

The Pros and Cons of Inclusion/Mainstreaming

PROS OF INCLUSION

Proponents of inclusion believe:

- Pull-out programs have been ineffective in delivering services to students with special needs. They cite research that indicates students with disabilities have performed better on test scores, or at the very least no worse, when they stay in regular education classes.
- Including students with special needs in the regular classroom provides the opportunity for them to learn social skills with their non-disabled peers.
- Additionally, these peers will grow to be accepting of human difference.
- Pulling students out of regular classrooms denies them access to the same curriculum offered to their peers.
- The stigma surrounding segregated special education classes is avoided when all students are educated in the same classroom.
- People with disabilities should be viewed as a minority group and therefore deserve the legal protection that other minorities enjoy.
- It is a basic right of all people to live and learn in the mainstream of school and community life.

CONS OF INCLUSION

Opponents of inclusion believe:

- Students in separate special education classrooms acquire individualized skills and one-on-one attention because of the special educator's training, the IEP-driven curriculum, and the opportunities for practice in a more sheltered setting.
- General educators face enough challenges in teaching an increasingly diverse population of "regular education" children. Adding students with special needs into an already over-burdened system lessens the effectiveness of the education all students receive.
- Students with special needs face added stress and pressure in regular education classrooms because they may directly compare themselves and their classroom performance to their non-disabled peers.
- Support for inclusion stems from it being a less expensive, as opposed to more effective method of serving students with special needs.