



Celebrate Differences
Celebrating the Abilities of Those with Disabilities



Inclusive Solutions

Volume 1, Issue 1

Spring 2010

What is Inclusive Solutions? Why read it?

Rebecca Christiansen

Founder/President Celebrate Differences

As a parent volunteering in the classroom, I often hear teachers commenting on needing more ways or more education on how to support their special education students. As an organization dedicated to improving the lives of those children with a disability, we felt creating a newsletter for educators would be helpful.

Inclusive Solutions is a newsletter that will assist you in your efforts to support students with disabilities in your classroom. We plan on providing you with strategies you can implement with your students to help them achieve their potential.

Each edition will feature ideas, strategies and resources that have been effective in working with students with disabilities.

We hope you enjoy our first edition of *Inclusive Solutions*. We look forward to bringing you this quarterly newsletter. Happy reading!

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Our Mission

Celebrate Differences is committed to supporting individuals with disabilities in reaching their fullest potential by providing positive resources and information to families, communities and health care providers while promoting a competent level of awareness and understanding.

Our Vision

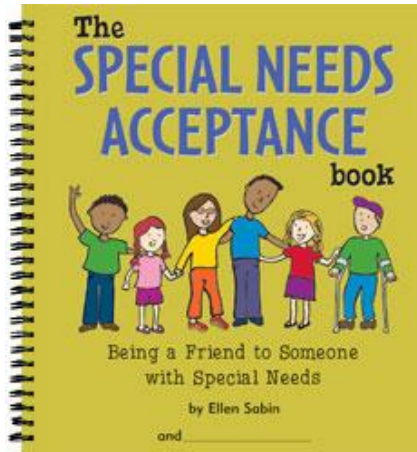
Our vision is to foster a community of acceptance which promotes the best opportunities for individuals with disabilities to exceed expectations and achieve their dreams.

**Check out our website
for some great
resources for your
parents!!**



The SPECIAL NEEDS ACCEPTANCE BOOK

Being a Friend to Someone with Special Needs is an informative and valuable book that helps children better understand their peers who have special needs. Using engaging exercises and educational information, it covers a range of disabilities and conditions including autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, learning disabilities like dyslexia, ADHD, blindness and deafness. This book provides insight to help kids understand their friends' challenges, while also showing them that we are more alike than we are different.



This book is available to purchase at <http://www.wateringacpress.com>.

An Assistive Technology FAQ

Jacquelyn Criger MS ED

Curricular Support/Technology

Assistive technology, or AT as it is commonly referred to, is not a new idea. It has been referred to in legislation for more than 20 years! But, there is still much confusion about what it is...and, who qualifies to use it.

What is assistive tech?

In current IDEA legislation, assistive tech is, "any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of children with disabilities." Pretty vague, isn't it? In some ways, that's good news...AT can be defined by how it's used, and not by what it is! In some ways, that's bad news. Sometimes assistive tech is being used, but not recognized as AT, or documented in the student's IEP.

There are a couple of Rules of Thumb that may help clarify. One is, if the student can't complete the task (in a reasonable amount of time) without using the tool, it is assistive tech...even if that tool is available to all students in the class. An example would be a calculator. If everyone uses it, for them, it's general technology. If one student can't do the math without it, for her, it's AT.

Another way to consider whether or not something is assistive technology is to consider how it's used. If it helps a student compensate for any part of the disability, then it is AT.

Bottom line...For most people, technology makes things easier. For people with disabilities, assistive technology makes things POSSIBLE!

The Bulletin Board



Each issue we will list valuable resources to assist educators in your efforts in providing education to students with disabilities. If you know of resources that others would benefit from, please email us at info@celebratedifferences.org and please share.

<http://curriculumconnection4sped.pbworks.com/FrontPage>

This site is full of resources supporting special education inclusion students and their staff in providing a meaningful, purposeful, blended, standards driven curriculum.

<http://www.sparklebox2.co.uk/>

This site provides high quality downloadable resources to enhance your teaching, classroom displays and school environment. All of the resources can be downloaded for free.

Ten Ways You Can Advocate for a Child with Special Needs this IEP Season

Catherine Whitcher, M.ED

Precision Education – www.preceisioneducation.com

- *Don't bring surprises to the meeting. A mini-meeting with parents can be a great tool!*
- *Share your reports/goals with parents prior to the meeting.*
- *Talk with the other professionals on the team to assure they aren't bringing surprises.*
- *Ask parents if they have concerns prior to the meeting to help negotiate solutions before the meeting.*
- *Assure goals you are writing are in alignment with the family values of the student's family.*
- *Focus on both strengths and weaknesses when writing goals.*
- *Your goals need to be measurable and objective, but also be sure they are reasonable and understandable.*
- *Remember to include technology for most, if not all, students. Technology helps create independence!*
- *Double check the support service minutes, accommodation and standardized testing pages.*
- *Before you recommend a placement for a student, please go and view the classroom yourself.*

Is it Behavioral? Adam Russo, LCSW, C-ACYFSW

Edgewood Clinical Services – adam@edwoodclinicalservices.com

Parents of kids with special needs face many challenges that are in addition to the traditional rigors of parenting. Parents are required to navigate various state, educational, and medical systems to ensure that their children are receiving the care and support that they need. As parents become advocates in addition to their roles as parents, understanding what is a behavioral concern as compared to a symptom of their child's disability may become a struggle to differentiate.

In attempting to determine whether a child's behavior is truly a behavioral issue, parents first must understand what their expectations of their child are. If a child is meeting behavioral expectations, then parents observe a worsening of behaviors, medical issues that could be potential causes should be ruled out. If there is nothing different medically occurring, then there could be a behavioral issue. Parents must understand what they believe are fair behavioral expectations to hold their child too consistently. Simply because a child has special needs does not mean that it is acceptable to have behavioral difficulties also; kids with special needs are just like any other child and can be oppositional, rebellious, or funny. The ways that they choose to express themselves may not be appropriate, and therefore require intervention from adults.

Behaviors typically happen in context for a child; because adults may not fully understand the cause or effect doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. Caregivers should work to understand what could potentially be triggering the negative behaviors and attempt different interventions to try to avoid this behavior in the future. There are many other ways to intervene, but this is simply one idea. Please feel free to email if you have any questions.



The Rainbow Club Submitted by Linda Warning, Spec. Ed. Programming Specialist, District 204

Positive classroom learning environments provide the first foundational step to supporting our kids in inclusive settings. Below is a model to assist staff in setting up environments using the Rainbow Club philosophy and strategies.

The Rainbow Club Principles:

- Draw attention to rule following behavior (assignment completion, etc)
- Enlist students to provide reinforcement for peers
- Utilize naturally occurring classroom activities and/or privileges contingently

Developing the Rainbow Club

- Class and staff work to set up 6-8 rules to support a positive learning environment
- Each student in class begins a specified time period (usually a week), within which to build a rainbow in the corner of each desk
- Colors are earned by demonstrating appropriate classroom rules.
- Free Time Eligibility periods are set up daily

Example: Free Time Eligibility

- Red (anyone on red earns free reading, free draw, etc)
- Orange (anyone on orange earns all of Red, PLUS board games, art projects, etc)
- Yellow (all of above colors PLUS checkers, help the teacher, etc)
- Green (all of above colors PLUS, magazines, computer games, etc)
- Blue (all of above colors PLUS CD player, teacher chair, etc.)
- Violet (all of above colors PLUS chat with friends, help in office, etc)

Remember

- Adapt the system to meet the needs, interests and dynamics of students
- CLEARLY display behavior expectations and free time opportunities associated with each color using the communication means of the students in the room (if you have picture communicators, icons must be used in this display)
- Individually display rules and opportunities, when necessary

***Adapted from Strategies for Teachers, Diana Browning Wright, 2009-developed as a method to replace the “red, yellow, green, pull the card” response cost system method, which by its punitive nature is difficult for our kids.**

DO YOU HAVE A GREAT IDEA THAT YOU
WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS?
SUBMIT YOUR IDEA TO
INFO@CELEBRATEDIFFERENCES.ORG FOR
YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A \$10 GIFT CARD.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 10, 2010

HANDWRITING WITHOUT TEARS
7 PM TO 8 PM (CPDU'S AVAILABLE)

MAY 22, 2010

OUTBACK STEAKHOUSE - NAPERVILLE
12 PM TO 2 PM

MAY 28, 2010

WENDY'S COMMUNITY NIGHT- MONTGOMERY
5 PM TO 8 PM

**PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF ALL OF
OUR EVENTS!**



**Join us on May 22, 2010 at
our **Outback Steakhouse**
fundraiser.**

**Please visit our website at
www.celebratedifferences.org
to learn more!**

Celebrate Differences

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