

BENEFITS OF INCLUSION IN PRESCHOOL



Children with Disabilities

1. They are spared the effects of separate, segregated education-including the negative effects of labeling and negative attitudes fostered by lack of contact with typically developing children.
2. They are provided with competent models that allow them to learn new adaptive skills and/or learn when and how to use their existing skills through imitation.
3. They are provided with competent peers with whom to interact and thereby learn new social and/or communicative skills.
4. They are provided with realistic life experiences that prepare them to live in the community.
5. They are provided with opportunities to develop friendships with typically developing peers.

Children Without Disabilities

1. They are provided with opportunities to learn more realistic and accurate views about individuals with disabilities.
2. They are provided with opportunities to develop positive attitudes toward others who are different from themselves.
3. They are provided with opportunities to learn altruistic behaviors and when and how to use such behaviors.
4. They are provided with models of individuals who successfully achieve despite challenges.

Communities

1. They can conserve their early childhood resources by limiting the need for segregated, specialized programs.
2. They can conserve educational resources if children with disabilities who are mainstreamed at the preschool level continue in regular as compared to special education placements during the elementary school years.

Families of Children with Disabilities

1. They are able to learn about typical development.
2. They may feel less isolated from the remainder of their communities.
3. They may develop relationships with families of typically developing children who can provide them with meaningful support.

Families of Children Without Disabilities

1. They may develop relationships with families who have children with disabilities and thereby make a contribution to them and their communities.
2. They will have opportunities to teach their children about individual differences and about accepting individuals who are different.

Wolery, M. and Wilbers, J. (Eds). (1994). Including children with special needs in early childhood programs. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.