



National Professional Development Center on Inclusion

What We Know,
What We Don't Know, &
What We Plan to Learn
(with your help)

Pam Winton

winton@mail.fpg.unc.edu

Virginia Buysse

buysse@mail.fpg.unc.edu

Camille Catlett

catlett@mail.fpg.unc.edu

Shelley DeFosset

defosset@mail.fpg.unc.edu



UNC

FPG CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Purpose of Session

1. Identify what is known and not known about preschool inclusion and professional development
2. Share information about the intentions of the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI)
3. Generate through small group discussion the participants' perceptions of key dimensions of high quality inclusive preschool classrooms, competencies of high quality inclusive teachers, and professional development that supports personnel and quality

Agenda

I. Inclusion: What We Know

- Almost 50% of young children with disabilities are being served in inclusive settings or natural environments (data available on Regional Resource & Federal Center Network, www.rrfcnetwork.org)
- Many preschool classrooms have children with disabilities enrolled (Wolery & Wilbers, 1995)
- Children with and without disabilities have positive developmental and behavioral outcomes in inclusive settings (Odom, Vitzum, Wolery, et al., 2004)
- In NC, early childhood programs which included at least one child with a disability were found to be of higher quality than non-inclusive programs (Buysse, Wesley, Bryant & Gardner, 1999)
- For inclusion to be an effective preschool option, high quality is necessary but not sufficient for children with disabilities to succeed (Odom et al., 2002)

II. Inclusion: What We Don't Know (or Don't Have)

- There is no agreed upon definition of inclusion (Odom et al., 2002)
- Although we have evidence that inclusion works for children under the right conditions, and we know broadly what programmatic factors support good outcomes for children in inclusive settings (Odom, Vitzum, et al., 2004), there is a slim body of rigorous research on effective inclusion strategies

III. Professional Development Related to Inclusion: What We Know

- Personnel in early care and education settings lack confidence and competence in serving young children with disabilities (Buysse, Wesley, Keyes, & Bailey, 1996)
- Early childhood teacher preparation programs do not adequately prepare teachers to work with children with special needs (Chang, Early & Winton, 2005; Early, & Winton, 2001)
- Professional development providers do not get adequate preservice preparation on how to plan and implement professional development (Maxwell, Lim, & Early, 2006)
- States must show progress to US Dept. of Education in meeting standards and outcomes for children with disabilities and their families, including those related to inclusion, and professional development is one of the major strategies states are using (data available on Regional Resource & Federal Center Network, www.rrfcnetwork.org)

- There are many early childhood professional development initiatives and programs, and they tend to be fragmented and disconnected (Winton, McCollum, & Catlett, 1997)

IV. Professional Development Related to Inclusion: What We Don't Know or Don't Have

- There is no consensus on a definition of professional development and related terms and approaches (Maxwell, Feild & Clifford, 2005)
- There is little rigorous research on effective professional development models and strategies (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Whitehurst, 2002; Winton, 2006)

V. National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI): What We Plan to Do

- Our goal and focus (see NPDCI Fact Sheet)
- Broad conceptual framework with emphasis on collaboration, alignment and the change process

VI. Small Group Activity to Generate ...

- Key dimensions of high quality inclusive classrooms
- Competencies of high quality inclusive teachers
- Professional development that supports personnel and quality

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