

# Syracuse Pre-Kindergarten Inclusion Program

Preschoolers with disabilities



*Inclusionary program for preschoolers with disabilities:*

- *A coordinated team effort assists children with developmentally appropriate experiences addressing their needs and interests.*
- *A strong parental component is employed which offers a variety of workshops and encourages them to participate in the classroom.*

## Results



- *Children enrolled in the Pre-K inclusion model had a significant gain in receptive language development as assessed on the PPVT-R and continued to maintain that gain into and throughout their kindergarten year.*

## The Program

The Syracuse Pre-Kindergarten Inclusion Program provides comprehensive services for approximately 1,000 economically eligible three- and four-year-olds and their families. Each classroom is supported by an itinerant trans-disciplinary team consisting of a speech pathologist, psychologist, social worker, and nurse to assist teachers in developing programs which meet the needs of both the children and their families. The program provides developmentally appropriate experiences which address each child's needs and interests. Pre-kindergarten also offers parents opportunities to develop their roles as partners in the educational decision-making process and as advocates for their children.

Preschoolers with disabilities are eligible to enroll in the Pre-kindergarten Program and receive IEP mandated services within his/her Pre-K classroom setting. Therapists conduct "push-in" therapy within the classroom setting often using the preschoolers without disabilities as models. They also model instructional and therapy techniques for classroom staff providing continuity of programming for the children. The program received the first "Moving Toward Excellence with A New Compact for Learning" award in 1992 from the NYS Board of Regents. All program professionals are certified in their area of instruction. Transdisciplinary child study teams meet regularly to discuss each child's IEP goals and strategies to meet these goals within the classroom setting and at home. The team focuses on the child's strengths and developmental skill levels determined by the District's Developmental Curriculum assessment completed three times per year.

Parents are fully involved in the classroom and are offered a variety of workshops on topics related to child development. They can also work as paid parent aides or volunteer their time in the classroom.

## Professional Development

Staff is provided with monthly in-service based on the needs and desires of the staff.

## Costs & Funding Options

The special education services provided in the inclusion program are funded by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the local municipality. Rates per therapy session for related services are set by local municipalities. The Pre-K Program is funded through a State grant by the NYSED (89%) and Syracuse City School District (11%). The NYSED can assist potential providers in completing all necessary forms for approval to provide preschool special education services. The administrators and/or professional development staff from the Syracuse City School District are able to provide assistance to districts interested in replication. Cost of training is negotiable and will include travel, meals, and lodging if necessary.

## Learning Standards

**English Language Arts:** 1) read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding; 4) read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

## Contact

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