Full Inclusion of All Students with Learning Disabilities in the Regular Education Classroom

The Learning Disabilities Association of America, LDA, is a National not-for-profit organization of parents, professionals and persons with learning disabilities, concerned about the welfare of individuals with learning disabilities. According to the latest figures available from Data Accountability Center, U.S. Department of Education, 2,415,564 students were identified as having a Specific Learning Disability in the fall of 2010. This is 41% of the 5,822,808 students with disabilities, between 6 and 21 years of age, served under IDEA.

‘Full inclusion’, ‘full integration’, ‘unified system’, ‘inclusive education’ are terms used to describe a popular policy/practice in which all students with disabilities, regard less of the nature or the severity of the disability and need for related services, receive their total education within the regular education classroom in their home school.

The Learning Disabilities Association of America does not support ‘full inclusion’ or any policies that mandate the same placement, instruction, or treatment for **ALL** students with learning disabilities. Many students with learning disabilities benefit from being served in the regular education classroom. However, the regular education classroom is not the appropriate placement for a number of students with learning disabilities who may need alternative instructional environments, teaching strategies, and/or materials that cannot or will not be provided within the context of a regular classroom placement.

LDA believes that decisions regarding educational placement of students with disabilities must be based on the needs of each individual student rather than administrative convenience or budgetary considerations and must be the results of a cooperative effort involving the educators, parents, and the student when appropriate.

LDA strongly support the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which mandates:

* A free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment appropriate for the students’ specific learning needs.
* A team approved Individualized Education Program (IEP) that includes current functioning levels, instructional goals and objectives, placement and services decisions, and procedures for evaluation of program effectiveness.
* A placement decision must be made on an individual basis and considered only after the development of the IEP.
* A continuum of alternative placements to meet the needs of students with disabilities for special education and related services.
* A system for the continuing education of regular and special education and related services personnel to enable these personnel to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

LDA believes that the placement of **ALL** children with disabilities in the regular education classroom is as great a violation of IDEA as the placement of **ALL** children in separate classrooms on the basis of their type of disability.

LDA URGES THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EACH STATE TO MOVE DELIBERATELY AND REFLECTIVELY IN SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING, USING THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT AS A FOUNDATION — MINDFUL OF THE BEST INTERESTS OF ALL CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.

*January 1993 (updated June 2012)*

How do you feel about students with disabilities being included in general education classes with their peers without disabilities? How do you feel about these students with disabilities being placed in a separate special education class all day? Do you agree with the article that it should depend on the student’s individual needs to determine where they should be educated? What benefits might a student with disabilities get from being in a special education class? What benefits might they get from being in a general education class with their peers? Do you have any other thoughts, questions, comments, or concerns about the article?

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