

## Special points of interest:

- Placement should be in a class with students within one to two years of the chronological age of the student being included.
- Neighborhood school refers to the school the child would attend if s/he did not have an educational disability.
- Inclusion looks different for every student, based upon the individual needs, strategies and resources required, and can accommodate students with the full range of disabilities.



## Fair but Not Equal

By: Jean Zitter, MSW, LCSW

The following vignette was taken from an article written by schoolteacher Katharine Parham for newamerica.org:

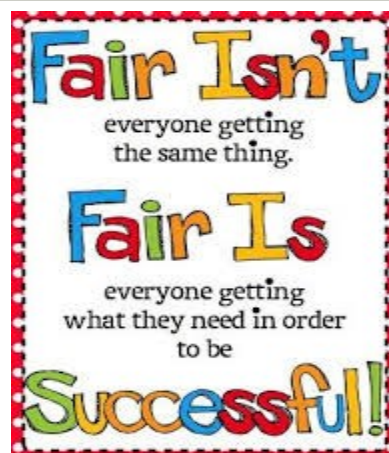
*There was a specific culture-building lesson I liked to use at the beginning of each school year during my time as an early elementary teacher. I would call three students of varying heights to the front of the room, where I'd taped three pieces of candy evenly across the board:*

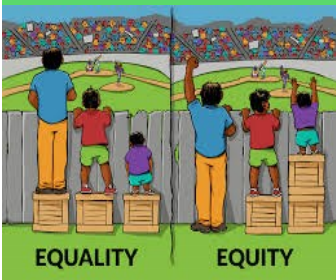
*"You may each take one piece of candy," I'd say, knowing that given their heights only the tallest of the three students would be able to reach a piece. When the righteously indignant protests began, I would pose a crucial question to the class: "Was this fair?"*

*This activity led to what I considered one of the most essential discussions for laying a strong cultural foundation in my classroom. Understanding that some classmates might need different kinds of help (different "chairs," as it were) to be as successful as others in reaching our classroom goals helped build a small, but mighty, cadre of youngsters all primed to support one another and operate in an environment where their teacher frequently gave more attention to some students than others.*

*Challenges, to be sure, but this "fair-but-not-equal" foundation of what appropriate behaviors should look like led to incredible, often unprompted displays of empathy among students throughout the year.*

Oftentimes, CST members are asked by classroom teachers whether it's fair to make accommodations for some students but not for others. The answer is a resounding "yes!"





**Upcoming Events:**

**March 17th**

**St. Patrick's Day**

**April 1st**

**April Fool's Day**

**Next Issue:**

**April 8, 2019**

**WHAT IS "SUPPORTED INCLUSIVE EDUCATION"?**

Supported inclusive education refers to the opportunity for all students, **regardless of their disability**, to be educated in **age-appropriate** general education classes in their **neighborhood school in natural proportions\***. All necessary **supports** are provided to students and educators to ensure meaningful participation in the total school community.

**Definitions of Terms Regardless Of Their Disability:**

Inclusion looks different for every student, based upon the individual needs, strategies and resources required, and can accommodate students with the full range of disabilities.

**Age-Appropriate:** Placement should be in a class with students within one to two years of the chronological age of the student being included.

**Neighborhood School:** This refers to the school the child would attend if s/he did not have an educational disability.

**Supports:** Supports can include, but are not limited to:

- \* curricular or instructional strategies
- \* peer supports
- \* team teaching strategies
- \* assistive technology
- \* environmental adaptations
- \* specialized instructional strategies
- \* additional adults in the classroom
- \* integrated and consultative related services

Supports will be different for each student dependent upon the unique needs of each student, class and district. Inclusive education requires creative thinking in providing these supports and a redefinition of roles. Inclusive education also involves supports for teachers that may include:

- \* planning time
- \* training and technical assistance
- \* collaborative teaming
- \* parental involvement
- \* administrative support

\*Natural proportions means that children with disabilities aren't lumped together in one general education class but distributed throughout all general education classes. Also worth noting is that children without disabilities also benefit significantly from learning in inclusive environments.

Studies show that typically developing children who engage at young ages with peers who have disabilities develop more positive attitudes and levels of understanding toward diverse counterparts than those who do not. It seems impossible, knowing this, to argue against any opportunity that might enable the next generation to grow up with more empathy for those different from themselves, especially as the U.S. becomes increasingly

diverse.

In an effort to set a national expectation for the availability of high quality inclusion classrooms in all school programs, the U.S Departments of Education and Health and Human Services recently released guidance on the importance of inclusion.

In a webinar hosted by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (within ED), Assistant Secretary Michael Yudin noted the gravity of this expectation with his introductory remark, "Being meaningfully included as a member of society is the first step to equal opportunity in this country. It is one of America's most cherished ideals and is every person's right."



**Inclusion works!**