

Inclusion – A sampling of research

Excerpted from Inclusion Evolution, <https://www.inclusionrevolution.com/> Includes K-12 studies

BETTER IEPs: In a 1992 quantitative study, Hunt and Farron-Davis found a significant increase in Individualized Education Program (IEP) quality in measures of age appropriateness, functionality, and generalizations when students were moved from a self-contained classroom to a general education classroom. This was true even when the special educator stayed the same and moved with the child into the least restrictive environment. Experts interpret this to mean that there's nothing going on within the four walls of a self-contained classroom that provides value and quality when stacked up against general education classroom settings.

- Citation: Hunt, P., & Farron-Davis, F. (1992). A preliminary investigation of IEP quality and content associated with placement in general education versus special education. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 17 (4), 247-253.

SEGREGATION = ISOLATION: Two years later, the same researchers looked at engagement of students with severe disabilities within general education. They found that there was an increase in the amount of instruction for functional activities for students with severe disabilities within general education compared to self-contained classrooms. Students in self-contained classrooms were less engaged and more isolated.

- Citation: Hunt, P., Farron-Davis, F., Beckstead, S., Curtis, D., & Goetz, L. (1994). Evaluating the effects of placement of students with severe disabilities in general education versus special education. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 19 (3), 200-214.

MORE TIME LEARNING: Similar results were found in a study of a small group of students with severe disabilities. Some of the students were placed in general education and some were in a self-contained classroom. The study found the general education setting provided more instruction time, a comparable amount of one-on-one time, addressed content curriculum more, and engaged in peer-modeling more.

- Citation: Helmstetter, Curry, Brennan, & Sampson-Saul, (1998). Comparison of general and special education classrooms of students with severe disabilities. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 33, 216-227.

ACCESS MATTERS: A 2013, quantitative study of more than 1,300 students between the ages of 6 and 9 years old within 180 school districts found that access matters. The study found a strong relationship between the amount of time spent in general education and achievement in math and reading for students with disabilities.

- Citation: Cosier, M., Causton-Theoharis, J., & Theoharis, G. (2013). Does Access Matter? Time in General Education and Achievement for Students With Disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education, 34*(6), 323–332. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932513485448>

INCLUSION + SUPPORTS: A 2012, comparative study followed 34 students with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) fully included in general education with supports with a control group of 34 students with ID in special schools. Included children made slightly more progress in literacy skills than children attending special schools. The researchers concluded that inclusive education is an appropriate educational placement for students with ID who require extensive supports in school.

- Citation: [Effects of inclusion on the academic achievement and adaptive behaviour of children with intellectual disabilities.](#) Dessemontet RS, Bless G, Morin D. J Intellect Disabil Res. 2012 Jun;56(6):579-87. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2788.2011.01497.x. Epub 2011 Nov

INCLUSION AS FUNCTIONAL SUPPORT: A study looking at the outcome of 11,000 students with all types of disabilities found that more time in a general education classroom correlated to less absences from school, fewer referrals for misbehavior, and more post-secondary education and employment options.

- Citation: Wagner, M., Newman, L., Cameto, R., and Levine, P. (2006). The Academic Achievement and Functional Performance of Youth with Disabilities: A Report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2). (NCSE 2006-3000). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International

INCLUSION AS LEARNING SUPPORT: A 2017, study found that 41.7% of students with learning disabilities made progress in math in general education classes compared to 34% in traditional special education settings without the presence of nondisabled peers.

- Citation: Sharp, N. (2017). Inclusion in the early childhood classroom: What should this look like? (Master’s thesis, Northwestern College, Orange City, IA). Retrieved from http://nwcommons.nwciowa.edu/education_masters/32/

NOT SO SPECIAL, Part II: A 2011 study finds that there’s nothing “special” about the four walls of a special education classroom. The research suggests that the purported rationale for self-contained special education in the literature—issues of community, distraction-free environments, specialized curriculum/instruction, and behavioral supports—were not present in the six observed self-contained settings. Implications for school leaders are discussed and the rationales for the utilization of self-contained classrooms are strongly questioned.

- Citation: Does Self-Contained Special Education Deliver on Its Promises? A Critical Inquiry into Research and Practice. Causton-Theoharis, Julie; Theoharis, George; Orsati,

Fernanda; Cosier, Meghan Journal of Special Education Leadership, v24 n2 p61-78 Sep 2011.

EVERYONE BENEFITS: Many schools and parents make the argument that typical peers may be negatively impacted by the presence of students with disabilities. Especially those students with behavior problems. But a 2013 study found that inclusion does NOT compromise a typical student's academic or social outcome. No significant difference was found in the progress of the low-, average-, or high-achieving pupils from classrooms with or without inclusion.

- Citation: [The impact of including children with intellectual disability in general education classrooms on the academic achievement of their low-, average-, and high-achieving peers](#). Sermier Dessemontet R, Bless G. J Intellect Dev Disabil. 2013 Mar;38(1):23-30. doi: 10.3109/13668250.2012.757589. Epub 2013 Jan 28.