

# Inclusive practice

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



The content of this assignment will critically analyse and report on the benefits and challenges of inclusive practice for children, families, staff and society. This essay will look closely at goal three of the strand Mana Tangata which states “ Children experience and environment where they are encouraged to learn with and alongside others” (MoE, 1996, p. 70). I will look closely at children with diverse needs and the importance in developing reciprocal relationships for the benefits of all, irrespective of challenges children, parents and teachers may come across.

I see relationships as one of the key components in an inclusive setting. Within the Early Childhood Education [ECE] setting reciprocal relationships need to be formed with the child, their whanau, the wider community, my fellow teachers, and any other professionals working with children. “ Positive teacher student relationships maximize the learning of every student and help children and youth become full participating citizens of society” (Positive Learning Environments in Schools, 2005).

Te Whariki (1996) makes many references to relationships and states that “ The wider world of family and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum” (p. 14). If I have been proactive in constructing an environment where all are welcomed, valued and feel supported, whanau will feel more empowered to build trust with me, leading to collaboration in the development of the learning process. This should build a relationship where parents and whanau feel they can rely on educators to care for and educate their child, a place where children are confident and happy to be.

These relationships are truly valuable. Sharing knowledge and learning is embraced by Te Ao Maori, because it enhances Mana Tangata, “ Mana  
<https://assignbuster.com/inclusive-practice/>

Tangata is the power of individual gains through their abilities, efforts and taking advantage of all opportunities... for development" (Hemara, 2000, p. 78). Educators need to be aware of the feelings that parents may have, new families may at first be reluctant, ambivalent and unwilling. They may find the process of bringing their child into day-care unfamiliar and frightening. What educators need to do is be honest, reassuring, compassionate and non-judgmental (Fialka, 2001).

Let them know and see that their child and themselves will be included, happy and make a valued and important contribution to our childcare family. It is important for Educators to talk with and listen to the families, children, doctors and specialists that are involved in the life of the diverse learner. This helps us to gain a clearer understanding of care requirements, education requirements and contributes to developing beneficial consistencies for the life of the child while also affirming the child's sense of belonging as he transitions between home and centre life.

" We must always be careful to avoid presumptions and assumptions that ultimately cause barriers to the partnership process" (New Zealand Tertiary College, 2013). I do not believe that any child or family should feel excluded from any ECE centre. Lyon (2005) states that " every person regardless of their similarities and differences has a fundamental right to be a part of a family, a community and a society that will enrich their lives and be enriched by the presence of theirs" (pg. 16).

We as educators need to fulfil the role in the education on children. We should strive to find the best way in which to help the child to learn with any disabilities they may have regardless of what they may be. Through regular

encounters within the ECE environment children with disabilities can develop self-confidence and a higher self-esteem as interpersonal skills and social relationships are affirmed and extended.

Lev Vygotsky, the socio-cultural theorist, believed that children's competency was enhanced when participation in socially and culturally defined activities, and emphasized that language was central to a child's ability to learn during social interactions (Hedges, 2003). Children construct their own knowledge and understanding, by means of these social interactions. Through communication, children build relationships with each other, and become more independent and active learners, building on their confidence and extending on their sense of belonging within the centre, (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Purdue, Gordan-Burns, Gunn, Madden, & Surtees (2006, cited in New Zealand Tertiary College, [NZTC]) state that “ inclusion is the right for all children and their families to participate in the ECE environment where diversity rather than being seen as a problem, is celebrated and welcomed”. Teachers and families can work together to create communities which celebrate wholeness, by actively promoting and practicing unity, dignity, respect and inclusiveness.

Inclusive environments benefit all of us, everyone in a community. Diversity is an opportunity for acceptance, to learn, to grow together, to support, and to become a community. Lyons wrote an article called; A place for everybody? (2005) here she states “ The early childhood sector is perfectly placed to demonstrate to families, communities and society at large that the

children with disability are children first and foremost and inclusion is about all of us and benefits all of us”.

Early childhood Educators should largely focus on developing an environment which embodies respect amongst all tamariki, families, staff and the wider community. For children with limited physical abilities, environmental factors contribute to creating an inclusive setting. Ramps, special tables, easels for arts and playground equipment work towards creating equitable learning opportunities. “ Inclusion necessitates the removal of barriers that may prevent individuals from belonging” (Allan, 2005 as cited in NZTC).

For complete successful inclusion in ECE, staffs need to identify and take action on removing any barriers to full acceptance, participation and learning. Physically inclusive centres maximise each child’s opportunity to access all spaces, make choices about the resources they themselves experience, interact with children and adults, care for themselves independently, experience challenge and take manageable risks, and engage with images, books and resources that reflect people with disabilities positively. (Owens, 2012).

Thought must be placed also on sounds, visual displays, and quiet areas to allow peaceful places for children and adults. All children have the right to receive high-quality, equitable educational experiences. If a teacher has correctly applied inclusive practice she would be creating lessons and activities that are available for all children so that everyone can play and contribute to these teaching and learning moments (Purdue, 2006).

These are extended opportunities for children to develop awareness of their strengths and a perception of themselves as capable of developing new strengths, interests and abilities. Teachers should be aware of and committed to stamping out un-inclusive language as this can be a powerful barrier to development and relationships (Purdue, 2006). This is language that avoids words or expressions that may be considered to exclude or discriminate children or people.

It is also important that when talking to or about the child with a disability to recognise the child before the disability. Educators know that each child is unique and they all have different learning capabilities, styles, and needs; so inclusive childcare centres place great importance on creating opportunities for students to learn and be assessed in a variety of ways. Therefore care and thought should be taken when considering activities for children, for example using activities which widen senses and invite diverse children as well as all children to involve themselves.

“ Educators should implement a curriculum which involves parents/guardians and where appropriate whanau. This can be achieved by developing a curriculum that respects a diversity of values and beliefs” (Ministry in Education [MoE], 1998, pg. 34). Teacher’s need to be positive towards all children and particularly children with diverse needs, focus on what they do well, tell them what they do well, believe in their abilities to succeed, and share that positively with other students, parents and the wider community, (MoE, 2000).

Through encouragement here I believe children are assured of their capabilities and independence, promoting a positive selfawareness, attitude

and a drive to continue to learn alongside their peers. Although it may seem to either parents or staff as challenging or daunting for centres to create inclusive centres, ultimately the benefits outweigh any negatives. Inclusive education benefits all children as it enables opportunities to learn alongside one another, provides opportunities for diverse educational experiences and peer interactions.

That is not to say that will not be at times, difficult; teachers, centre management and parents just need to make a slightly extended effort in creating an inclusive environment for the benefit of our children. Barriers to inclusion include the lack of funding, limited hours for education support workers [ESW], inadequate resources and lack of understanding of inclusive practice and how to adapt the environment and staffs practice and pedagogy (Burns, Purdue, Briggs, Stark and Turnock. 2012). Teachers may feel at times, incapable or not adequate to provide the specialist assistance to the diverse learner.

It is important that we remember that we are professional early childhood educators and that if we ask specialists and use resources we are capable of assisting the child. Here knowledge is power, we must be proactive in our centres development, sourcing resources, searching for grants, using ministry resource libraries, making the most of our time with ESW and empowering them in their care and education of our children. One of the biggest challenges could perhaps be staff adapting their own beliefs about educating and caring for children with disabilities.

Therefore staffs, ESW and management should be attending professional development to gain insight into the various cultural beliefs of giftedness, for <https://assignbuster.com/inclusive-practice/>

example Pakeha and Maori have differing perspectives on children with special needs. Pakeha value mainly academic achievement while a Maori view focuses on the child's talent within a cultural context (McKenzie, 2010). Teacher Aids may be working in a centre and staff need to ensure we are working in collaboration with and supporting them, creating a consistent learning environment.

As Lyons (2005) states “ it is not and should not be the ESW's sole role to ensure the success of inclusion” (p. 19). Collaboration is an important aspect of an inclusive setting and one that teachers should actively promote. To ensure tamariki have fair access to quality education, extra assistance and adapted programmes, staff, parents, management, support workers and specialists meet together to discuss planning and programming to best support the child in their play and developments according to their needs.

These plans are known as an Individual Development Programme, this is developed to bring together knowledge and contributions from those who know the child best to support future developments. When working with children with special needs it might mean challenging deficit based assessment from ‘ specialists’ and to recognise the value of what the children are learning through a different lens (Mc Arthur, J. , Purdue, K. & Ballard, K, 2003).

When planning for any child's strengths and interests the environment should cater for and encourage well-being, belonging, communication, exploration and contribution. The Education Review Office (2010) states that the centre must “ enhance children's learning and development through planning, providing and evaluating a range of appropriate activities that



cater for the learning and developmental needs of the children fostering their cognitive, creative, cultural, emotional, physical, and social development, including both individual and group experiences, indoors and outdoors”