educational opportunities therefore, that school districts provide:

- Guidance for Individualized Education Program(IEP) team, considering factors such as supports and services, modifications needed that includes beginning placement in regular classrooms-
- Appropriate support services needed so that programs and curricula are appropriately modified, understanding that modifications may be an appropriate means of delivering educational benefits
- Students with the appropriate supplementary aids and services, being familiar with the wide array of these services , referring to the SaS(Supplemental Aids and Services) Toolkit
 1. modified curriculum
 2. positive behavior support plan
 3. assistive technology
 4. an aide
- Complete and appropriate information to parents and families, to be partners and collaborate with the schools to make informed decisions about their child's educational programs

Successful inclusion is an ongoing process. It requires:

- Professional development for all staff, including paraprofessionals, building staff, and transportation providers from researched based inclusive practices
- Collaboration and joint planning time between regular education teachers, special education teachers, support personnel, students and families
- Administrative Leadership , by supporting team structures to promote and set the tone for an inclusive climate
- Knowledge and skill in fostering relationships among students, including extracurricular activities
- Promote an inclusive climate for all students.
- Policy Development that includes all students
- Regular education classrooms with natural proportions, 15.36% of the total enrollment in PA are students with disabilities, according to the Bureau of Special Education data in 2013-14.

**The Arc of Pennsylvania
Position Statement**

Approved by The Arc of Pennsylvania Board of Directors April 20, 2009

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