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TO INFINITY AND BEYOND:

EXPANDING THE CONTINUUM OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

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LEARNING TARGETS

- Describe the need for inclusion programming
- List at least two benefits to post secondary outcomes for inclusion practices
- Identify the steps to take when embarking on inclusion practices
- Develop a preliminary inclusion plan for my program

EARLY CHILDHOOD INCLUSION

Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his / her family regardless of ability to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities and society.

DEC & NAEYC 2009



CURRENT PROGRAMMING

PUSD COMMON LANGUAGE

- “Community” Preschool
 - Classrooms within PUSD that consist of: 50% students are who are typically developing and 50% students who require an IEP
- “Developmental” Preschool
 - Classrooms within PUSD that consist of: 30% students who are typically developing and 70% students who have an IEP(self-contained classroom)

HISTORY OF PRESCHOOL PROGRAMMING IN PUSD

- In the beginning (early 1990s)
 - Only self-contained preschool classrooms with some peer models
 - Most students who were evaluated by the PS assessment team and identified as a student with a disability were placed in these self-contained preschool classrooms
 - Other students who required an IEP and were attending community based preschool (not PUSD) and received itinerant services
 - PUSD did not offer general education preschool programs in the district

DEVELOPMENT OF PUSD COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL CLASSROOMS

- Early Childhood Block Grant (1995)
 - Targeted at-risk and/or low income four year olds
 - Two PUSD Community Preschools (Kachina and Peoria Elementary)
 - Only enrolled typically developing students
 - Partnered with Head Start and La Petite Academy
 - 60 students total

EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

- 1996
 - Added families who did not qualify financially under the grant
 - District offered tuition-based preschool placement for typically developing students
 - Self-supporting through grants and tuition -> did not receive PUSD M&O funding

INCLUSION HISTORY

- Between 2000-2001
 - Students who had been identified with a Speech Language Impairment for articulation were gradually placed in the PUSD Community Preschool Classrooms
 - Tuition subsidized by the special education department for students who were on IEPs
 - PUSD Developmental Preschool Classrooms were not licensed by Department of Health Services Childcare Licensure - limited inclusion
 - All classrooms were open to ages 3-5 years old

INCLUSION HISTORY (CONTINUED)

- 2004-2005
 - PUSD Developmental Preschool Classrooms were re-licensed through Department of Health Services, which allowed more opportunities for inclusion
- 2007-2008
 - PUSD Community Preschool Classrooms were designed as a 50-50 model (50% typically developing students/50% students with IEPs)

CURRENT MODEL

- Developed during 2009-2010 school year
 - PUSD Community Preschool Classrooms
 - Addition of Preschool Inclusion Teacher (PIT)
 - PIT provides itinerant Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) to meet the needs of students who are on IEPs; students do not require SDI throughout their day
 - Classrooms continue to consist of 50% students who are typically developing and 50% of students who have identified disabilities and require an IEP

ROLE OF PRESCHOOL INCLUSION TEACHER (PIT)

- Delivers SDI (specially designed instruction)
- Acts as the case manager
- Provides consultative support: working with classroom staff to adapt the environment and tools, manage expectations, develop toolbox of strategies that are appropriate for individual students

CLASSROOM COMPARISON

- Community Preschool Classroom
 - Teacher certified in early childhood
 - 1 Instructional Assistant
 - 16 children in a classroom
 - No more than 8 students who require an IEP to maintain general education LRE
- Developmental Preschool Classroom
 - Teacher certified in early childhood AND special education
 - 2 Instructional Assistants
 - 8-10 children who require an IEP and up to 3 peer models

Type of classroom depends on the ratio of general education vs. special education students

COST OF CURRENT MODEL

- Community Preschool Classroom

- ~ \$75,000 annually
- 32 students (16 a.m./16 p.m.)
- Cost per student = \$2344
- Tuition based
- Quality First Scholarships (based on income)
- Tuition subsidized by special education department for students on IEPs -> 230 kids
- 262 students on IEPs

- Developmental Preschool Classroom

- ~ \$95,000 annually (additional IA + benefits)
- 16 students (8 a.m./8 p.m.)
- Cost per student = \$5937
- M & O funded
- 267 students

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BEST PRACTICES AND RESEARCH

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA 2004)

- Part B
 - Requires that special education and related services be provided, to the maximum extent possible, in the least restrictive environment, which includes a continuum of placement options and supplementary services
- The first placement option considered for an eligible children with a disability is the regular classroom the child would attend if he or she did not have a disability

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs (September 14, 2015)

“It is the Departments’ position that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations.”

RESEARCH REGARDING INCLUSION

- Children with disabilities in inclusive settings:
 - can make significant developmental and learning progress
 - experience greater cognitive and communication development, which is especially apparent in children with more significant disabilities
 - demonstrate stronger social-emotional skills than their peers in separate settings

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/earlylearning/joint-statement-full-text.pdf>

RESEARCH REGARDING INCLUSION (CONTINUED)

- Children demonstrate greater independence as an adult
- Children with disabilities can be effectively educated in inclusive programs using specially designed instruction
- Inclusion is not more expensive than having separate programs for children with disabilities.

RESEARCH REGARDING INCLUSION (CONTINUED)

- Successful inclusion requires intentional and effective collaboration and teaming
- The individual outcomes of preschool inclusion should include access, membership, participation, friendships, and support
- Children with disabilities do not need to be “ready” to be included - Programs need to be “ready” to support all children

RESEARCH REGARDING INCLUSION (CONTINUED)

- Children's growth and learning is related to the peers' skills and the effects are more pronounced for children with disabilities
- Desired outcomes are achieved when children are included several days a week in social and learning opportunities with typically developing peers and specialized instructional strategies are used to meet children's individual needs

Barton, E & Smith, B. 2014

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL ACTIONS

US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT OF
INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS (SEPTEMBER 14, 2015)

CREATE A VISION

Arizona Department of Education:

“Arizona is committed to including all children and their families in early learning environments by providing family centered supports and services that are high quality, comprehensive and collaborative.”

CREATE THE CULTURE OF INCLUSION

- Identify instructional leaders (administrators, principals, psychologists, teachers, family...)
- Develop a child-centered culture
 - Explicitly & implicitly convey the message that you are welcome, wanted, respected and valued
- Barriers related to creating the culture
 - Lack of knowledge & awareness
 - Needs based vs. strengths based

PRIORITIZE INCLUSIVE PLACEMENTS

- General Ed Placement First
 - The first placement option considered for a child with a disability is the same considered for a child without disabilities
 - Consider adaptations and supports are needed to allow access and promote success for all children
- Barriers
 - Perceptions
 - Differentiating instruction
 - Education / Collaboration

IDENTIFY RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS

- Professional Development
- Access to specialized supports and materials to promote:
 - Children's Learning
 - Social-Emotional/Behavioral health
 - Language/Communication Development
- Blended Instructional Approaches
- Barriers

CREATE STAFF STRUCTURE

- Collaborative
- Sufficient staff to implement programming
- Supportive/consistent teams
- Review, assess and modify

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PROPOSED PRESCHOOL MODEL

PHASE 1 - COMPLETED

- Enrolled students with IEPs in district Community Preschool Classrooms
- Added Preschool Inclusion Teachers
- Created Developmental Preschool Classrooms
- Considered Outplacement

PHASE 2: IN PROCESS

- Co-teaching Preschool Classroom
 - General education teacher
 - Special education teacher
 - Instructional assistant for four days
 - Ratio is 70% students who are typically developing/30% students with IEPs

PHASE 3: PROPOSED

- General Education with Expanded Preschool Inclusion Teacher
 - General education teacher with early childhood certification
 - Increased PIT support (based on student need) (+)
 - Increased IA support: 2 IAs (four-day) (+)
 - Ratio is 60% students who are typically developing/40% students who require IEPs)
 - Push-in related services (based on student need)

PROPOSED PRESCHOOL LRE CONTINUUM

General Education Classrooms

Special Education
Classroom

GenEd Teacher
50/50
1 IA

GenEd Teacher
w/PIT support
50/50
1 IA

GenEd Teacher
w/PIT +
(Expanded PIT)
60/40
2 IAS

Co-Teaching
GenEd and SpEd
Teachers
70/30 1IA

SpEd Teacher
30/70
2 IAs

PROGRAM COST PER STUDENT

General Preschool	Gen Ed with PIT	Gen Ed with PIT+ (Expanded PIT)	Developmental PS
\$2344	\$2674	\$3469	\$5937

SAVINGS !!!!

PER STUDENT MOVED FROM SELF-CONTAINED CLASSROOM TO LESS RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

General Ed	Gen Ed with PIT	Gen Ed with PIT+ (Expanded PIT)
\$3593	\$3263	\$2468

HOW TO FUND THE INCLUSION PROGRAM

- Federal Grants
- State Funded Grants
- McKinney Vento – Title I
- Special Education (for teacher & students who require IEPs)
- Tuition

SEEKING QUALITY FIRST GRANTS

- Scholarships and incentive funding to improve programming
- DHS licensing opens other avenues for additional inclusion options

CHALLENGES

- Attitude & Belief
 - someone will lose
 - staff unpreparedness
 - lack of awareness and understanding
 - lack of respect
 - lack of communication/collaboration
- Policy & Procedure
 - Conflicting policies across programs
- Resources
- Turf issues

SOLUTIONS

- Collaboration Awareness Support
- Systems Change
- Community Awareness
- Think creatively

PRESCHOOL INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

Your Turn!!

REVIEW LEARNING TARGETS

- Describe the need for inclusion programming
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QUESTIONS???

