

Challenges in Early Childhood Inclusion: Teacher Experiences and Perspectives

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Abstract

The education of young children is foundational therefore crucial; even more so for children with special needs. Researches confirm the benefits gained by young children with special needs when they are included in quality early childhood programs. Important factor here is the teacher. The presentation is based on a study of six preschool teachers. Questions centered on their experiences meeting the needs of the children; collaborating with parents; the challenges they met; and the outcomes. Teacher perspectives and future directions are further discussed.



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“Inclusion captures, in one word, an all-embracing societal ideology”

[\(http://www.specialeducationguide.com/pre-k-12/inclusion/\)](http://www.specialeducationguide.com/pre-k-12/inclusion/)



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“Inclusion is important because through our diversity we certainly add to our creativity. If you don’t have a diverse classroom or a diverse world, you don’t have the same creative levels and I think our strength lies in our diversity.”

Gretchen Walsh



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Learning Knows No Bounds

<http://euroclio.eu/2016/02/join-special-interest-group-inclusive-education>

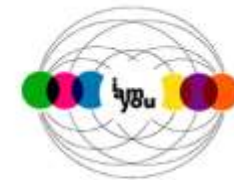


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School Profile

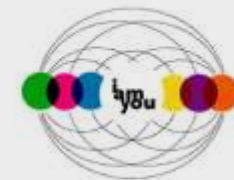
- Mall-based preschool
- 17 years in existence
- Offers programs for children ages 2 to 5
- Open enrollment

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Teacher Profile- six teachers

- All female

Table 1. Teacher Profile

Teacher	Education	No. Years Teaching	
1	BEED Preschool	2	
2	BEED Sped	1	
3	AB Psychology	15	
4	BEED Preschool	4	
5	BEED Preschool	3	
6	BEED Sped	2	



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Teacher Experiences: The children's special needs



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Table 2.
Children's Special Needs

Children's needs	f	%
Communication	19	26.02
Sustaining attention	14	19.18
Sensory -Sound sensitivity	5	6.85
Impulsive behavior	5	6.85
Relating with peers	5	6.85
Off-task behavior	4	5.48
Tantrums/disruptive behavior	4	5.48
Following directions	4	5.48
Fine motor skills	3	4.11
Establishing eye contact	2	2.74
Aggression	2	2.74
Crying	2	2.74
n	73	100.00



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Teacher Experiences: Responses to children's needs

- Recommending psycho educational assessment of the child
- Ensuring home-school collaboration (Trivette, 2007)
- Tracking the therapy sessions to ensure consistency of strategies in the school
- Modification of strategies to be developmentally appropriate for the each child (Snyder, Rakap, Hemmeter, Sandall, Mc Lean, 2011; Daugherty, s. Grisham-Borwn, J & Hemmeter, M., 2001)
- Use of scaffolding (Craig-Unkefer and Kaiser, 2002 Kaiser, 2001)
- Ensuring maximized participation of each child in the class

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Teacher Experiences: Responses to children's needs

Table 3.
Self Rating of
Extent of
Addressing the
Children's Needs

Teacher	No. of CSN	Mean	Interpretation
1	2	3.50	Some Extent
2	4	4.25	Great Extent
3	8	4.00	Large Extent
4	7	4.43	Great Extent
5	8	4.12	Great Extent
6	8	5.00	Great Extent
		Mean	



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Teacher Experiences: Family Support

- Parents appeared hesitant, even defensive to consult developmental pediatrician/ go for assessment
- Parents relied on the nanny to provide care and support
- Involvement of grandparents
- Parents agreed to psycho educational evaluation
- Parents regularly attended PTCs
- Parents shared Occupational and Speech therapy session reports (Kasari C, Freeman S., Alkin, M, 1999)
- Parents were open to suggestions.

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Teacher Experiences: Families Support

Table 4.

Teacher Rating of
Extent of Family
Support

Teacher	No. of CSN	Mean	Interpretation
1	2	3.00	Some Extent
2	4	4.50	Great Extent
3	8	4.25	Great Extent
4	7	4.14	Great Extent
5	8	4.50	Great Extent
6	8	3.87	Large Extent



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Teacher Experiences : Challenges

- Difficulty of informing parents of red flags/ need to go for consultation
- Hesitation of parents to go for assessment
- Having more than one child with special needs in a class
- Classroom management- managing distracting behaviors



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Outcomes

- Children's marked improvement in their skills
 - communication
 - Self-help
 - Gross and fine motor
 - Social skills- gained friends (Buysse, V, Goldman B.D., Skinner, 2002)
- Children were accepted in the big school



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Teacher Perspectives

- Collaboration is vital
- Knowledge of Child development is crucial
- Inclusion is a means to learn about respect and kindness (teachers, children and parents)
- Preschool teachers advocate and support inclusion.
- All children succeed (with or without special needs) when they feel loved and that they belong

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Future Directions

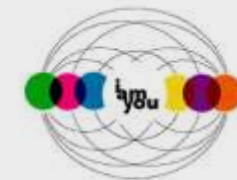
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 - Index for Inclusion by Tony Booth, Mel Aisncow, Denise Kingston, 2006),

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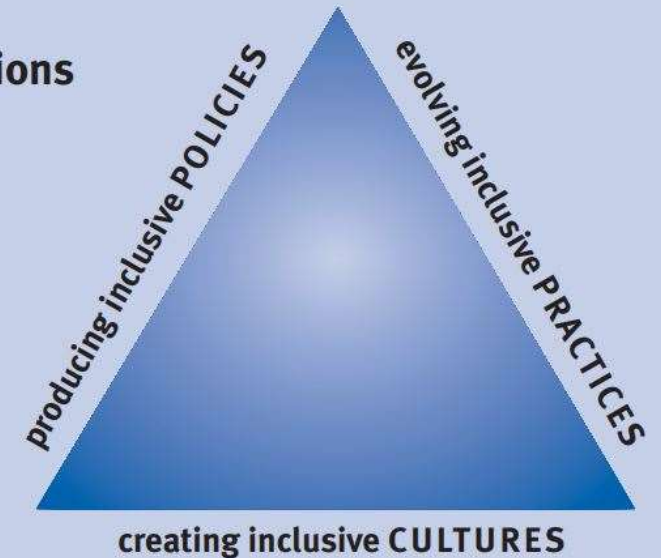


Future Directions

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figure 4

The three dimensions of the *Index*



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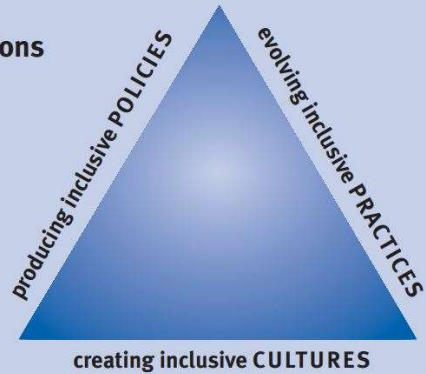
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figure 4
The three dimensions
of the Index



Future Directions

- Adoption of Framework/s-

- Index for Inclusion by Tony Booth, Mel Aisncow, Denise Kingston, 2006),
- Building Community- inclusive values
- Developing the Setting for All- organizing support
- Orchestrating Play and Learning- mobilizing resources

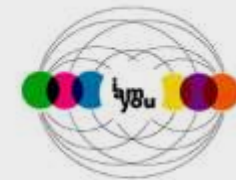


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Future Directions

- Adoption of Framework/s-
 - DEC NAEYC Position statement in Inclusion, Recommended Practice 2016
 - Assessment
 - Environment
 - Family
 - Instruction
 - Teaming and Collaboration
 - Transition

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Outcomes

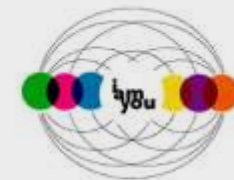
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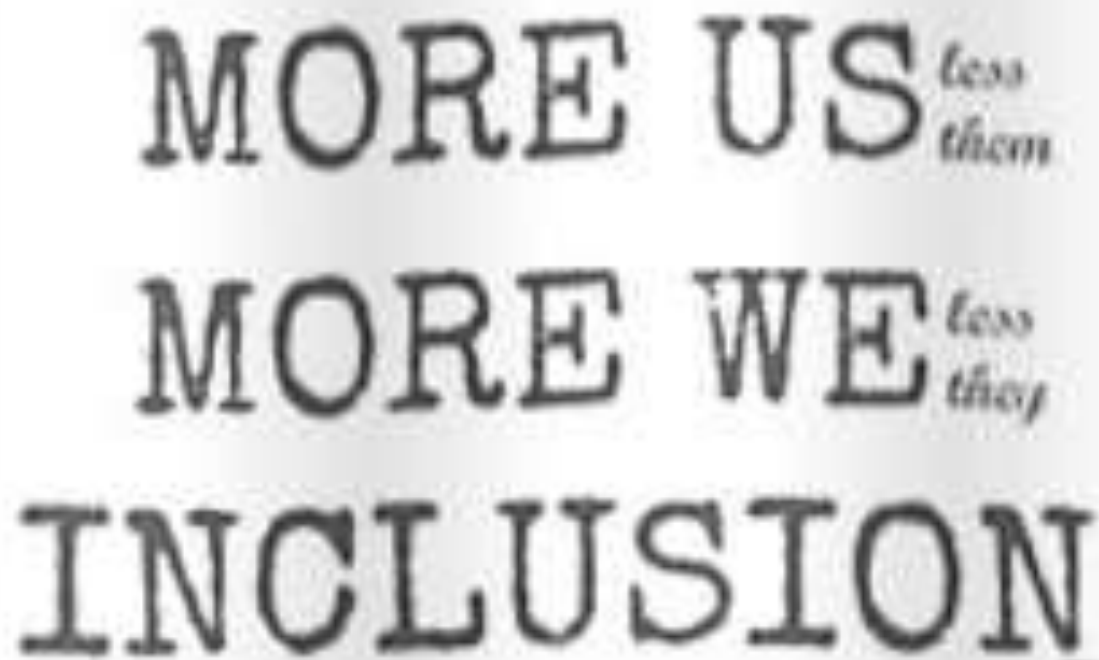
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Thank you for
listening.

A poster with a white background and a black border. The text is arranged in three lines. The first line reads 'MORE US' in a large, bold, serif font, with the words 'less' and 'them' in a smaller, lowercase, sans-serif font to the right of 'US'. The second line reads 'MORE WE' in the same large, bold, serif font, with 'less' and 'they' in the same smaller font to the right of 'WE'. The third line reads 'INCLUSION' in the same large, bold, serif font.

MORE US *less them*
MORE WE *less they*
INCLUSION

Thank you for listening



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