

# Including Children with Typical Development

I've heard a lot about the benefits of inclusion for young children with special needs. But what about children who are developing typically? Won't they fall behind if they are in a class with children who have disabilities?

It is understandable that professionals and families have questions about the effects of early childhood inclusion on children without special needs. Now, thanks to research, we are able to say without any doubt that inclusion offers something positive to everyone!

- Typically developing children do not lose ground developmentally because they are in an inclusive setting. They continue making progress in their learning and development. In fact, typically developing children enrolled in inclusive settings show a greater understanding of disability and greater sensitivity to individual differences among others. Contact with classmates with disabilities in their inclusive classroom is one factor that makes a positive difference in their attitudes!
- Children with special needs benefit from being enrolled in inclusive classrooms. They demonstrate more mature and positive behaviors around their typical peers. They show gains in social and language skills that they may not have experienced in self-contained or segregated settings.

- Teachers report generally positive attitudes about having children with disabilities in their classrooms.
- Families generally express favorable attitudes toward having their children in inclusive programs. These positive attitudes increase over time.

Here are some things we can all do to promote early childhood inclusion:

- Spread the news about the benefits of inclusion for all children.
- Publicize resources supporting inclusive child care such as training, consultation, and increased child care subsidies.
- Continue to promote the rated license and support programs and staff as they strive to raise their star ratings. After all, higher quality means better outcomes for children with and without special needs.

Those of us who work at PFI are generally excited about the changes we are noticing in the early childhood landscape. Although we need more studies to know for sure whether early childhood inclusion is on the rise across the nation, we are seeing more and more children with special needs enrolled in child care.

And it isn't just children with mild disabilities who are included anymore.

Children with all types of abilities are given the chance to grow and learn alongside their typical peers! **ATN!**



by  
**Pat Wesley**  
Pat was  
Director of  
Partnerships for  
Inclusion from  
1993–2007

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