



Me, Too! Inside Preschool Inclusion

The Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion

Inclusion is about belonging and participating in a diverse society.

- Inclusion is not just a school issue – it extends to the communities in which children and their families live.
- Inclusion is not only a disability issue; all children and families have a right to participate and be supported in the schools and community.

For more information see:

*Odom, S. L. et al. (1996). Inclusion at the preschool level: An ecological systems analysis. *SRCD Social Policy Report*, 10, 18-30.

*Hanson, M. J. et al. (1998) The culture of inclusion: Recognizing diversity at multiple levels. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 13, 185-210.

Individuals – teachers, families, administrators – define inclusion differently.

- Levels of the ecological system, priorities and responsibilities influence definitions of inclusion.
- People within the same system (e.g., one school or school district) may have extremely different views of inclusion.

For more information see:

*Beckman, P. J. et al. (1998). Communities, families, and inclusion. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 13, 125-150.

*Odom, S. L. et al. (in press). On the forms of inclusion: Context and service delivery models. *Journal of Early Intervention*.

Beliefs about inclusion influence its implementation.

- The beliefs about schooling that families and professionals bring with them to the classroom influence how inclusive practices are planned and implemented; these beliefs are influenced by many complex factors.
- Beliefs about human diversity – culture, race, language, class, ability – influence how inclusion is implemented in schools and communities.

For more information see:

*Hanson, M. J., Gutierrez, S., Morgan, M., Brennan, E. L., & Zercher, C. (1997). Language, culture and disability: Interacting influences on preschool education. *Topics in Early Childhood Education*, 17, 307-337.

*Lieber, J., Capell, K., Sandall, S. R., Wolfberg, P., Horn, E., & Beckman, P. J. (1998). Inclusive preschool programs: Teachers' beliefs and practices. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 13, 87-106.

Programs, not children, have to be “ready for inclusion.”

- The most successful inclusive programs view inclusion as the starting point for all children.
- Inclusion can be appropriate for all children; making it work successfully depends on planning, training and support.

For more information see:

*Janko, S., Schwartz, I. S., Sandall, S., Anderson, K., & Cottam, C. (1997). Beyond microsystems: Unanticipated lessons about the meaning of inclusion. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 17, 286-306.

Collaboration is the cornerstone to effective inclusive programs.

- Collaboration among adults, including professionals and parents, within and across systems and programs is essential to inclusive programs.
- Collaboration among adults, from different disciplines and often with different philosophies, is one of the greatest challenges to successful implementation of inclusive programs.

For more information see:

*Lieber, J. A. et al (1997). The impact of changing roles on relationships between adults in inclusive programs for young children. *Early Education and Development*, 8, 67-82.

*Lieber, J., Beckman, P. J., & Horn, E. (in press). Working together to provide services for young children with disabilities: Lessons from inclusive preschool programs. In S. Graham & K. Harris (Eds.), *Working together*. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Specialized instruction is an important component of inclusion.

- Participation in a community-based or general education setting is not enough. The individual needs of children with disabilities must be addressed in inclusive program.
- Specialized instruction can be delivered through a variety of effective strategies, many of which can be embedded in the ongoing classroom activities.

For more information see:

*Frea, W., Craig, L., Odom, S. L., & Johnson, D. (in press). Differential effects of structured social integration and group friendship activities for promoting social interaction of peers. *Journal of Early Intervention*.

*Horn, E., Lieber, J., Schwartz, I., Sandall, S. & Li, S. (1998). *Supporting young children's IEPs in inclusive settings through embedded learning opportunities*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Adequate support is necessary to make inclusive environments work.

- Support includes training, personnel, materials, planning time, and ongoing consultation.
- Support can be delivered in different ways and each person involved in inclusion may have unique needs.

For more information see:

*Lieber, J., Schwartz, I. S., Sandall, S., Horn, E., & Wolery, R. A. (in press). Curricular considerations for young children in inclusive settings. In C. Seefeldt (Ed.), *Early childhood curriculum: A review of research*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Inclusion can benefit children with and without disabilities.

- The parents of children without disabilities whose children participate in inclusive programs often report beneficial changes in their children's confidence, self-esteem and understanding of diversity.
- High quality early childhood programs form the necessary structural base for high quality inclusive programs; thus, all children benefit from them.

For more information see:

*Brown, W. H., Odom, S. L., Li, S., & Zercher, C. (1998). *Ecobehavioral assessment in inclusive early childhood programs: A portrait of preschool inclusion*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

*Hanson, M. J., Morgan, M., Gutierrez, S., Barnwell, D., & Beckman, P. (1997). Finding friends at school and at home: Parents' strategies for helping preschoolers develop friendships. *Exceptional Parent*, May, 24-26.

The ECRII Researchers

Paula Beckman, Marci
Hanson, Eva Horn,
Susan Janko, Shouming Li,
Joan Lieber, Jules Marquart,
Sam Odom, Susan Sandall,
Ilene Schwartz, Ruth Wolery

To learn more and join our mailing list contact

The Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion
Box 328, Peabody College
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37203

Visit our World Wide Web site at <http://www.inform.umd.edu/EDUC/Depts/ecrii/>