

Collaboration for Inclusion

DEVELOPING A SHARED FRAMEWORK AND COMMON GOALS FOR THE CHILD IN SCHOOL

To develop this shared framework the team needs to reflect on the following:

1. How committed to an inclusive education are we?

-Do we agree the child should be included in society and that inclusion in mainstream schooling is the way forward for him? Are we going to look for the Least Restrictive Environment?

-Do we use language that reflects the child's abilities and needs?

-Do his IEP goals reflect content standards from the general education curriculum? I.E. **Do we believe that the child is competent and able to learn? Do we hold the philosophy of the "least dangerous assumption" I.E. the child is capable of understanding, learning and communicating, and that we will dedicate to working towards finding the best way to enable the child to do so.**

-is the child spoken to with age appropriate vocabulary, topics and inflection?

-does the child "go out" for some or all of his learning?

-is the child on the receiving end of "help" (e.g. special buddy programs, altruism) rather than engaging in reciprocal mutually beneficial relationships with other students with and without disabilities.

-is the child's name on class lists, job lists etc as other students are?

-does the child participate in all class routines?

-are his instructional supports available to other children?

2. Are the child's supports effective? If they are, we will see:

- S/he is called on in class and can answer questions and make comments

-S/he works on academic tasks at the same time as classmates

-S/he is not idle when the TA is not present

-the TA is not a buffer or conversational go-between for the child with the teacher and classmates

-S/he will progress in his learning

-S/he will usually behave appropriately

3. Does the child have appropriate and effective communication supports?

- does s/he have a means to communicate effectively all the time?
- does s/he communicate for a variety of purposes?
- has his/her primary mode of communication been identified?
- is his/her communication aid/s age appropriate and programmed with age appropriate curriculum relevant content?
- Is his family involved with the selection of and programming of his/her communication aid/s?
- will the communication aid assist him with interaction with his/her peers, and will his/her peers be assisted to communicate with him?

Will the child and relevant persons be trained in the use of the aid?

4. Is the child receiving support to develop friendships?

- true inclusion can be said to be occurring when children make friends among their peers that continue without adult support and occur across different environments.

5. Do the school and the family work in partnership?

- does the school listen to and support the family's vision and priorities for the student, or do they have a different view of his education and his future?
- does the family assume negative intentions on the part of the school?
- is communication with the school spotty, and primarily negative, or focused only on the IEP?

Summarized by Shaelene Craddock (Association for Children with Disability (TAS) Inc. Senior Consultant).

The Inclusion Facilitator's Guide by Sheryl Jorgenson, Mary Shuh and Jan Nisbet, 2006. Paul H Brookes. Baltimore.