INCLUSIVE schooling

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Achieving Inclusion:
5 Strategies to Ensure an Inclusive Placement for Your Child

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Introduction

The family's vision was clear: Sunny would go to school in her neighborhood with the same friends with whom she had grown up with...running through the sprinklers, learning to ride a bike, and searching for buried treasures in the park down the street. Sunny's family wanted her to attend her neighborhood school, learn to read, make new friends, and fall in love with learning. For many years, school members of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) team supported this vision, and Sunny was successfully included...until the 8th grade. During Sunny's transition meeting from middle to high school, the school-based members of the IEP team recommended a different setting, explaining to Sunny's mom that a life skills program at the high school would be most beneficial.

This information came as a surprise to the family; why should Sunny's placement be changed when she had done so well in the general education classroom for the past nine years? The principal explained, "For students with more complex support needs (like Down Syndrome) during the high school years, time is better spent focusing on helping Sunny learn to navigate the community, learn functional life skills like shopping and folding laundry, and connecting with job opportunities." They finished their argument by stating, "Our students are very successful in this program, and it's far less frustrating for them than taking on the more challenging academic classes and curriculum." Dissatisfied with these reasons, Sunny's mother began to learn how she could work to ensure Sunny's successful participation in the inclusive classroom as she transitioned to high school.

Situations like these are not unusual. Across different states, school districts, and even school buildings and grades, a family's success in receiving effective and inclusive educational opportunities varies greatly. Suffice it to say, some school districts are far more committed to supporting inclusion of all students. To further complicate things, during IEP meetings, discussion of placement options does not always occur on an equal playing field. In other words, the school personnel are often viewed as the experts and often make decisions without family input. Other times, families understandably place trust in the school's collective expertise and seemingly logical arguments, thus agreeing to segregated placements only to become dissatisfied later when limited opportunities and low expectations become evident.

This article will provide families, like Sunny's, with six key strategies necessary to work collaboratively and effectively with their school district to advocate for inclusive educational opportunities.

Strategy #1.

Learn What's Possible

To begin your advocacy, you will want to start by learning what is possible and setting up your vision for inclusive education for your child. In this section we outline four key areas of exploration: the term "inclusive education", research to support inclusive education, research to understand the problems of segregation, and powerful instructional practices that support inclusion.

Explore the term "Inclusive Education"

In the past, when the term special education was used, a special place (a room or school) came to mind. But this notion is outdated. Special education is not limited to a specific or a separate location. Special education is about services and supports to ensure access, participation, and progress in the general curriculum. Further, research has established that all children, including children with the most complex support needs, learn best in classroom settings with their general education peers (Cole, et.al, 2021). And U.S. Federal law mandates "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities … are educated with children who are not disabled" (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S. C. 1412[a][5])). Aligned with the research and U.S. law, when students with disabilities are educated primarily in general education settings, this is called inclusive education.

But we believe inclusive education is much more than access and much more than simply educating students with and without disabilities together in general education settings. We believe it is a bold and courageous call to disrupt the inequities too often found in traditional educational systems. Below, we have defined inclusive education in the following way.

Inclusive education means that we no longer accept that separate classrooms, separate schools, and separate lives are in the best interest of any student. Separating people by ability disadvantages everyone. Belonging is a human need. Our educational system, practices, and spaces need to be reimagined.

Every student is valued because of their strengths, gifts, and even challenges. As disability is simply diversity. Everyone benefits from meaningful participation and opportunities to learn grade level content with diverse peers. We must trust that all students come to us as incredible whole people who do not need to be fixed (Causton & Pretti-Frontczak, 2021).

Inclusive education means providing students with access to support when it is needed, and of course, partnering with families in authentic and meaningful ways. To bring this definition to life, schools need to create spaces that welcome and celebrate students' multiple identities and abilities, eliminate barriers to access and participation, prioritize collaborative teaching between general and special educators, and design accessible and engaging instruction for all.

Dive into the Research

Educational research has consistently shown that educating students with and without disabilities together is better for all (Choi, et al., 2017; Kart & Kart, 2021; Molina Roldán, et al., 2021; Owen-DeSchryver, et al., 2022). When students with disabilities are educated in inclusive settings they make greater progress on IEP goals and grade-level standards (Cosier, Causton-Theoharis, & Theoharis, 2013; Choi et al., 2020; Cole et al., 2021; Dell'Anna et al., 2022). In fact, research shows the more general education classes a student is enrolled in, the closer to grade level they are in their reading and math abilities (Test et al, 2009). Inclusion also increases communication skills and interpersonal skills for students with disabilities (Foreman, Arthur-Kelly, Pascoe, & King, 2004; Woodman, Smith, Greenberg, & Mailick, 2016).

Access to inclusive education also supports students with disabilities to establish a larger network of friendships (Copeland & Cosbey, 2009; Jackson, Ryndak, & Wehmeyer, 2008) and increases the likelihood that they will join in extracurricular activities and see friends outside of school (Newman, Wagner, Cameto, Knokey, & Shaver, 2010). Inclusion for students with disabilities also leads to fewer disciplinary referrals and fewer absences from school (Dell'Anna et al., 2022; Test, Mazzotti, Mustian, Fowler, Kortering, & Kohler, 2009). And when looking to the future, inclusion in general education is a critical predictor of graduation from high school, access to post-secondary education, gainful employment, and independent living (Mazzotti, et al., 2021; Test et al., 2009).
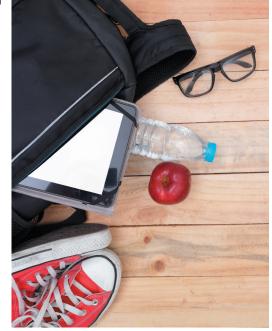
The inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom also strengthens the classroom as a whole. Research has shown that when students with disabilities are included, teachers create classrooms that focus on student strengths, increase student access to resources and technology, implement teaching strategies that reach all students, and teach skills of collaboration and interdependence (Bouillet, 2013; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Skiba & Losen, 2015). When students with disabilities are included, not only does achievement rise, but learning opportunities are strengthened for all.

Despite evidence of the positive outcomes of inclusion, many students continue to receive their special education services in segregated special education classrooms where they do not have as much success. Becoming familiar with the problems of segregation for students with disabilities is important when advocating for inclusion.

Understand the Problems of Segregation

Research shows that the majority of practices and supports observed in segregated settings can be implemented in more inclusive settings without compromising the effectiveness of instruction— such as small groups, individualized instruction, and communication and behavioral supports (Barrett, Stevenson, Burns, 2020; Causton-Theoharis et.al, 2011). Segregated special education classes are often justified because school teams believe these classrooms provide benefits such as 1) more direct instruction time from highly qualified educators; 2) reduced environmental and behavioral distractions for students; and 3) more individualized support to help students achieve grade-level content. But research actually shows the opposite is true. Students in segregated special education classes and programs 1) spend less time on academic instruction and are taught more frequently by paraprofessionals than highly qualified educators; 2) experience higher levels of distractions in the classroom; and 3) receive less individualization of instruction (Barrett et al., 2020; Causton-Theoharis et.al, 2011).

Learn About Powerful Instructional Practices that Support Inclusion

As you advocate for an inclusive placement for your child, it is useful to know more about the key instructional practices that help educators implement meaningful and effective inclusion. Here we outline 5 powerful instructional practices, supported by educational research, that you can recommend to the IEP team.

Collaborative Service Delivery. Educators must work together in collaborative ways to inclusively teach a wide range of learners in general education. Sometimes this requires a co-teaching relationship, consultative support, or inclusion facilitation. There are many different terms and ways to provide collaborative service delivery to students, but the benefits are well-documented and include increased responsiveness to students (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007), increased access points to learning (Hackett, Kruzich,Goulter,& Battista, 2021) and student reports of feeling more supported (McDuffie, Mastropieri, & Scruggs, 2009).

Differentiated Instruction. To reach all students in the general education classroom, educators design differentiated instruction to address a wide range of learners. Differentiation provides students with multiple ways to learn content, process information, and demonstrate what they know. Differentiation not only draws on student strengths, but addresses student needs.

Adaptations that Support Access to Grade-Level Content. Educators must create and provide accommodations and modifications to give students greater access to grade-level general education content and standards. To do this most effectively, educators and families can work collaboratively to identify the child's needs, prioritize skills and goals, and develop appropriate adaptations so that students can be meaningfully included and make progress in grade-level curriculum.

Natural Supports. The term natural supports refers to the existing supports available to all students to increase independence and interdependence. For example, instead of using a paraprofessional to open a student's snack bag, the student learns to ask a friend or get help from the lunchroom monitor, who is available to support all students. Inclusive Behavior Supports. Educators must commit to supporting students with compassion, collaboration, and a focus on connection and learning rather than correction and punishment. Educators should understand that behavior is communication, and that stress directly leads to behaviors so they are able to provide inclusive behavior supports that increase belonging and success for the student.

After reading Strategy #1: Learn What's Possible, we invite you to take a moment and put what you've learned into action. Feel free to do all or just one of the action steps provided in the following tiny to do list.

Tiny To Do List:

☐ Share the definition of inclusive education with your school team. We also have it available in a shareable format in appendix A and online here: www.inclusiveschooling.com/definition-of-inclusion

☐ Identify any ideas connected to the research that you would like to learn more about.

☐ Determine which powerful instructional practices you want to learn more about and take to the school team. (Check out the resources list in Table 3 for a few ideas).

Strategy #2.

Know the Legal Facts

We now want you to familiarize yourself with the legal aspects of inclusive education. Specifically, in this section we take you through understanding your role, key legal terms for inclusion, and important legal cases.

Your Role as Co-equal Partner Parents should be meaningfully involved in the educational decisions made about their children and are a legally necessary part of the IEP team. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act - IDEA (2004) specifically discusses parent involvement in determining placement decisions. The most important provisions of this law are outlined next, starting with how each school must ensure that a parent of each child with a disability is a member of any group that makes decisions on the child's educational placement. Further, if neither parent can participate in a meeting in which an educational placement of their child will be made, the school must use other methods to ensure their participation, including individual or conference telephone calls, or video conferencing. (20 U.S.C. 1414(e), 1415(b)(1)).

Parents are also an integral part of developing IEP goals and strategies that will support their child to reach those goals. This means that you should outline IEP goals you would like to see achieved, and you can provide strategies for helping your child achieve those goals. As required by the IDEA, the school team must include your suggestions regarding goals and associated support in the IEP. We provide more guidance and details for how to work with the team to develop IEP goals and effective strategies in this article's Strategy #3. But first, we want to point out that it is important to advocate for your co-equal role in IEP development, as some school teams are more familiar with creating IEP goals and strategies on their own. To illustrate specific ways to advocate for shared IEP creation, we return to Sunny and her family from the introduction of this article.

When Sunny's mom began to learn how to work with the school team to plan for an inclusive and collaborative IEP meeting, she wrote an email to the IEP team. She let them know 1) she would be submitting suggested goals to include in the IEP; 2) she would prepare a list of strategies that had been successful for Sunny in previous years in general education settings; and 3) she requested that the IEP team provide her with a draft of the IEP one week prior to the meeting so she could review and prepare feedback in advance. This communication ensured Sunny's mom was able to participate as a co-equal partner who could provide unique expertise and help drive the goals and strategies development alongside the school professionals.

Understand Key Legal Terms Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Perhaps the most important legal language for inclusive education comes from the federal law governing special education (IDEA 2004) is the section entitled Least Restrictive Environment or LRE.

> LRE means that, to the maximum extent appropriate, school districts must educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports, referred to as "supplementary aids and services," along with their nondisabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled (IDEA, 2004).

Under LRE, the general education classroom is the first place to be considered for placing a student with a disability before more restrictive options are considered. And a child with a disability cannot be removed from a general education classroom merely to meet the needs of the school. 34C.F.R. 300.116 (b)(3)(e).

Supplementary Aids and Services
Supplementary aids and services is another key term you will want to understand. These aids and services are what educators will use to successfully support your child with access to the general education class, curriculum, and peers. Common examples might be preferential seating, graphic organizers, use of digital tools (e.g. laptop, tablet), recorded lectures, reduced seat time, assistance from a teacher with special education training, training for the general education teacher, a note-taker, communication device, or modifications to materials such as simplified language or multiple-choice questions in place of short-answers. All these can be used to adapt the general education curriculum or instruction to provide your child with meaningful access. By law, educators must utilize all of the possible supplementary aids and services (and the possibilities for supports are quite endless) before determining that a student needs to leave the general education classroom. You can review a sample listing of supplemental aids and services in Table 1.

Inclusion Related Court Cases

U.S. courts have provided school districts and families with clear and specific guidance related to inclusive education under IDEA. What follows in Table 2 is a summary of several of the most important legal cases related to inclusive education in the U.S. The table is designed to provide you with more detailed information about longstanding and more recent legal precedent for inclusive education.

While each case is important, we find that Roncker (1983), Endrew (2017), and L.H. (2018) are some of the most powerful rulings to understand when advocating for inclusion for your child. Specifically, these cases provide inclusive education guidance such as: 1) services are portable, meaning they can and should be brought to your child in general education (Roncker); 2) the IEP should provide your child with high expectations through challenging goals and the opportunity to make progress on those goals (Endrew); and 3) the school cannot recommend a segregated setting simply because the school/staff is not prepared to support inclusion in general education (L.H.).

Table 2. Inclusion Related Court Cases

Name of Case	Description of Case
Brown v Board of Education (1954)	Established that education must be made available to all on equal terms. Separate but equal is inherently unequal. Advocates for people with disabilities transferred this concept of equal opportunity to students with disabilities
PARC v Pennsylvania (1972)	The PARC plaintiffs argued that children with mental retardation could benefit from educational programs, and that these experiences did not have to be academic and could involve other training. Furthermore, the PARC plaintiffs argued that since the state provided students without disabilities a free education, the state could not deny students with mental retardation this same right.
Roncker v Walter (1983)	This case challenged the assignment of students to disability specific programs and schools. The ruling favored inclusive, not segregated, placement and established a principle of portability. It is not enough for a district to simply claim that a segregated program is superior. In a case where the segregated facility is considered superior, the court should determine whether the services, which make the placement superior, could be feasibly provided in a nonsegregated setting (i.e., regular class). If they can, the placement in the segregated school would be inappropriate under the act (IDEA).
Daniel R.R. v State Board of Education (1989)	In this case the court decided not to follow the Roncker test and developed its own test. First, the court must examine whether, with the use of supplementary aides and services the child could be included in the classroom. Next, if the child could not be included, the court asks whether the child was mainstreamed to maximum extent possible.
Sacramento Unified School District v. Rachel H (1992)	In this case, the courts developed a four-part test: 1) the educational benefits from the regular classroom; 2) the non-academic benefits of interaction between students with and without disabilities, 3) the impact of the student with disabilities on the teacher and other children in the classroom; and 4) the cost of supplementary aids and services required for mainstreaming the student"
Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District (2017)	In this case, the Supreme Court clarified the standard of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) under the IDEA. It ruled that the correct standard of FAPE is whether or not a school district has created an IEP in which the student has: 1) challenging and ambitious goals in their IEP, and 2) can make progress according to their own individual needs.
L.H. v Hamilton County Department of Education (2018)	In this case, the court ruled that the self-contained placement the school provided the student was more restrictive than necessary and therefore in violation of IDEA. The court also explained that school staff cannot choose to exclude a student from general education simply because they are " unwilling or unable to properly engage in the process of mainstreaming L.H....rather than isolating and removing him when the situation became challenging."

Now that you have read through the legal facts of inclusion, we again invite you to pause, reflect and complete any of the actions noted in the tiny to do list before moving on to Strategy #3.

Tiny To Do List:

○ Draft an email to the school team communicating your rights and preferences related to a co-equal role in the IEP (e.g. state that you have suggested goals and successful strategies to be included in the IEP and that you would like a draft IEP in advance of the meeting).

○ Circle or highlight key legal terminology or phrases you want to use in the future.

○ Visit www.wrightslaw.com to explore more U.S. legal aspects and court cases in more depth.

Strategy #3.

Collaborate Effectively on the IEP

You are now acquainted with the definition of inclusive education, the research, the instructional practices, and key legal information. It's time to learn several other skills and strategies for effectively collaborating on the development of the IEP with the school-based team.

Share an Inclusive Vision

Initially, you will want to get clear about the vision you want for your own child. Write your vision down. Then, share it with your child's school team. You could email it to the team at the beginning of the year, read it aloud at an IEP meeting, send it to the school in a letter format, or ask that it be included in the present level of performance section in your child's IEP. Returning to our story about Sunny, her family believed strongly that Sunny should continue to be included in all aspects of High School, so they crafted the following vision statement and shared it at Sunny's IEP meeting.

Our ultimate vision for Sunny is that she is educated alongside her general education peers and friends for the entire school day. We want her to be included in every aspect of schooling. This means she is with her peers for lunch, recess and special area classes, but more importantly, in all general education academic subjects with the appropriate supports.

We want her support services to be brought directly to her and delivered seamlessly in the general education class. We view Sunny as an important member of her school. Therefore, we want her to be engaged as an integral part of the classroom and school community at every turn.

Start with Strengths

You know your child the best. Making sure the IEP team learns about your child and remains focused on strengths instead of areas of weakness can help ensure the type of inclusive educational placement you want, and it is your child's right. Ask yourself, "What skills and strengths does my child have that will help her learn and develop social relationships?" "How can those strengths and skills be utilized to help my child learn in the classroom?" Some parents put together a strengths and strategies profile to help their team members see what is possible. See Figure 1 for a sample strengths and strategies profile.

Figure 1: Sample Strengths and Strategies Profile for Sunny

Strengths, Gifts, Interests, and Talents	Effective Strategies
- Loves to read and is a good reader - Has a great sense of humor; voted "funniest" by her senior class - Great memory; remembers information about others after meeting them - Knows a lot of information about the medical field and is very interested in all areas of science - Strong self-advocate - Has a YouTube Station about fashion - Enjoys working to help others - Loves school - Joined the debate club and is a good public speaker - Works well with a schedule - Has many creative ideas for writing - Is planning to go to college	- Use text reading software or make sure that material is at independent reading level - Highlight key points on printed text using highlighter tape - Focus on main concepts in science and social studies - Use peer notes in all classes - Use models for math assignments - Use graphic organizers for scaffolding writing tasks - Use laptop and Co:Writer app for all writing - Use peer supports not paraprofessional whenever possible - Teach in naturally occurring general education environments - Have high expectations

Focus on the Whole Child

Educators typically only see your child at school, which can limit their perspectives. It can be helpful to share instances of inclusion outside of school. One parent we know brings a five-minute video clip focused on how her child Sam is successful in everyday aspects of his life, despite being legally blind. Seeing Sam run track, cook with the family, and perform a lead role in the school play helps the team recognize greater possibilities and maintain higher expectations for him. You might also share ways your child is included in a summer camp, an after-school club or activity, or religious group— the most important thing is helping the team see your child in a full and holistic way.

Bring an ally.
Parents often describe IEP meetings, including the discussion of placement, as difficult or painful. Families have found it to be very useful to have a friend or advocate sit next to them, take notes, share ideas, and help them process information. Be sure to choose someone to accompany you who is comfortable being there and can communicate respectfully and effectively and who serves as a calm supportive presence for you during the meeting.

Prepare Your Child for Meaningful Involvement

Prepare your child for meaningful involvement with the IEP by asking them about their strengths, talents, and dreams, as well as what is and isn't working for them at school. Begin to help them plan a comfortable level of involvement in the meeting, whether that means presenting information in a slide show or creating a video in advance, or discussing strengths, needs and accommodations. As you and the school team continue to support your child to participate in the IEP, you can eventually have them lead the IEP meeting. Including children in their own IEP meetings beginning at a young age and helping them develop the necessary skills and confidence to lead their own meeting is the very best way to teach self-advocacy and helps the whole team focus on what the meeting is all about: your child.

Understand Assessment Practices and Decisions

Assessment information is critical for making decisions about what to do for a child- whether that be eligibility or placement decisions, to grade academic work, to monitor progress on learning outcomes, or to make changes to IEP goals. Team members can provide you with knowledge about specific assessments and should share the results in a way you can understand. If assessment information is referenced during an IEP meeting and you aren't sure what it means, ask for clarification or follow-up information. There may also be additional information to include about assessment results directly in the IEP. For example, if Kayla, a student with autism, did not answer or was distracted during an assessment and received a score indicating they are "far below average," this one assessment may not reflect the child's true understanding or ability. Understanding how assessment information will be used to make decisions for your child will ensure you are the best advocate for your child. See Table 3 for several resources on inclusive assessment practices and tips for families to better understand what can be a complicated part of the process. For example, download a 30-page assessment terms primer to help ensure you aren't misled or left out of the conversation just because of the terms used. The primer contains definitions of over 100 common early childhood assessment terms.

Help Write Inclusion Oriented Goals

A student's individual goals should be driven by the student's strengths and what the student and their family would like to accomplish over the course of the year. Goals should be individualized and directed by the student's needs and should also assist in connecting the student to the general education curriculum and to their peers (IDEA, 20 U.S.C. 1414(d) 2004). When drafting your child's IEP goals, consider how the goals can guide the team in working on academic and social skills in natural and inclusive environments. Specifically, IEP goals should: 1) Use supports and curriculum that are age-appropriate; 2) Lead to meaningful outcomes for your child; 3) Support learning the general education curriculum with peers; and 4) Occur in natural settings and times throughout the day. For example, social skills can be practiced in cooperative groups while learning science. Working on communicating wants and needs can take place before, during, and after, just about any lesson or activity. Your child does not need to be in a separate location to practice skills related to an IEP goal. We've shared the following PK-12 example IEP goals from teams we've worked with to help you craft your child's own meaningful and inclusive IEP goals.

Example IEP Goals

- While working in cooperative groups with two-four peers without disabilities, Noah will successfully take turns four out of five times.

- When given example models as support, access to calculator, and directions read aloud, Tanya will independently solve multi-step equations connected to grade-level math content with 80% accuracy in four out of five trials.

- When provided with a grade-level passage and access to his text-to-speech app, Naomi will provide at least three accurate details from the passage in three out of four trials.

- During daily activities, Sam will explore investigate (e.g., bang, close, crumple, dump, flip, hand, hit, open, poke, pound, pour, pull, push, put in, scoop, shake, squeeze, swipe, take back, touch, turn, wind) three different objects in order to make something happen (i.e., intentionally cause an effect to take place), each day for two weeks.

- Trevon will share information verbally (e.g., answering questions, telling, commenting) or non-verbally (e.g., selecting, pointing) five times a day for six consecutive days.

- During daily activities, Emma will use a variety of two and three word phrases to greet, inform, and respond, and will be understood by familiar adults and peers. To be understood by familiar adults and peers, Emma will produce/say the final consonant sounds of /p,t,d,k/ with two or less sound deletions in 10 phrases, across three consecutive observations.

Stay Organized with Documentation

Having a written or digital record of important conversations, events, or documents helps to support you during the IEP process. You will also want to have easy access to records that provide a comprehensive picture of your child's strengths and needs, as well as other information that provide evidence for points or suggestions you may want to make in the IEP. Keep copies of emails, written communications, relevant doctor or other specialist appointment summaries, and select work your child completes.

Once you've organized your documentation in preparation for the meeting, consider how you will document the IEP meeting itself. For example, you might audio-record with consent; take notes during the meeting; have an advocate, family member, or friend take notes for you; or summarize your impressions via voice recording or in written format when the meeting is over. Whatever you decide this information will likely be useful to you and the team to when you want to revisit or better understand conversations and decisions made in the meeting.

Know How a Collaborative Team Works

Your child's school-based team can include many different professionals, including the general education teacher, special education teacher, paraprofessional, therapists (e.g. occupational, physical, and speech and language pathologists), school psychologists, behavior specialists, social workers, vision teachers, and audiologists. This is sometimes known as a multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary team. While every team will differ depending on your child's support needs, it is important to ensure that the team focus is to work collaboratively to bring support to your student in the general education classroom.

As the parent, you are an expert on your child and should be treated as an equal member of the collaborative team. This means you can request that the team provide collaborative service delivery options to support your child in general education. This might look like a special educator co-teaching, providing consult or drop-in supports, or inclusion facilitation supports to the general educator(s). You can also request integrated and inclusive therapies during times that make the most sense for your child and their schedule (e.g. physical therapy during recess or physical education; speech therapy during the English and Language Arts block). While collaborative service delivery is common for many school teams, often, the time for teams to co-plan requires advocacy. Therefore, we recommend families ask questions about when the team will be given co-planning time to support the inclusive and collaborative service delivery for your child.

Communicate Effectively

Effective communication is paramount to the functioning of any team, and this is especially true when you are a part of a multidisciplinary collaborative team. Keeping an open line of communication with your child's teachers and related service providers will help to a) foster a positive reciprocal relationship between you, professionals on your child's team, and your child; and b) keep you informed of happenings at school while also keeping school staff appraised of important information related to your child. Just as you help the school team focus on your child's areas of strengths before areas of need, you should strive to interact positively with teachers and staff and consider their strengths in helping to support your child in meeting IEP goals and other important outcomes.

For example, if your child's general education teacher makes lessons fun and interactive for the whole class, you might cite her powerful teaching methods as a reason why you want your child in her classroom. If your child's special education teacher does a great job adapting content, you might refer to their skill as a support for the general education teacher working to differentiate instruction. Focusing on the strengths of your child's team first (before exploring areas of concern) helps to keep team members from becoming defensive and sets the team up for an increased likelihood of collaborative success. Ultimately, leading to optimal educational outcomes for your child.

Other tips for effective communication include but are not limited to:

- Practice active listening (e.g., listen closely, pay attention to verbal and non-verbal cues, do not interrupt the person speaking, ask for clarity when you need it, and seek to paraphrase what was said)
- Be clear and concise when speaking and in written communication
- Support your views (e.g., be prepared with evidence to back up your claims)
- Come prepared to meetings with questions and documents you may want to reference

Include Support for Personnel in the IEP.

Sometimes the school is willing but not prepared to support students in inclusive classrooms. Encouraging the team to gain experience by observing successful inclusive classrooms or schools can help. Additionally, sharing articles, websites or videos with the staff can help build the capacity of the team. See table 3 for a list of such resources. Requesting that the team receive professional development on the topic of inclusion can also be useful. Training for staff can be listed under support for school personnel in the IEP (See IDEA 2004, § 300.704(b)(4)(i), (b)(40(xi)). Lastly, you can learn about local inclusive education experts that may be able to provide your team with training and support to make your child's inclusion more successful.

Problem Solve Effectively and Positively

When challenges arise, some educational teams can begin to ask questions such as, "Is inclusion working?" or "If the child is not succeeding, isn't it time for a separate class or program?" To help you overcome these roadblocks, we recommend understanding how to get yourself and your school team into a positive collaborative mindset to help cultivate greater optimism, creativity, and motivation.

Here are a few ways you can collaborate effectively with your child's school team: 1) co-create a vision for your child's inclusive future; 2) build upon each other's strengths; 3) express gratitude; 4) ask questions and share successes that inspire hope and possibility (e.g., keeping things child-centered, strength-based, and focused on possibilities if a conversation or meeting turns negative). Below we share a few handy phrases you might adapt to increase effective problem-solving with the IEP team.

- That's a great support idea. Let's brainstorm how that can happen in the general education classroom.
- After listening to all that has been shared, it seems the needed services are portable (e.g. they can be brought to my child in the general education classroom).
- My child is best supported when surrounded by other children who can model those skills. For example, last year she increased her reading skills significantly when partnered regularly with her reading-buddies Toby and Talon.
- Last year, the general educator had real success embedding that goal into the day. How might we adapt that strategy this year?
- I agree, a lack of planning time is frustrating. How can the administration help to support you with increased co-planning time?

The underlying strategy in the phrases above is to practice positivity with your team so you can work together to focus on how inclusion can work for your child. Inclusive placements have been successful for students with disabilities all over the country. But more school districts will be able to implement inclusive practices when they begin to engage with families using the question "how can we make this work?" as a guiding framework.

Focus on placement. Inclusion in general education is one of the most critical predictors of success for your child. So, in the IEP meeting, we recommend focusing on placement.
Handy phrases to have on the tip of your tongue might include:

- Our number one priority is that our child remains with her same age peers.
- We are open to many ideas but inclusive education for our child is most critical.
- How can this work in an inclusive setting?
- That seems portable. We would like to bring that service to our child in general education.
- Could this service be addressed in a co-taught classroom?
- How can we embed that IEP goal into the general education curriculum?

You now have some of the most effective strategies to support your collaboration on an inclusive IEP. Before moving to Strategy #4, take a minute to pause, reflect, and turn the ideas in the tiny to do list into actions.

Tiny To Do List:

☐ Highlight key strategies you want to use in your child's IEP.

☐ Write down questions you have related to strategies shared that need to be answered before your next IEP meeting.

☐ Identify strategies you might need more support with or want to practice before you feel comfortable implementing.

Strategy #4.

When the School Team Remains Resistant: Know Your Rights

It is possible that you have tried all of the above strategies, and then some, but your school team still does not agree that your child should be included. You will want to know your rights under IDEA to support your child's inclusive education. So, while we recommend you try many methods to solve any disagreement, we also recognize you have rights to procedural safeguards under IDEA. Here are a few things you can do to navigate disagreements, particularly around placement or services.

- Write a letter or email to your principal, director of special education or superintendent explaining your requests.
- Request a conference with the teacher, principal, special education director or superintendent to address your prepared list of specific questions.
- Ask for a facilitated IEP meeting with an impartial facilitator.
- Request an additional IEP meeting to attempt to get resolution.
- Request an independent education evaluation (IEE) from an inclusive education expert, following an evaluation or reevaluation.
- Request inclusion training for your school district administrators and educators.
- Contact your local parent center https://www.parentcenterhub.org/ or the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates https://www.copaa.org/.

You can also work with other families or start or join a parent organization to bring a collective parent voice to the matter. However, at some point a more formal option may become necessary. Your next step might be to consider the dispute resolution options under IDEA. These steps are requesting mediation, filing a due process complaint, holding a resolution meeting, moving forward with a due process hearing, and filing a state complaint. You may wish to request the presence of legal representation or hire an attorney as you explore all of these dispute resolution options. For more information about your legal rights under IDEA go to https://sites.ed.gov/idea

Addressing disagreements related to inclusion may not always be necessary for every parent, but we invite you to take the following steps to understand your rights.

- If your school district remains resistant to inclusion-- create a plan of action using some of the ideas described above.
- Research your local parent centers or attorneys specializing in inclusive special education.
- Identify specific resolution methods for which you need more information or clarification — your questions can be addressed on https://sites.ed.gov/idea/ or through your local parent center found at https://www.parentcenterhub.org/.

Strategy #5. Build a Network of Support

Advocating for inclusive education means that we are working to disrupt existing inequities found in traditional educational systems, such as systemic ableism, segregation for students with disabilities, and overrepresentation in special education for students of color and students living in poverty. Families and parents should not have to right these longstanding, systemic educational wrongs alone. You are part of a strong and powerful network of researchers, lawyers, educators, administrators, families and self- advocates actively working every single day to make real and lasting change in the area of inclusive education. We as authors stand side-by-side with you in this work.

We recommend building your support network with other families, advocates, and professionals committed to achieving inclusion. You can begin researching and reaching out to local and state parent advocacy organizations, student self-advocates, universities, or local and national inclusive education experts and advocates. In Table 3 we highlight many people, organizations, and resources that can help you in your search to create a robust network of like-minded allies.

You might also want to connect with a group of parents in your child's school or district. , Many districts have Special Education PTAs (SEPTA) that work to bring innovative inclusive professional development to their school district to support not only their children's inclusion but the school or district as a whole. Or you can join a more informal support network with inclusion-minded families in the area. For example, a group of parents from a middle school started a walking club and they met at a local park on Sundays. They walked several laps around the park as their kids played. Before they would meet, a different parent from the walking club would share a weekly inclusion resource—article, video, website, etc.— and the group would discuss it during their walk and make plans to take actions based on the new knowledge.

We now invite you to take a moment and put what you've learned into action. Feel free to do all or just one of the action steps provided in the following tiny to-do list.

Tiny To Do List:

○ Who is in your network of support? Make a list of your current supports.

○ Who might be added to your network of support? Add any new support ideas.

Conclusion

Over a series of IEP meetings, Sunny's family carefully laid out their vision for her high school education, her desire to attend college, and the successful modifications from her middle school years. The school team was reluctant at first, but after several hours of discussion about the importance of Sunny receiving her education in the general education classroom, they agreed to support Sunny inclusively. Sunny is now a senior taking astronomy, creative writing, health, business, and U.S. history alongside her peers. She not only has plans of going to college, she has been accepted into a college program and will be living in the dorms next year.

It is significant to think about the alternate course Sunny's education could have taken had her mother not been persistent in her efforts to advocate for Sunny. Had Sunny's mom accepted the initial recommendation of the school, Sunny would not have had access to the general education curriculum. She would not have read Macbeth or The Bluest Eye and been able to share her thoughts on these literary works with her friends. She would not have dissected a shark or learned about mindfulness strategies to reduce stress. Sunny would not have been convinced by her peers to join the Debate Club. She likely wouldn't have been voted "funniest" in the senior superlatives; wouldn't have carpooled with her friends to prom. And she very likely would not be attending college next year.

Sunny's mom, Rani, reports, "it's exhausting and unfair that parents have to work so hard to access educational rights and inclusion for their children with disabilities. I mean, I advocated for Sunny with support from advocates, educators, researchers and a lot of support from family and friends." She wants other families to know that whether you have similar supports or are just starting out on your own and are feeling overwhelmed, "YOU are the most important member of your network." To effectively advocate, find ways to support your emotional, physical, cognitive and spiritual needs.

Inclusion isn't a practice that schools can choose to adopt or reject. It is a legally supported, evidence-based practice that continues to result in positive outcomes for students with and without disabilities. How and where a child is educated is one of the most important educational decisions a team can make.

Parents are an essential component of that team. We are hopeful that as parents, you can utilize the strategies shared in this article. We hope you will learn about inclusive possibilities for your child, understand the legal information about inclusion, have new skills to collaborate effectively in the IEP meeting, know your rights related to handling disagreements, and work to create a network of support to advocate for your child to experience meaningful inclusion.

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PEAL CENTER

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PENNSYLVANIA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

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List of Useful Resources for Encouraging Inclusion

VIDEOS

Deej- https://www.deejmovie.com/: "In this first-of-its-kind collaboration between a veteran filmmaker and a nonspeaking autistic, Robert Rooy and DJ Savarese share editorial control as they attempt to navigate the challenges of representing autism. Deej, the result of this often difficult partnership, is a story told largely from the inside, by DJ – not by his parents or autism experts or even the camera. At its core, Deej reflects the sort of participation that disability rights advocates insist upon: "Nothing about us without us.""

Disability Roadmap- https://likerightnowfilms.com/film/3356/My-Disability-Roadmap: "Samuel Habib, 21, wants to date, leave home, go to college. But he drives a 350-pound wheelchair, uses a communication device, and can have a seizure at any moment. Determined to find his path forward, he seeks out guidance from America's most rebellious disability activists. Will they empower him to launch the bold adult life he craves?"

Intelligent Lives- https://intelligentlives.org/: "Three pioneering young American adults with intellectual disabilities...challenge perceptions of intelligence as they navigate high school, college, and the workforce. Academy Award-winning actor and narrator Chris Cooper contextualizes the lives of these central characters through the emotional personal story of his son Jesse, as the film unpacks the shameful and ongoing track record of intelligence testing in the U.S."

This is not about me- https://thisisnotaboutme.film/: "Filmed in an observational style, This Is Not About Me gives a glimpse into Jordyn's daily life interweaved with visits to Jordyn's schools and interviews with teachers that worked closely with her. Jordyn guides us through difficult moments in her childhood. Piece by piece, her story reveals how professionals misunderstood her and pushed her deeper into a broken education system. Despite this system, Jordyn thrived, but her story is not one in a million. There are thousands of students like Jordyn who have something to say."

Wretches & Jabberers- https://www.wretchesandjabberers.org/: A "compelling documentary chronicles the world travels of disability rights advocates, Tracy Thresher and Larry Bissonnette, in a bold quest to change attitudes about the intelligence and abilities of people with autism...In the film, Tracy and Larry take to the road to promote awareness of the hidden intelligence in those who face speech and communication challenges, connecting with others like them across the globe who struggle to find a means of expression."

Who Cares About Kelsey- https://whocaresaboutkelsey.com/: This film "documents the lives of students with emotional/behavioral challenges, and shows innovative educational approaches that help these students to succeed – while improving the overall school culture and climate...Who Cares About Kelsey? will make viewers reconsider the "problem kids" in their own high schools and spark new conversations about an education revolution that's about empowering–not overpowering–our most emotionally and behaviorally challenged youth."

BOOKS

Causton, J. & MacLeod, K. (2020) From Behaving to Belonging: The Inclusive Art of Supporting Students who Challenge Us. ASCD.
"Julie Causton and Kate MacLeod detail how teachers can shift from a "behavior management" mindset (that punishes students for "bad" behavior or rewards students for "good" or "compliant" behavior) to an approach that supports all students—even the most challenging ones—with kindness, creativity, acceptance, and love...We need to transform our classrooms into places of love. To that end, this book represents a paradigm shift from a punitive mindset to a strengths-based, loving approach and encourages the radical act of creating more inclusive and caring schools."

Causton, J., MacLeod, K., Pretti-Frontcak, K., Rufo, J., & Gordon, P. (2020) The Way to Inclusion: How Leaders Create Schools Where Every Student Belongs. ASCD.
"The research is clear: Including students with disabilities in general education classrooms is the most effective way for all students to learn...Chock-full of research, resources, and seasoned advice, The Way to Inclusion walks you step-by-step through the inclusivity change process, from envisioning your path to reimagining the roles of existing staff and everything in between. The book outlines seven clearly defined milestones tied to an Action Plan that will help you stay the course with so vital an initiative."

Causton, J. & MacLeod, K. (2021) The Paraprofessional's Handbook for Effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms (Second Edition). Paul H Brookes.
"What does a great paraprofessional need to know and do? You'll find real-world answers from two experts in the second edition of this bestselling guidebook...An essential hands-on guide for new and seasoned paraprofessionals—and a must-have for the educators and other professionals who support them—this empowering book takes the guesswork out of this critical classroom role so you can help students with disabilities reach their full potential."

Fialka, J. Feldman, A. & Mikus, C. (2012) Parents and Professionals Partnering for Children with Disabilities: A Dance that Matters. Corwin.
"Rich with humor and heart, this highly readable book offers helpful steps for self reflection, personnel preparation, and parent-professional training. Educators and parents will find expert guidance for listening to each other's music, trying out each other's dance steps, and working toward a new dance that includes contributions from all—with the ultimate reward of seeing children achieve their highest potential."

Grisham-Brown, J. L. & Pretti-Frontczak, K. (Eds.). (2011). Assessing young children in inclusive settings. The blended practices approach. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
"This comprehensive text provides explicit guidance on developing a successful curriculum framework, working effectively with families and other team members, tailoring instruction to each child's individual needs, and embedding learning opportunities that address all children's goals. Teachers will learn from the field's most current research, and they'll get a full continuum of strategies for teaching young children with diverse abilities. Practical information on authentic assessment and data-driven decision-making is also woven throughout the book."

List of Useful Resources for Encouraging Inclusion

BOOKS

Jung, L. A., Frey, N., Fisher, D., & Kroener, J. (2019). Your students, my students, our students: Rethinking equitable and inclusive classrooms. ASCD.
"This book — written not for "special educators" or "general educators" but for all educators —addresses the challenges, maps out the solutions, and provides tools and inspiration for the work ahead. Real-life examples of empowerment and success illustrate just what's possible when educators commit to the belief that every student belongs to all of us and all students deserve learning experiences that will equip them to live full and rewarding lives."

Kluth, P. & Causton, J. (2017) 30 Days to the Co-Taught Classroom: How to Create an Amazing, Nearly Miraculous & Frankly Earth-Shattering Partnership in One Month or Less. "In just 30 days, this book will introduce you to the information, competencies and habits you will need to become a great co-teaching partner. The authors will help you get to know your co-teacher, understand each of your roles, improve your planning and co-planning skills, expand the structures you use to teach and support students and even celebrate your accomplishments...Take just 30 days, and change your life –and the lives of all of your students!"

Kurth, J.A. & Gross, M.N. (2014). The Inclusion Toolbox: Strategies and Techniques for All Teachers. Corwin.
"Featuring materials relevant to all stages of implementation, The Inclusion Toolbox is an all-in-one resource that combines research-based strategies and practical tools to help you design and implement a truly inclusive education program...With user-friendly online resources and practical strategies, this comprehensive guide will help you make inclusion a reality!"

Pretti-Frontczak, K. & Grisham, J.L. (Eds.) (2022). Assessing young children in inclusive settings: The blended practices approach (2nd ed.). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
"Prepare current and future teachers with the second edition of this comprehensive textbook, an in-depth guide to the how and the why of high-quality assessment in the context of inclusive early childhood settings. Readers will learn how to select and use assessment instruments, conduct authentic assessment during daily activities and routines, collaborate with families and other team members, and much more."

Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). How to differentiate instruction in academically diverse classrooms. ASCD.
"First published in 1995 as How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms, this new edition reflects evolving best practices in education, the experiences of practitioners throughout the United States and around the world, and Tomlinson's continuing thinking about how to help each and every student access challenging, high-quality curriculum; engage in meaning-rich learning experiences; and feel at home in a school environment that "fits.""

Woodlock, M., & Novak, K. (2021). UDL Playbook for School and District Leaders. Cast.
"The authors lay out a step-by-step process to remake your leadership skills and methods through the inclusive principles of Universal Design for Learning. Creating multitiered systems of support, delivering effective and inspiring feedback, and embedding the UDL principles throughout your culture and curriculum—these are just some of the topics covered by two veteran school leaders."

WEBSITES • INCLUSIVE EDUCATION • EXPERTS & ADVOCATES
www.inclusiveschooling.com: Headed by inclusion experts Drs. Julie Causton and Kristie Pretti-Frontczak, the mission of Inclusive

Schooling is to "strengthen inclusive mindsets, heartsets, and skillsets of educators and school administrators by partnering with school districts from across the world to deliver transformative and engaging professional development". A page dedicated to family resources offers numerous tools to support family advocacy towards an inclusive education for your child.

https://swiftschools.org: "SWIFT is a national technical assistance center that builds whole system—state, district, school, and community—capacity to provide academic and behavioral support to improve outcomes for all students" using an equity-based multi-tiered system of support model. Parent and family resources are provided in English and Spanish, and links to regional parent technical assistance centers are provided.

www.thinkinclusive.us: "As the official blog of MCIE [Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education, Inc.], we exist to build bridges between families, educators, and people with disabilities to advocate for inclusive education. We do this by publishing content from disabled advocates, parents of children with disabilities, and educators who are "all-in" for inclusion. Visitors to the website can sort the content by advocacy, community, education, videos, and podcast episodes.

LEGAL INFORMATION
www.wrightslaw.com: "Parents, advocates, teachers, and attorneys come to Wrightslaw for reliable, up-to-date information about special education law and advocacy for children with disabilities." The website is extensive and comprehensive, and serves as a go-to resource for many educators and families of children with disabilities.

http://idea.ed.gov: As the official website for the U.S. Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), it offers information on IDEA law as well as many resources from the Department and its grantees. Resources include but are not limited to policy documents, the official IDEA statute, regulations, and annual reports, information on grants, state specific information, IDEA updates, and newsletters.

List of Useful Resources for Encouraging Inclusion

FAMILY & YOUTH ADVOCACY
https://www.parentcenterhub.org/the-parent-center-network/: "There are nearly 100 Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs) in the US and Territories", and this site will guide you towards regional and/or state specific centers that aim to help "parents participate effectively in their children's education and development".

www.modsquad4access.com: Guided by the tenacity of three friends that joined forces to pave the way for the future of AAC, the MOD Squad "fuses unique techniques from around the world of AAC to create a new understanding of communication and competency. The MOD Squad takes everything you thought you knew about how those with speech related disabilities communicate and blows it up".

ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS
Causton, J., MacLeod, K., & Pretti-Frontczak, K. (2021). Ready... Set... Success: A Formula for Leading Schools with Love. Educational Leadership, 79(2), 21-25.
"For compassionate discipline to be more than just a good intention, it requires a framework. School districts often find it difficult to ditch traditional behavior management practices like punitive or public discipline tactics, even when their goal is to implement a discipline program that promotes support and love. The authors present a Ready, Set, Success framework as a practical guide for authentically including students using humanistic behavioral support."

Causton, J., Udvari-Solner, A., & MacLeod, K. M. (2017). Creating educational adaptations, accommodations, and modifications. In F. P. Orelove, D. Sobsey, & D. L. Gilles (Eds.), Educating students with severe and multiple disabilities: A collaborative approach (5th ed., pp. 407–435). Paul H. Brookes.
"Now in its fourth edition, this highly respected, bestselling textbook gives undergraduate and graduate students up-to-the-minute research and strategies for educating children with severe and multiple disabilities. This popular core text--for 15 years, a staple of teacher training programs in special education and related fields--thoroughly prepares preservice professionals with comprehensive coverage of the topics they will need to know about. With the practical, research-based guidance in this textbook, future educators will learn how to educate students with severe and multiple disabilities in the setting where they will best be served."

Causton-Theoharis, J. N. (2009). The golden rule of providing support in inclusive classrooms: Support others as you would wish to be supported. Teaching Exceptional Children, 42(2), 36-43.
"The golden rule for adult support in inclusive classrooms is to support others as one would wish to be supported. Adequately applying the golden rule requires knowledge and imagination. Educators need to know the effect of their actions on students. The author also discusses the need for fading support, as reflected in the literature."

Causton-Theoharis, J. & Theoharis, G. (2008). Creating Inclusive Schools for ALL Students. The School Administrator. September, 24-30.
"In this article, a former principal at Falk Elementary School in Madison, Wisconsin, describes his school's shift as it sought to create an inclusive school for all students and establish an authentic sense of belonging. Nationwide, schools and districts from Concord, New Hampshire, to Whittier, California, and from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to Charlotte, North Carolina, are undertaking inclusive school reform with positive results."

Giangreco, M.F. (2004). "The stairs didn't go anywhere!": A self-advocate's reflections on specialized services and their impact on people with disabilities. In M. Nind, J. Rix, K. Sheehy, & K. Simmons, K. (Eds.) (pp. 32-42). Inclusive education: Diverse perspectives. London: David Fulton Publishers in association with The Open University.
"The information included in this article is based on a semi-structured interview conducted with Norman Kunc by Michael F. Giangreco on July 4, 1995 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada....Norman Kunc (pronounced Koontz) is a sought-after consultant and speaker on a wide range of educational, disability, and social justice issues. He was born with cerebral palsy and attended a segregated school for students with disabilities from the age of three until 13 when he was included in a general education school."

Jorgensen, C. M., McSheehan, M., Schuh, M., & Sonnenmeier, R. M. (2012). Essential Best Practices in Inclusive Schools. National Center on Inclusive Education | Institute on Disability / UCED | University of New Hampshire.
"How can educators create inclusive classrooms where students with intellectual and developmental disabilities not only participate and communicate, but also learn academic content? The groundbreaking model in this book is the answer. Practical, forward-thinking, and person-centered, The Beyond Access Model, a researched approach developed by three inclusive education experts from the University of New Hampshire's Institute on Disability, shows education professionals what meaningful inclusive education looks like and gives them the critical guidance they need to make it happen."

Kluth, P., Villa, R., & Thousand, J. (2001, December/January). "Our school doesn't offer inclusion" and other legal blunders. Educational Leadership, 59, 24-27.
"25 years after Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), many educators and administrators still do not understand the law or how to implement it. This article discusses three reasons for this situation and suggests benefits of understanding the law."

List of Useful Resources for Encouraging Inclusion

ONLINE COURSES AND MODULES

Causton, J. & Pretti-Frontzcak, K. (2021) Co-Teaching for the Inclusive Classroom: Creating Phenomenal Co-Teaching Teams. Inclusive Schooling.- https://www.inclusiveschooling.com/product/coteach-main/:
"This is a four-part series that is for PreK-12th grade educators who are co-teaching or who will start co-teaching soon. It is perfect for teams of general and special education teachers who want to get really clear on recommended practices for all aspects of co-teaching. This series is also perfect for Itinerant Teachers and Inclusion Facilitators. You'll learn invaluable strategies for communicating, coaching, and consulting with others."

Causton, J. & Pretti-Frontzcak, K. (2021) Para-Bytes. Inclusive Schooling.- https://www.inclusiveschooling.com/parabytes-sp/:
"Para-Bytes are innovative and user-friendly professional development designed specifically for busy PreK-12 paraprofessionals, teaching assistants, and one-on-one aides. Para-Bytes are organized into four categories that cover EVERYTHING paraprofessionals need to know to provide incredible inclusive support to all students. Each "Byte" is conveniently organized around the most common questions paraprofessionals ask."

Bondie, R.S. (2022). Differentiated Instruction Made Practical. Harvard University.- https://pll.harvard.edu/course/differentiated-instruction-made-practical:
"By using a four-step teacher decision-making framework and implementing structured classroom routines rooted in research on cognition and motivation, you will increase equity, access, rigor, and engagement for all students. This program will prepare you with the agile thinking required to analyze problems of student learning and then make decisions to adjust and differentiate instruction within given time and curriculum constraints."

The Iris Center Peabody College (2021). High-Leverage Practices. Vanderbilt University.- https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/high-leverage-practices/:
"Developed by the Council for Exceptional Children and the CEEDAR Center, high-leverage practices are 22 essential special education techniques that all K-12 special education teachers should master for use across a variety of classroom contexts...This interactive alignment tool, developed in collaboration with CEEDAR, identifies which IRIS resources provide information on HLPs."

OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

Involving Families in Assessment and Intervention: A Toolkit for Early Childhood Educators- https://brookespublishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Involving-Families-in-Assessment-Toolkit_FINAL.pdf: "In this toolkit, you'll get strategies, tip sheets, and other tools for keeping families involved and engaged throughout the whole process of assessment and intervention. Discover the why and the how of family participation, get guidance on overcoming challenges, and find links to more helpful resources."

The Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework Toolkit: Maryland's Vision for Engaging Families with Young Children- https://marylandfamiliesengage.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/maryland-family-engagement-framework-toolkit.pdf: "This toolkit was designed to support Maryland's early childhood community as they implement strategies of the Framework to promote family engagement in early care and education settings and to improve families and children's outcomes by promoting a two-generational approach."

Early Childhood Assessment Terms Primer- https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/prekdownloads/Assessment+Primer/2019+Complete+Assessment+Primer.pdf: This resource is intended to support families and educational professionals to decode the jargon around assessment. Accessing the primer will ensure you aren't misled or left out of the conversation just because of the terms used.