



# GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTATION

## of The Fundamentals of Inclusive Education



### What can educators do to support the core elements of inclusive education?

This guide lists specific steps educators can take to implement the fundamentals of inclusive education. The information in this guide is aligned with Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9 of the Cheryl M. Jorgensen book, *It's More Than "Just Being In."*

#### DEMONSTRATE DIGNITY AND VALUE

Demonstrating value and respect for students with complex access needs is a practice that should infuse every moment of the school day. Here are some active steps you can take to bring these values to life:

- Presume your student understands you when speaking to them.
- Speak to students in a natural tone of voice, not as if you are talking to a toddler.
- Don't speak about private issues such as toileting, personal hygiene, or behavior within earshot of other students or professionals not on the student's team.
- Don't use terms like "low functioning" to describe students. Each student has gifts, talents, strengths, and needs. Instead of looking at disability as a deficit, look at disability as a part of the natural diversity of human beings.
- Don't require students to change prior to including them in inclusive academic and social situations. It is precisely those situations in which students will learn the norms and skills associated with being a member of an inclusive community.
- Strive to discover each student's unique gifts and talents and utilize their strengths to engage them in instruction.
- Show respect for students' families. They have a lifelong investment in their child's education and often know what works with their child better than school personnel.

## SUPPORT AN INCLUSIVE VISION

Follow this list when supporting students' families and Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) committees in developing an inclusive vision for school and future community living. The McGill Action Planning System (MAPS) process supports students and families to talk about the student's history, passions, strengths, dreams and nightmares, hopes for the current school year and life after high school, and the best ways to support the student to achieve his or her dreams. Chapters 2 and 10 in the Jorgensen book, *It's More Than "Just Being In,"* provide step-by-step instructions for developing a MAPS-informed vision and plan:

- Provide the student's family with a description of the MAPS visioning process and then invite them to participate in a MAPS meeting.
- Ask the student if they want to participate in a MAPS meeting.
- Identify a facilitator and chart paper recorder for the meeting and have an initial meeting with the student and family to discuss the process and identify participants.
- Schedule the meeting in a welcoming space.
  - Be sure that the meeting space is accessible for all participants.
  - Schedule at least 90 minutes for the meeting.
- Invite meeting participants including siblings and the student's classmates.
  - Provide snacks and drinks for the meeting.
  - Set up chairs around the focus student, with family and close friends in the front row and other participants behind.
  - Post flip chart pages at the front of the room.
  - Use markers with no scent.
- Review the meeting agenda and norms for participation.
- Facilitate the meeting.
- Develop an action plan to implement the recommendations that arise from the meeting.
- Give the flip chart paper to the student and her family.
- Follow up on the action steps on a regular basis.
- Write a vision statement and include it in the IEP.

## PRESUMING COMPETENCE

According to Cheryl Jorgensen, presuming competence means that in the absence of conclusive evidence, teachers should assume that all students can participate in an age-appropriate general education curriculum and form meaningful relationships. Students with complex needs may require additional help to achieve the same goals as students without disabilities. It is presuming all students can demonstrate competence if they are supported well.

Learn more about what educators can do to support presuming/constructing competence in the [Guide to Implementation for Presuming and Constructing Competence from TX CAN](#).

## ESTABLISH VALUED MEMBERSHIP IN GENERAL EDUCATION

If the student is already a member of a general education classroom, use this membership list to identify areas of membership that need team focus. Prioritize them in order of importance and develop an action plan for implementation.

- The student attends the school they would attend if they didn't have a disability.
- The student's class and other activities in which they are involved have a natural proportion of students with and without disabilities.
- The student is a valued member of an age-appropriate general education class.
- The student's name is on all class lists, group lists put on the board, job lists, and so forth.
- The student participates in classroom and school routines such as the Pledge of Allegiance, lunch count, jobs, errands, eating lunch in the cafeteria, changing classes, and so forth — in typical locations and at the same times as classmates without disabilities.
- The student receives accessible print and other learning materials in accessible formats at the same time those materials are provided to students without disabilities.
- The student participates in classroom instruction in similar ways as students without disabilities, including whole class discussion, writing on the board, small group discussion, and projects. The student is called on by the teacher as frequently as other students in the class.
- The student rides the same school bus as their peers without disabilities, arriving and leaving at the same time.
- The student transitions between classes alongside their peers without disabilities, arriving and leaving at the same time.
- The student progresses through the grades according to the same pattern as students without disabilities.
- The student learns in outside-of-school, age-appropriate, and inclusive environments before the age of 18 only when such instruction is the norm for general education students.
- Related services and specialized instruction are provided within the typical routines of a school day in addition to, not in place of, core general academic and behavioral instruction.
- Related services are delivered primarily through in-class support and consultative services in a way that minimizes removal from the classroom.
- The school is physically accessible and/or accommodations are arranged so that the student and other individuals with mobility challenges have full access to all opportunities within the school building.
- The school accommodates the student's sensory and health care needs.

If a student is not yet a member of a general education classroom, complete the TX CAN training [Transitioning a Student from a Self-Contained to a General Education Classroom](#) which focuses on transitioning a student from a segregated classroom to an inclusive one.

## FACILITATE STUDENTS' SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

When some students with disabilities are included in general education classrooms, they will establish reciprocal social relationships without any active intervention on the part of adults. If you notice that the student with complex access needs is not included in social chit-chat, sits alone during lunch, has no one to hang out with during recess, and has no interactions with classmates outside of school, then intentional friendship facilitation is needed. Chapter 8 in the Jorgensen book, *It's More Than "Just Being In,"* provides detailed guidance on this process. It is summarized in this list:

- Create a map of the student's current circle of friends and relationships.
- Identify where there are significant gaps in the student's circle and develop a plan for increasing the student's participation in shared activities with classmates or friends from community activities.
- First, address the barriers to the student's development of reciprocal social relationships.
- Put into place all of the essential considerations for friendship.
- Enlist the student's classmates in problem-solving if friendships don't happen naturally.
- Identify a bridge builder as a strategy for getting the student more involved in social and extracurricular activities.

This is covered extensively in another TX CAN Inclusion Series training: [Creating and Sustaining Peer Networks](#).

## PROVIDE SUPPORTS FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN GENERAL EDUCATION

Chapter 9 in the Jorgensen book, *It's More Than "Just Being In,"* describes in detail the process of developing weekly plans for students' active participation and learning in general units of study and recurring instructional routines that cross all content areas. This list includes the highlights of the process and can be used to check whether the team is following the recommended steps in the process.

First, review this participation list to determine where the team should focus their efforts to increase the student's active engagement in general education instruction.

- The student participates in classroom and school routines in typical locations, such as the Pledge of Allegiance, lunch count, jobs, errands, eating lunch in the cafeteria.
- The student participates in school plays, field trips, and community service activities.
- The student participates in classroom instruction in similar routines as students without disabilities, for example:
  - whole class instruction
  - whole class discussion
  - at the board
  - small group discussion and projects
  - by raising their hand
  - when called on by the teacher
- The student has a way to communicate the same academic messages that are expected of other students in the above instructional routines, for example:
  - giving answers
  - asking questions
  - making comments
  - taking notes
  - writing
  - drawing figures
- The student completes the same assignments and other work products (with adaptations, modifications, and reduced volume of work per the student's unique needs) as students without disabilities.
- A high school student engages in outside-of-school, age-appropriate, and inclusive environments (e.g., service learning) in the same proportion as classmates without disabilities.
- Students in the transition years (ages 18-21) attend post-secondary education, work, make connections to community activities and social groups, and learn to live away from their childhood home.

Then, use this list to determine if the team is developing instructional support plans on a regular basis and following them with a high degree of fidelity (i.e., accuracy and consistency across staff).

- Establish a common planning time for the team to develop instructional support plans.
- At weekly team meetings, complete the [Instructional Support Planning Form](#) to identify the student's learning objectives for general education units/lessons, and to plan vocabulary, lesson activities, and supports.
- Share instructional support plans with all team members.
- Check the fidelity of the implementation of supports weekly and develop a plan to improve the fidelity of low-rated supports.
- Refine the instructional support plans as the year progresses to reflect new supports and strategies that have been found useful for the student.

Providing supports, and the [Instructional Support Planning Form](#), are covered extensively in these TX CAN Inclusion Series trainings: [Supports for Participation](#) and [UDL - Designing with Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities in Mind](#).

## DEVELOP COLLABORATIVE INCLUSIVE TEAMS

- Define inclusive roles and responsibilities for all team members.
- Shift the role of the special education teacher to that of an Inclusion Facilitator (IF).
- Create a weekly schedule for the IF that includes time in each student's general education class, time for making adapted materials, time to facilitate a team instructional planning meeting, and time to communicate with students' families.
- Schedule related services primarily within the context of general education lessons and other inclusive school activities and environments.
- Schedule weekly instructional support planning meetings that incorporate information from the general educator about upcoming lessons and units and input from all other service providers regarding support the student will need to fully participate in general education instruction.
- Identify times for service providers to work together to support student participation.
- Use an [Instructional Support Planning Meeting Agenda](#) to record team discussion and decisions.
- Share instructional support plans with all team members including parents.

## ENCOURAGE VISIONARY LEADERSHIP FROM SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Research has shown that the leadership of the school principal is one of the most important factors in making inclusion successful. You can support your administrators' leadership efforts by sharing inclusive education research, suggesting which professional conferences focus on inclusive leadership development, supporting your administrators' decisions related to inclusion, and connecting your school administrators with administrators from other inclusive school districts.

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This document was designed to accompany the [Fundamentals of Inclusive Education](#) training from TX CAN.