



inclusion! matters!



SSD Inclusion Matters! Subcommittee
SSD of Saint Louis County • 12110 Clayton Road • Town and Country, MO 63131

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Inclusion Matters!

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PLEASE NOTE! *Not all of the information in this manual will be needed to plan for an inclusive education for a particular child. We included a wealth of information so that you would have a fairly comprehensive reference. We recommend that you begin with the surveys and you can then determine which pieces of Inclusion Matters to utilize and/or where to begin. Each topic included in the student-specific planning process has a section to support it so that you can find the information you need. In addition, documents referenced are subject to change.*

Introduction

Mainstreaming. Class Within a Class. Integration. Inclusion. Inclusive Education.

It's been quite a journey of how we approach teaching students with disabilities in general education. The above phrases represent how schools have worked to have students with disabilities in general education. We look forward to a day when we talk about teaching students with disabilities alongside of students without disabilities as simply "education".

Recently, a group of stakeholders charged with promoting inclusive education, agreed on a definition of inclusion in order to operationalize our next steps:

Inclusive education is the full acceptance of all students and leads to a sense of belonging within the school community.

Inclusive education means that students with disabilities are supported in chronologically age-appropriate general education classes in their home schools and receive the individualized instruction delineated by their individualized education programs (IEP's) within the context of the core curriculum and general education class activities. Inclusion is an effort to make sure students with disabilities go to school along with their friends and neighbors while also receiving whatever specially designed instruction and support they need to achieve high standards and succeed as learners.

Inclusive education is not the same as mainstreaming or integration. Mainstreaming attempts to move students from special education classrooms to general education classrooms only in situations where they are able to keep up with their typically developing peers without specially designed instruction or support. Integration provides only part-time inclusion, which prevents the students from becoming full members of the classroom community.

Adapted from "What is Inclusion" Inclusion White Paper

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Inclusion MATTERS! was originally developed over twenty years ago as a working document by the Inclusion Facilitators of Special School District of St. Louis County to serve as a tool to help educators and parents plan and implement inclusive education for students with disabilities. While the core of the first edition is still grounded in effective practices, a group of invested professionals have provided incredible updates to address the changes in schools, policy and district culture. This guide is intended to be a resource for schools to use as the next step in their journey to teaching all students.

The title of this resource represents two important definitions of the word matters:

1. Inclusion Matters because it provides opportunities for peer relationships and friendships, environments for generalization and enrichment of academic skills, models of appropriate social and language skills, and typical routines. Inclusive education “matters” in the children’s neighborhood school because it prepares students with and without disabilities to live, work and play together as citizens of their community.
2. Inclusion Matters are those important steps and tools that empower a team of educators and parents to develop a successful educational experience for a student with disabilities and his or her peers. This manual is a collection of those “matters” found to be critical to planning and implementing inclusive education.

We offer Inclusion MATTERS! as a resource to empower your team to attain the positive outcomes that inclusive education provides for individuals with disabilities.