

INCLUSION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS: MODELLING A SUCCESSFUL SYSTEM

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Abstract

Inclusion in early childhood settings is required by United Nations for children with disabilities as well as children who are gifted, culturally and linguistically diverse, or disadvantaged. This paper will explore factors surrounding successful inclusion in early childhood education. Research will focus on three interrelated phases from preparing the setting, to implementation, and to evaluation. The expectation is that evaluation will be used as a tool for improvement. Policies, leadership and organizational supports, resources, needs assessment of children and their families, pre-service and in-service training set the environment for inclusion. High quality curricula, evidence based practices, an inclusive physical setting to all children, and a partnership with families contribute to a successful implementation. Formative and summative evaluation will target the barriers and facilitators of inclusion so challenges can be overcome. It will also be proposed that for inclusion to be successful, an ecological model should be adopted. Cultures, policies, and practices could be exclusive for a variety of reasons. A shared understanding of the societal obligations toward all children forms the basis for action. Practices will be successful when families, teachers, administrators, and the society at large feel that it is their responsibility to contribute to inclusion in early childhood settings.

Keywords: Childhood, Disabilities & Evaluation.
