



# Inclusive Education: The foundation to an inclusive life

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[www.inclusionontario.ca](http://www.inclusionontario.ca)

# Integration Action for Inclusion

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We are a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to educational inclusion and living in the community for ALL people who need extra support. We provide support to parents and friends seeking to enrich the lives of their children. We influence school boards and educators, but our work focuses on supporting families.

[www.inclusionontario.ca](http://www.inclusionontario.ca)

# Our story



Sophia and Eva

# Why is IAI at this summit?

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- When we ask what do you want for your child with a disability?
  - Meaningful relationships
  - Purpose, meaning, roles
  - Life in community
  - “Good Life”
- We don’t hear:
  - Only daily contacts are with paid care givers and others with disabilities
  - Group homes
  - Long-Term Care institutions
  - Sheltered workshops or day programs
  - “Isolated Life”

# Why is IAI at this summit?

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- What are you planning for?
  - Most of us want to plan for a “Good Life”
  - But families are instead often forced into planning for an “Isolated Life” for our child with a disability, and we don’t even know it
    - Safe (zero risks)
    - Secure (financial security)
  - Is an ordinary life
    - risk free?
      - Dignity of risk (capacity questions, understanding risk, shades of grey)
      - Resilience
      - Growth mindset
    - filled with therapy and appointments?
      - Intensive, early interventions

# Social Capital

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- When you're disabled, you are told who you are allowed to know; and non-disabled people, similarly, are told who they can't know
  - History of institutionalization
    - A World Without Martha, by Victoria Freeman
  - While we've closed the institutions, the mindset still lives on in special education classrooms
- Why does social capital matter?
- Umbrella term for the many advantages an individual can acquire through membership in a social community and important factor in health and wellbeing
  - [Somewhere to Live, Something to Do, Someone to Love: Examining Levels and Sources of Social Capital Among People with Disabilities](#)
  - [Social connectedness predicts quality of life indices much better than either income or educational level](#)

# Social Capital

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- Between 40-70% of those seeking employment find jobs through others in their social network

Canadian Survey on Disability, November 28, 2018

- Of all Canadians with disabilities, 60% are employed compared to 80% of non-disabled Canadians
- 76% employed with mild disabilities
- 31% employed with very severe disabilities

# How do we do education for typical learners?

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- Go to school in their neighbourhood school with their peers
- Explore and support interests and strengths
- Have wide social and community networks - many types of community – some based on shared identities, some based on shared interests and influences.

# Social Capital in School: Peers

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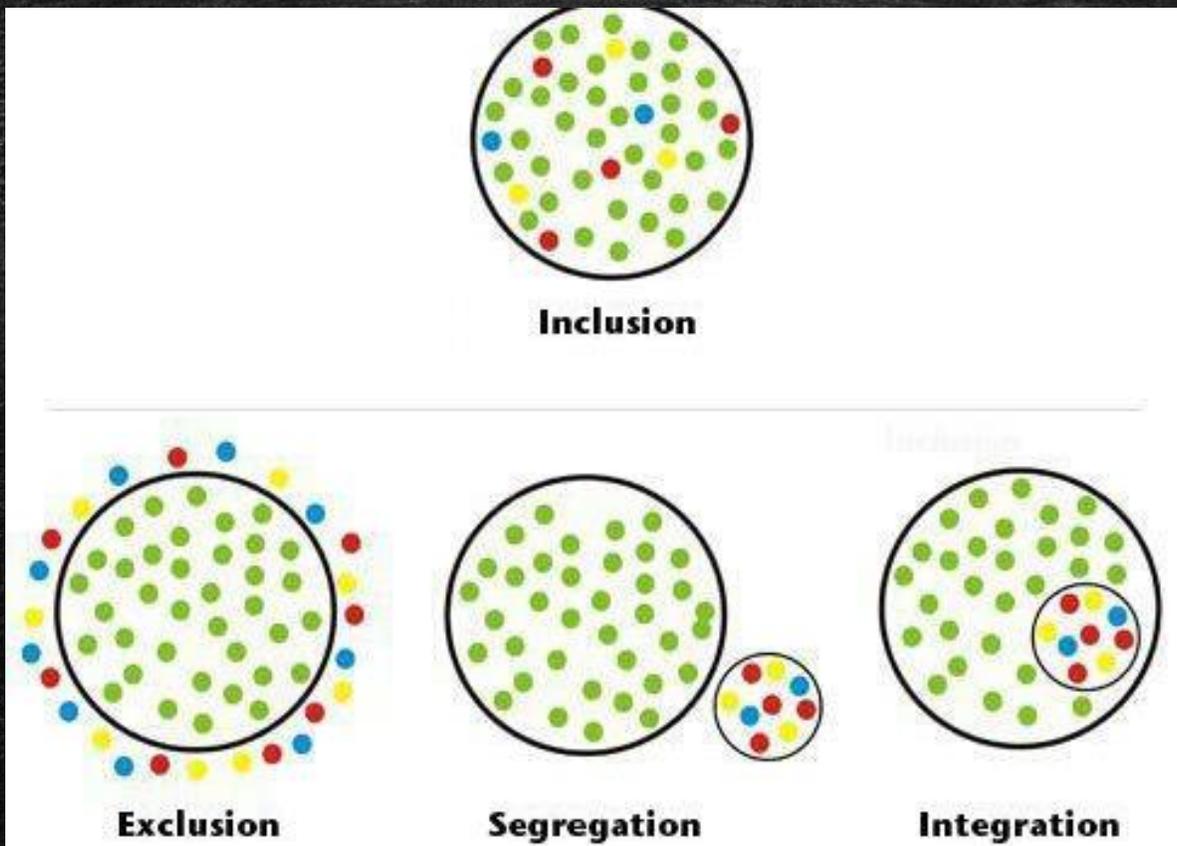
- Natural opportunities to be with peers
- Provide a positive role model and respect individual differences
- Purposeful partnerships
- Seating arrangements
- Foster peer supports
- Students with disabilities can also be leaders

# How do we do education for students with disabilities?

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- We send them to separate classrooms, separate camps, separate programs of all kinds, where only other disabled persons are part of the community - from very young ages (often as young as 4)
- Based on a deficit and medical model
- Isolate persons with disabilities from wider social connections and networks and remove them from the community and then we wonder... why are outcomes so poor?

# What does inclusion look like?



You're not even in the building (exclusion).

You're in another room (segregation).

You're in the room, but not part of it (integration).

You're in the room, and you're part of what's happening (inclusion).

# Definition of Inclusive Education

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- Inclusion is children with disabilities being educated in the school they would attend if they didn't have disabilities, in age-appropriate regular education classrooms, where services and supports are provided in those classrooms for both the students and their teachers, and where students with disabilities are fully participating members of their school communities in academic and extracurricular activities.
  - Disability is Natural

# What isn't inclusive education

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- “Placing students with disabilities in mainstream classes without accompanying structural changes to, for example, organization, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies, does not constitute inclusion”
- <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRPD/GC/RighttoEducation/CRPD-C-GC-4.doc>

# What does the research say?

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- [A Case for Inclusive Education, Gillian Parekh, Research Assistant, TDSB \(2013\)](#)

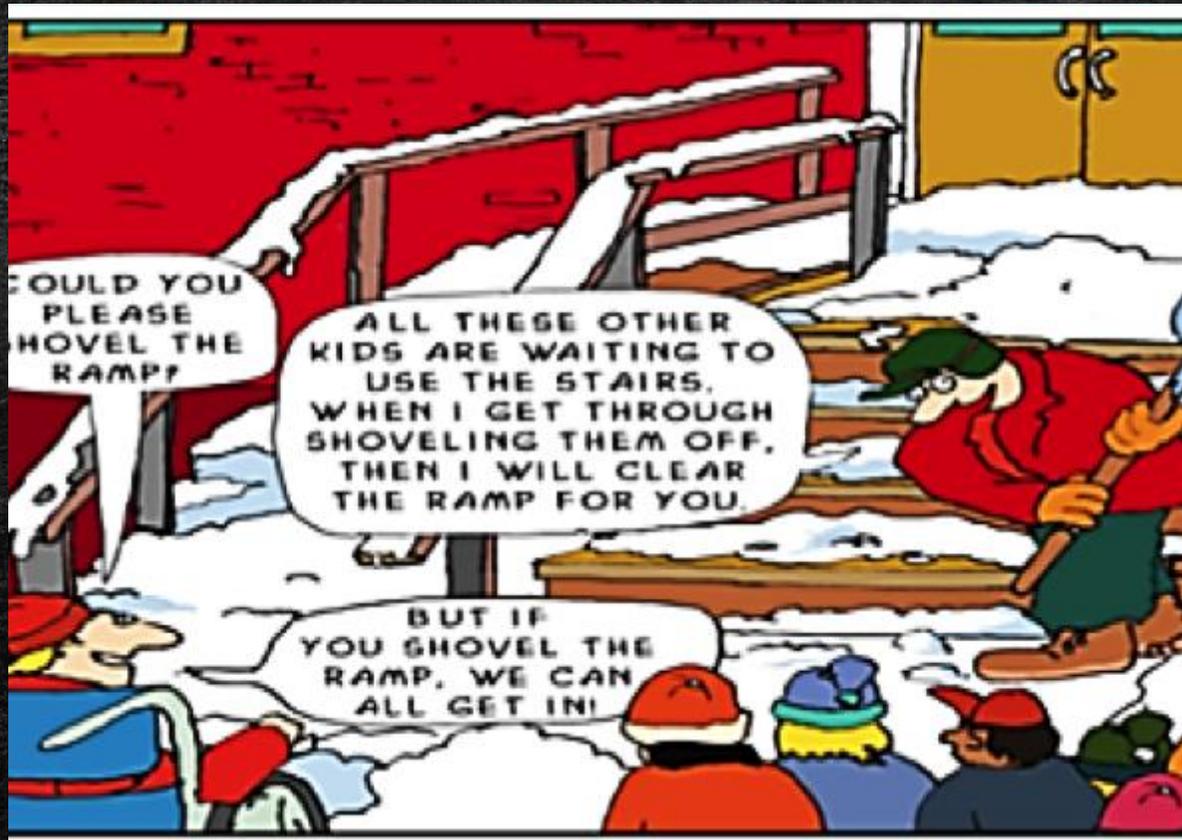
“Although the international literature does not suggest that inclusion works best for every student all the time, the overall trend indicates that students with special education needs (SEN) generally fare the same or better in inclusive settings with no negative impact on students without SEN. Therefore, adopting an inclusive model of education not only brings education systems in line with international rights conventions, but has also demonstrated to maintain or improve academic outcomes for students with SEN.”

# The Law

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- Education Act
  - Regular classroom placement, with appropriate services and supports, is to be considered as a first option
- Ontario Human Rights Code
  - Dignity of the person
  - Accommodate persons with disabilities to the point of undue hardship
    - Financial test
    - Health and safety test
  - These are not privileges for persons with disabilities – they are basic rights to allow for a dignified life

# How: Universal Design



Design it so that it is universally accessible in the first place.

# Universal Design

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- Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. ... This is not a special requirement, for the benefit of only a minority of the population. It is a fundamental condition of good design. ... By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates products and environments that meet peoples' needs.
  - <http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/>

# Universal Design for Learning

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- Universal Design For Learning
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYtUIU8MjIY>
- <https://fivemooreminutes.com/>

# What do School Boards tell us?

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- There's no money to support your child in the regular classroom
- Your child's outcome will be better in a special education classroom
- Your child can't get anything out of the regular curriculum
- Your child is safer in a special education classroom
- Your child will be bullied in the regular classroom

# What some parents tell us about why they choose special education classrooms

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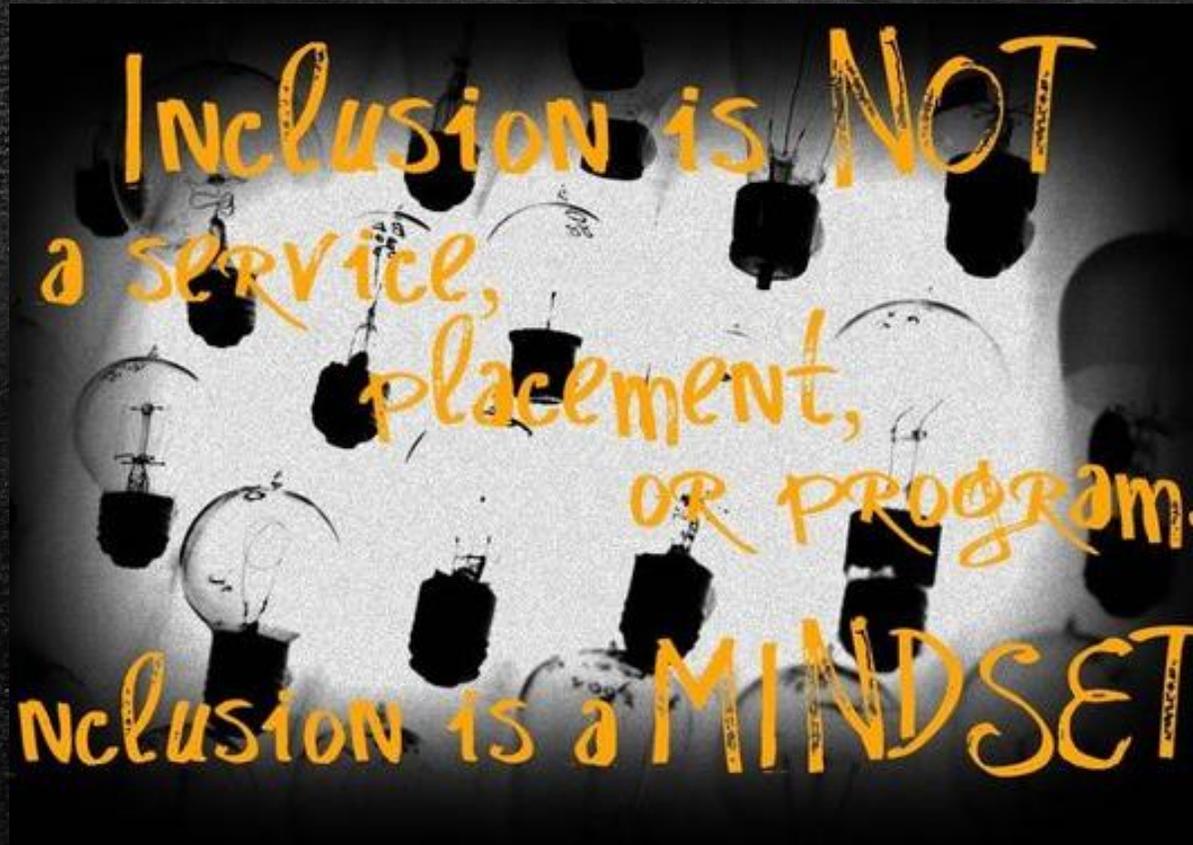
- Their kids would be a burden or seen as one
- Their kids will have low self-esteem in the regular classroom
- Their child cannot access the grade-level curriculum
- The class is better tailored to their child's needs
- Their child is loved and supported in that space
- Their child will never really be included
- They belong with the "disabled community"

# Abelism

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- Burden
- Why does it matter if they are at grade level
- The classroom should be universally designed
- No evidence that there are better outcomes for students in special education classrooms for those with ID/DD; limited in others
- Do Black, Indigenous, Women, LBGTO students only belong in the Black, Indigenous, Women, LBGTO community?
- Has inclusion of the disabled gone too far? Do we ask that of any other group?

## Final Thought



Inclusion is NOT  
a service,  
placement,  
OR PROGRAM.  
Inclusion is a MINDSET