Maximizing Inclusion of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in the United States

A Focus on Universal Design, Accommodations, and Communication Supports

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Federal laws, regulations, and guidance have helped to support maximizing inclusion by requiring access to the general education curriculum for all students, including those with disabilities. U.S. federal laws include:

- Every Student Succeeds Act
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Rehabilitation Act
Inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom has increased since 1997, from 46.4 to 63.5%.

From 2008 to 2017, the percentage of students with disabilities in the general education classroom 80% or more of the day increased from 58.5% to 63.5%.

2017 data from the 41st Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of IDEA.
Inclusion Varies

But, the data are not so positive for all students with disabilities. Students with intellectual disabilities have not fared as well:

- 2000: 12.6%
- 2006: 16.0%
- 2017: 17.0%

Efforts to Maximize Access

Access to the grade-level general education curriculum is a foundational approach for developing increased inclusion. Much of the focus is on:

- Universal design for learning
- Accommodations and other accessibility approaches
- Communicative competence
Universal Design for Learning

Developing programs and activities that recognize individual differences in all students and promoting multiple ways to:

• Present information to students
• Engage students in learning
• Enable them to respond

Resource:
www.cast.org
Accommodations

Accommodations (e.g., braille, sign language) and other accessibility supports (text-to-speech, extra time) are to be provided during instruction and during assessments.

Resource:
www.nceo.info
Communication Supports

- Peer supports
- Modeling use of Alternative and Augmentative Communication (ACC)
- Training teams
- Team planning to make sure communication supports work

Resource: tiescenter.org
Communication TIPS

• TIP #1 How Peers Can Support Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Use by Students with Significant Communication Needs  
https://tiescenter.org/resource/ID/-2mLJDfTuShg1LaPkMzQ

• TIP #2 Using Collaborative Teams to Support Students with Significant Communication Needs in Inclusive Classrooms  
https://tiescenter.org/resource/1q/pKnJgOQzqwLf-87mpDg
MTSS for ALL Students

NCEO and TIES Center worked together to produce a brief that provides ideas for how to make a multi-tiered system of support inclusive of all students, including those with significant cognitive disabilities.
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