

The parent perspective: Inclusion and acceptance in the classroom

The Family Advisory Committee at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital has created a mini-workshop for teachers and/or teacher candidates to explore the topic of creating inclusive activities in elementary school. Through real stories and an experiential learning activity, we hope to show that small changes in classroom settings can make a big difference to the experiences of children with various types of special needs (including physical, communication, intellectual and/or behavioural exceptionalities).

Workshop objectives

1. Explore the concept of inclusion in the classroom from the family's perspective
2. Share real stories of inclusion in the classroom (successes and failures)
3. Engage in a group activity (analyze a real scenario using an activity planning guide)
4. Share resources/strategies for successful inclusion in the classroom

About Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital (Holland Bloorview) is Canada's largest children's rehabilitation hospital focused on improving the lives of kids with disabilities. Holland Bloorview is a global leader in applied research, teaching and learning, and client and family centred care. We are a provincial resource transforming care for children with cerebral palsy, acquired brain injury including concussion, muscular dystrophy, amputation, epilepsy, spina bifida, arthritis, cleft-lip and palate, autism and other physical and developmental disabilities. Our vision is to create a world of possibility for kids with disability. For more information please visit www.hollandbloorview.ca

About the Holland Bloorview Family Advisory Committee (FAC)

The Family Advisory Committee is a devoted group of parents and youth that represents children and their families who receive services at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. We partner with hospital employees and leadership to promote client and family centred care.

Contact

If you have any questions or comments or would like to to organize a workshop, please contact us at facchair@hollandbloorview.ca.

Sample student profile

Valeria is a 10 year old girl attending grade 5 in a public elementary school. At home, she enjoys playing games on her iPad, watching videos, swimming and riding her bike. She also likes to be outdoors as much as possible.

Valeria's cognitive and academic skills are well below grade level. She also has some physical challenges and has difficulty with mobility and balance. She is able to walk independently, but is limited in her ability to run. She has mild hearing loss, but does not wear hearing aids. Valeria is able to communicate effectively with her peers and adults, mainly using single words or short phrases.

Valeria is very happy girl and enjoys interacting with her peers, although needs some support in order to participate in activities and to stay on task. Her classmates are very inclusive and are always willing to partner with Valeria and help her to participate.

Sample scenario: Hide-and-seek

You are planning a hide-and-seek activity for physical education, but Valeria can become easily overwhelmed with fast paced activities and competition. What is the best way to include Valeria in this activity?

Sample activity planner

Demand	Abilities needed	Student	Adaptations
Motor	Run	Walks	Increase count or decrease distance
	Yell	Quiet	Yelling partner
	Reach for target	High only	Tethered home base
	Hear from distance	No	Visual signal/flare
	Crouch	Yes	
	Close eyes	Yes	
Cognitive	Count to target 50	No	Count to ten for each finger
	Recognize peers from background	yes	
Emotional	Coping with chasing	No	Reverse hide-and-seek
	Keeping a secret	No	Two-stage hide: first all, second the revealer
	Following no peek rule	Yes	
	Coping with competition	No	

When you are completing your own planner for your given scenario, consider these demands:

- Motor
- Movements and coordination required
- Necessary skills (e.g. count, figure-ground perception)
- Emotional/social
- Demands on coping confidently (e.g. being chased, frustration, losing)

Blank activity planner

Activity: _____

Demand	Abilities needed	Student	Adaptations
motor			
Cognitive			
Emotional			

General strategies to support inclusion

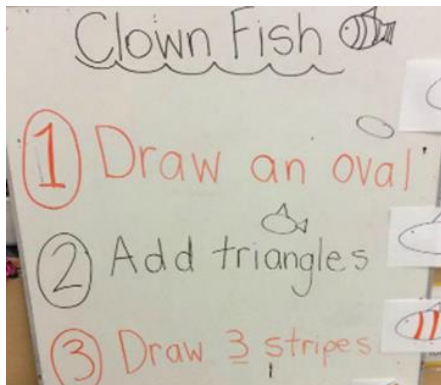
1. Plan in advance
2. Focus on the positive
3. Problem solve creatively
4. Collaborate with others
5. Source helpful resources

Resources and ideas

Small things can make a big difference to a child's experience in the classroom.

Some things to think about:

- Room set up is important
- Tools to help everyone (so kids don't feel singled-out)
- Simple directions
- Modifications to activities
- Technology (e.g. tablets)
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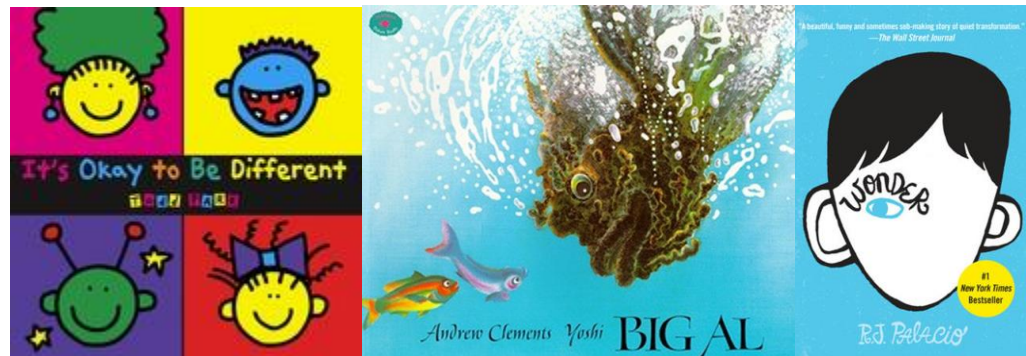
Step by step directions



Placemat to help stay focused and organized

Techniques for encouraging social inclusion:

- Passive encouragement (heterogeneous groups)
- Active encouragement
 - If a child in the class has special equipment, ask them if they would mind letting the other students try
 - Use books to help teach kids about different abilities
 - Books we recommend are *Big Al* by Andrew Clements, *It's Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr and *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio



Atheneum Books for Young Readers (*Big Al*); Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (*It's Okay To Be Different*); Knopf Books for Young Readers (*Wonder*)

Take away messages

Small changes have a big impact
Conversations lead to clarity