

How Inclusive Is Your School?

Schools can use this checklist to assess their inclusive practices, whether they are being developed, have been established, or are embedded in school culture.

Learning Environment & Supports

- Students spend the majority of their school day with groups of students without disabilities.
- One-on-one settings are only used when required to support specific learning goals for the individual.
- The general education classroom is the predominant learning environment.
- Supplemental instruction (or intervention) is provided as needed and is provided in addition to time spent in the core content classes, not in place of it.
- Appropriate work environments are available for individual learning and are accommodated in areas such as classrooms, study rooms, or library rooms, not the hallway.
- Classroom organization encourages independent learning.
- Support is sufficient to help students progress in their learning, while allowing them to draw on the knowledge they already possess.
- Students learn collaboratively.
- Staff encourage naturally occurring supports, such as peer models.

Teaching Approach & Lessons

- Teaching extends the student's learning.
- Lesson plans reflect differences in students' knowledge.
Teaching styles and lesson plans accommodate differences in learning.
- The learning objectives for each student are clear.
Students have opportunities to record their work in a variety of ways.
- Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Lessons reflect consideration of all student needs (IEPs, related services, etc.)



Faculty & Staff



- Teachers, teaching assistants (TAs), and paraprofessionals encourage naturally occurring supports, such as peers.
- Teachers share lesson plans and homework with TAs and paraprofessionals in advance of the presentation of new topics and individual lessons.
- TAs and paraprofessionals are involved in curriculum and lesson planning and review.
- TAs and paraprofessionals have planning time to make resources as directed by the teacher and to plan the differentiation with the teacher.

Lesson Planning & Response to Student Needs

- The school team aims to maximize the independence of students.
- Assessments are implemented to identify achievements and gather data to inform effective planning.
- The program of activities and lesson plans are tailored to the individual's talents and interests and are done within the general education classroom.
- Related services (OT, PT, speech, etc.) are provided as needed by pushing into the general education environment. Pulling the student out of the classroom for related services should be limited to when it is absolutely necessary.
- Learning in school capitalizes on activities and learning opportunities outside of school.
- Home-to-school links communicate and share priorities and strategies between different settings where the student spends time.

NDSS and Down Syndrome Education International (DSEI) created the resource, *Down Syndrome: Guidelines for Inclusive Education*, to improve the development and educational outcomes for individuals with Down syndrome from birth to adult life by providing educators, therapists, early interventionists, parents, and school districts with a guide to evidence-based practices.

Visit our our website for the complete guide
<https://ndss.org/inclusive-education-guidelines>



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