



**LRE & Meaningful Inclusion:
Explanations and Examples from
Parents
Presented By:
Swedesboro-Woolwich SEPC**

Workshop Format

- Four parents presenting personal experiences with their children
- Staff Members (Teachers, Paraprofessionals, CST Members) will elaborate as needed and provide examples to aid in discussion

Inclusion/LRE Workshop Summary

1. LRE & Inclusion Definition; Preschool Inclusion
– By Kathy Rengepis
2. How to Support your Child through a change in Classroom Setting
– By Val Amaradio
3. Alternative look at LRE
– By Hina Dadhanla
4. Inclusion in the Community
– By Caroline King

Please be respectful

- Please listen. All views expressed tonight are personal examples of individual experiences with inclusion.
- Please feel free to ask questions and ask for clarification if you do not understand or would like more information on something you hear
- Please be mindful that other adults in the room may view inclusion differently. Please show respect to everyone, even if you do not agree with them.

Parent's Role in Special Education

- **Expert on Your Child**
 - You know your child best. Share that knowledge with the school (letter to teachers, Student Profile)
- **Full and Equal Member of the IEP Team**
 - Be an active participant. Have a 3 or 5 year vision for your child. Make sure IEP reflects this vision.
- **Your child's advocate** (at school, home, and in the community)
- **Communicator/Facilitator**
 - between doctors, therapists, anyone working with your child and the IEP team

SEPAC's Role in Swedesboro-Woolwich School District

- We are a group of parents who work closely with the Special Education Department to provide educational workshops and share important information on community based resources.
- **SEPAC's Mission:** "Our intention is to create a learning community for parents of students receiving special education services, teachers and administrators. We also provide input to the district on issues concerning students with disabilities. Through education and collaboration, the best outcomes for our children can be achieved."
- *New Jersey Administrative Code 6A: 14-1.2(h) states that: Each board of education shall ensure that a special education parent advisory group is in place in the district to provide input to the district on issues concerning students with disabilities*

LRE stands for Least Restrictive Environment

- LRE for each child is individual, based on that child's abilities. While the General Education setting must be considered, the LRE for a child with a disability may be one of the other classroom setting options outlined in the Continuum of Placement Options (see chart)
- More details on the questions to answer when considering various placement options for a student can be found here (some highlights of this will appear in a few minutes on Slides #11 & 12): <http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/info/array/files/frame.htm>

Continuum of Placement Options



Placement Options

- Mainstream (with or without modifications)
- In-class Support (2 teachers)
- Resource Room Model (Pulled out for 1 or 2 subjects)
- Self-Contained (e.g. PSD, MD, ABA)
- Out of District
- Homebound Instruction

Meaningful Inclusion

- Meaningful inclusion is:
 - A mindset, belief system
 - Students with disabilities are actively educated among general education peers
 - All learners feel welcome, as in a family
 - Everyone belongs
 - The program is better because all children are in it
 - Value of diversity
 - Must be sustainable -- not just up to one teacher

Key Questions for the Decision Making Process

- What are the student's learning needs relative to the general education curriculum?
- What are the student's other educational needs?
- Can the student learn the same content as chronological age peers, or are modifications needed?
- In what ways can we support the student's learning needs and goals/objectives within the general education classroom/program?
- In what ways can we support the staff to address the student's needs within the general education classroom/program?

Modifications to the General Education Curriculum

- *A student with a disability is not removed from the age appropriate general education classroom solely based on needed modifications to the general education curriculum [N.J.A.C.6A:14-4.2(a)9]*
- LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Preschool Inclusion

- Research shows that inclusion among typically developing peers is extremely successful in helping students with developmental delays, especially communication delays
 - Students model peer behavior
 - Great strategy to motivate and encourage child is to surround child with peers
- At a preschool level, the discrepancy in academic performance is minimal
 - Later on, the gap between academic performance widens. E.g. Students learning higher math

Takeaways from Our Experience

- ✓ Set high expectations
- ✓ Believe in your child
- ✓ Boost child's self confidence so she believes she can be successful in school
- ✓ Challenge your child in subjects that interest him (child will be more engaged, try harder if it's a subject the child enjoys)
- ✓ Listen to your child about which learning environment she feels comfortable in
- ✓ Help your child build friendships with peers

Thinking Outside of the Box

- Other ways to include our students with peers?
 - Sitting at a lunch table with peers
 - Peer reading partners
 - Peer mentors
 - Reverse inclusion – invite peers come into the special education classroom

Section #2

**How to Support your Child through a
change in Classroom Setting**

Presented by: Val Amaradio

**Supporting Your Child Through a
Change in Classroom Setting**

- Respecting Differences, Choices, and Most importantly....Our Children!

**Supporting Your Child Through a
Change in Classroom Setting**

- The Early Years
- Kindergarten - Trial... and Error.
- MD vs Self-Contained LLD (Learning Language Disabled)
- MD-Fewer Students, Less Distractions, easily modified instruction. Sacrifice: no exposure to socially appropriate language based peers.
- Self-Contained = More students = More distractions, exposure to more socially appropriate language based peers. Sacrifice: Difficulty learning.

Supporting Your Child Through a Change in Classroom Setting

- A new experience
- Every district is different, too!

Supporting Your Child Through a Change in Classroom Setting

- Setting the Child Up for Success is a Team Job!
- How an evaluation form opened my eyes.
- The 5 Year Vision...Where do you see your child?
- Don't set the bar too low...or too high.
- Juliana's opinions matter, too!
- The team is on board to try!
- The PARENT is the primary support to the child, team and...TEACHER!
 - Parent must provide education regarding info on disability and outside resources)
- The teacher and supports are KEY ingredients!
 - Everyone needs to be on board for the child to be successful.
- Not a Time to socialize...but still an opportunity to learn from peers.
 - Holding Juliana accountable: Behavior and Responsibility
 - Group learning times, trips to the backpack, snack time, exposure to general curriculum

Key Takeaways From Our Experience

- ✓ Think Outside of the Box
- ✓ Considering a mixture of options.
- ✓ Consider asking your child what is important to him/her.
- ✓ Consider the child's needs: Academic, Functional, Social
- ✓ What opportunities are available to include your child successfully?
- ✓ Looking to the Future - Difficult choices continue - Which sacrifice do we need to make?

Section #3

Alternative look at LRE

Presented By: Hina Dadhania

Out of District Placement as LRE

- Sometimes your child may need more extensive services than your school district is equipped to provide. When this happens, parent may need to seek a placement outside of the district.
- "Out of district placement places your child in a specialized school specifically designed to address special learning or behavioral needs. The schools have the benefit of providing the highest degree of structure, routine, and consistency throughout school day."

Section #4

Inclusion in our Community

Presented by: Caroline King

Inclusion in our Community

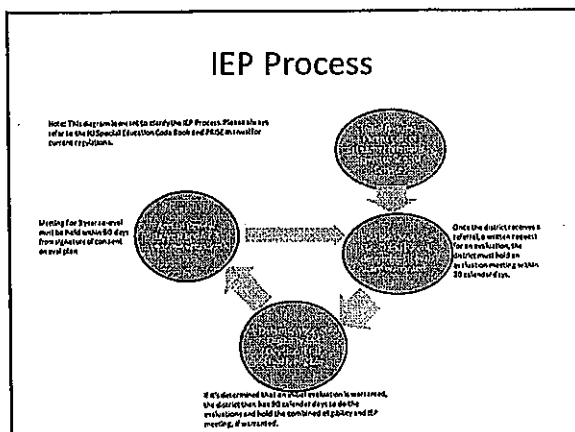
- Inclusion in the community begins in the home.
 - Use Person First language all of the time, especially in the home.
- Introduce your family to our community.
- Visit Public Buildings within our community.
- Seek opportunities for inclusion within our community.
 - School activities that are held within the community are perfect!
- Encourage independence with proper supports.
- Support Abilities Awareness.

Inclusion in our Community

- Exposure is Key
- It takes courage and determination to expose an individual with disabilities to their community.
- Our loved ones will contribute to their spheres of society.
- Individuals with disabilities are citizens. Citizenship is understood as a "right to have rights."

Supplemental Information

- IEP Process
- Articulation Meeting
- Websites



Requesting an Additional Meeting

- NOTE: If your child currently has an IEP, in addition to the Annual Meeting, you may request in writing an IEP meeting at any time. Child Study Team has 20 days from parent request to hold IEP Team Meeting, also known as Articulation Meeting.

Inclusion Websites

- NJ Coalition for Inclusive Education: <http://ncie.org/>
- <http://www.spannj.org/START/inclusion.htm>
- State of NJ Dept. of Special Education Presentation: An Array of Supports for Including Students with Disabilities in General education programs (November 2008): <http://www.state.nj.us/education/special/inf/array.shtml>
- Wrightslaw Website <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/lre.index.htm>
- Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation: <http://www.swifthschools.org/>

Inclusion Articles

- <http://nicie.org/wp-content/uploads/Highlights-on-Inclusive-Education-Research.pdf>
- <http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/04/17/my-daughter-profoundly-disabled-needs-a-school-for-children-like-her/? r=0>
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rachel-adams/included-everyone_b_5508649.html
- <https://medium.com/bright/my-son-belongs-in-your-child-s-class-5eccebd8162c>
