

Educational Settings and the Role of the Family

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- 4.1** Describe important concepts about educational settings
- 4.2** Explain the least restrictive environment
- 4.3** Describe the continuum of alternative placements
- 4.4** Describe different types of educational settings
- 4.5** Explain collaboration partnerships between general education and special education teachers
- 4.6** Describe how a student's learning disabilities affect families and parents.

Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.

—Albert Camus

STANDARDS Addressed in This Chapter:

CEC

These standards have been approved by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences

- 1.2—Beginning special education professionals use understanding of development and individual differences to respond to the needs of individuals with exceptionalities.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 2—Learning Environments

- 2.0—Beginning special education professionals create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning

environments so that individuals with exceptionalities become active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination.

- 2.1—Beginning special education professionals through collaboration with general educators and other colleagues create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments to engage individuals with exceptionalities in meaningful learning activities and social interactions.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 5—Instructional Planning and Strategies

- 5.5—Beginning special education professionals develop and implement a variety of education and transition plans for individuals with exceptionalities across

a wide range of settings and different learning experiences in collaboration with individuals, families, and teams.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 6—Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

- 6.3—Beginning special education professionals understand that diversity is a part of families, cultures, and schools, and that complex human issues can interact with the delivery of special education services.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 7—Collaboration

- 7.0—Beginning special education professionals collaborate with families, other educators, related service

providers, individuals with exceptionalities, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the needs of individuals with exceptionalities across a range of learning experiences.

- 7.1—Beginning special education professionals use the theory and elements of effective collaboration.
- 7.2—Beginning special education professionals serve as a collaborative resource to colleagues.
- 7.3—Beginning special education professionals use collaboration to promote the well-being of individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of settings and collaborators.

The educational setting is a critical element of the assessment-teaching process. In this chapter, we examine educational settings for teaching students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities. We focus on the following topics: (1) important concepts about educational settings, (2) types of educational settings, (3) collaboration and promoting partnerships between general education teachers and special education teachers, and (4) parents and families of students with disabilities.

4.1 Important Concepts About Educational Settings

A key decision that is made by the IEP (Individualized Education Program) team is to determine the setting or educational environment in which students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities will receive instruction. We discuss two key concepts in the law that guide decisions about a student's educational environment: (1) the least restrictive environment (LRE) and (2) the continuum of alternative placements.

Did You Get It?

Who determines the appropriate setting where a student with learning disabilities will undergo instruction?

- a. teachers and parents together
- b. the school board
- c. the entire IEP team
- d. teachers, parents, and the student

4.2 Least Restrictive Environment

An important provision in special education law pertaining to educational settings is the *least restrictive environment* (LRE). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA-2004) calls for instructing students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment—that is, with peers who do not have disabilities—to the greatest extent appropriate. LRE serves as the cornerstone of the inclusion movement.

4.2a Inclusion

With increasing frequency, the recommended educational setting for students with disabilities is the general education classroom, which is often referred to as *inclusion*. IDEA-2004 requires that students with disabilities receive instruction in the least restrictive environment and that they have access to the general education curriculum.

For effective instruction for students in general education, it is essential to provide suitable supports for students with disabilities.

The inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings continues to expand. Figure 4.1 shows that about 54% of students with disabilities receive instruction inside the regular class over 80% of the school day, 24% receive instruction in the regular class for 40% to 70% of the school day, 17% receive instruction in the regular class for less than 40% of the school day, and 5% receive instruction in other environments.

4.2b The Philosophy of Inclusion

Inclusion is based on the conviction that all children with disabilities have a right to participate in environments as close to normal as possible and to benefit socially and academically from being in the central school and society. The underlying philosophy supporting inclusion is that maximum integration with typically developing children is highly desirable and should be a major goal (Scanlon, Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2010; Boyle & Scanlon, 2010).

The philosophical contention of inclusion includes the normalization of children through integrated regular classes and the elimination of labels for children with disabilities. An additional hope for inclusion is the underlying belief that a large part of a child's problem would disappear by doing away with labels (Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2010; Boyle & Scanlon, 2010).

An argument for inclusion is that successful adults with disabilities have learned to function comfortably

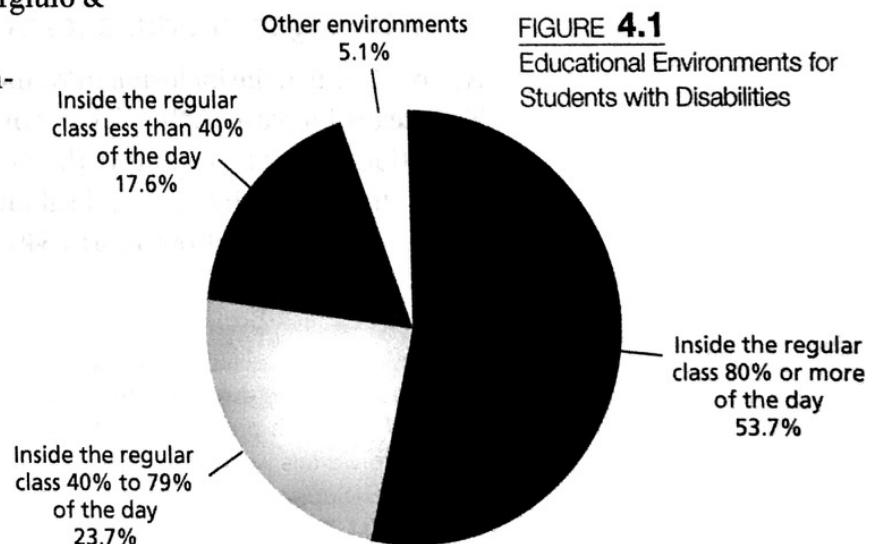


FIGURE 4.1
Educational Environments for Students with Disabilities

Source: 30th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act. (2012). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (based in 2008 data)

in society and in the community—in an unrestricted environment composed of all people. To promote normalization and experiences in the greater society, inclusion aims to ensure that, to the extent appropriate, students with disabilities have experiences in school with students who do not have disabilities.

4.2c Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming was an early procedure in which students with disabilities were placed selectively in a general education classroom for instruction, when teachers believed the students would benefit from an integrated placement. Students with learning disabilities and other mild disabilities were carefully integrated into general classrooms, perhaps for a single subject. The goal of mainstreaming was to increase slowly the amount of time that the students would spend in the general education classroom. The mainstreaming plan was carefully worked out and monitored for each student by special and general education teachers.

With mainstreaming, the starting point for the student was the special education classroom. The student was then integrated into a regular or general education classroom. In contrast, with inclusion, the starting point for a student with special education needs is the general education classroom with the student receiving special education services either within or outside that classroom.

4.2d Guidelines for Effective Inclusion

To make inclusion settings more effective, it is essential to provide sufficient support through multidisciplinary teams of professionals who mutually adjust their collective skills and knowledge to create unique, personal programs for each student. Ideally, all staff members should be involved in making decisions, teaching, and evaluating the student's needs and progress.

Effective inclusion requires that teachers (1) consider the student and the family, (2) be committed to the goals of inclusion, (3) have adequate resources and supports, and (4) engage in ongoing professional development (Salend, 2008; Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Smith et al., 2002). Including Students in General Education 4.1 describes some practical strategies for Inclusion.

4.2e Changes in Educational Placements

As noted earlier, the inclusion movement is rapidly escalating within our schools. The steady increase of the placement of students with all disabilities in general education classes is striking. In the 21 years between 1987 and 2008, the percentage of students with learning disabilities who had only general education class placement increased from 17% to 54% (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Did You Get It?

"Least restrictive environment" is a principle put forth, championed, and passed by which piece of legislation or governmental body?

- a. Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA-2004)
- b. U.S. Supreme Court in *Florence Co. School District Four v. Shannon Carter*, 510 U.S. 7, (1993)
- c. No Child Left Behind Act
- d. The Education for the Handicapped Children Act

Including Students in GENERAL EDUCATION 4.1

Practical Strategies

- **Use a team approach.** The general education classroom teacher should use a team approach to share responsibility with special education teachers and related professionals. General education classroom teachers are sometimes hesitant and even fearful about providing for the needs of special students in their classrooms and a team approach alleviates these fears.
- **Provide supportive services.** Students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities who are served in the general education classroom often need supportive services. The special education teacher can be helpful in obtaining and providing supportive services.
- **Plan for social acceptance.** Many students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities experience difficulty in being accepted socially by their peers in the general education classroom. By itself, placement in a general education classroom may not lead to greater social interaction or increased social acceptance. Social planning is needed.
- **Teach students appropriate classroom behavior.** Students may have to be taught acceptable classroom behaviors. As predictors of success in the classroom, acceptable classroom behaviors are even more important than academic competencies. Essential behaviors for classroom success include (1) interacting positively with other students, (2) obeying class rules, and (3) displaying proper work habits.
- **Use coteaching strategies.** The general education teacher and the special education teacher should use collaborative planning and teaching in the classroom.

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4.3 Continuum of Alternative Placements

Another important concept is the continuum of alternative placements. This provision in the law specifies that schools should make available an array of educational settings to meet the varied needs of students with disabilities. The placement options include (1) general education classes, (2) resource rooms, (3) separate classes, (4) separate schools, and other types of placements as needed, such as a (5) residential facility, or (6) a home-bound or hospital setting.

Table 4.1 contains a brief list, with explanations, of educational services for students with all categories of disabilities. The options are ordered from the least restrictive to the most restrictive environment. As noted earlier, the term *least restrictive environment* refers to the concept that as much as possible students with disabilities are educated in an environment with students who do not have disabilities.

The placement of students with disabilities with nondisabled students in general education classes is considered the least restrictive option. Placement in a separate class or a separate school in which only students with disabilities are served is a more restrictive environment. It is important that teachers not lose sight of the continuum of placement options and the fact that some students with learning disabilities need more than an inclusive setting can offer (Johns, 2003; Crockett & Kauffman, 2001; Zigmond, 2003b, 2007).

continuum of alternative placements

An array of different settings that should be available in a school system to meet the varied needs of students with disabilities.

TABLE 4.1

Continuum of Alternative Placement Options

	Least Restrictive	General education class Includes students who receive most of their education program in a general education classroom and receive special education and related services outside this classroom for less than 21% of the school day. It includes children placed in a general education class and receiving special education within this class, as well as children placed in a general education class and receiving special education outside this class
		Resource room Includes students who receive special education and related services outside the general education classroom for at least 21%, but not more than 60% of the school day. This may include students placed in resource rooms with part-time instruction in a general education class
		Separate class Includes students who receive special education and related services outside the general education classroom for more than 60% of the school day. Students may be placed in a separate class with part-time instruction in another placement or placed in separate classes full-time on a regular school campus
		Separate school Includes students who receive special education and related services in separate day schools for more than 50% of the school day
		Residential facility Includes students who receive education in a public or private residential facility for more than 50% of the school day.
	Most Restrictive	Homebound or hospital setting Includes students placed in and receiving special education in homebound or hospital programs

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4.3a The Case for the Continuum of Alternative Placements

Many scholars believe that the research evidence for one special education delivery model over another is still inconclusive (Zigmond, 2003b, 2007). The case for the continuum of alternative services includes the following:

Students with disabilities need intensive teaching in small instructional groups. Many students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities need intensive, systematic, and explicit instruction from teachers who are trained and highly skilled in delivering such services. Moreover, instruction for these students is most effective in a small instructional groups, which is difficult to provide in a general education class (Vaughn, Elbaum, & Boardman, 2001; Zigmond, 2003a, 2007).

General and special educators should work together to provide individualized instruction. The issue of *where* students receive instruction is very complex and there are no simple answers. It is important to recognize that the placement or the setting is not a treatment. The setting itself is less important than what goes on in the setting. General education teachers and special education teachers can work together to provide individualized instruction within a general education classroom setting (Holloway, 2001; McLeskey et al., 2004; Murawski & Dieker, 2004; Zigmond, 2003, 2007; Murawski & Swanson, 2002).

Many parents and professionals worry that many of the needs of students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities cannot be met in an inclusion classroom. The reality is that labels are indispensable in special education and that even if general education is excellent, special education is still needed (Kauffman, 2007). Does the stigma come from the label or from the child's failure to learn? For example, reading disabilities would not exist in a society that does not value literacy. The reality is, however, that we live in a society that does value literacy, and a person who does not know how to read suffers in this society (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1997).

Many students with learning disabilities and related disabilities need individualized instruction and intensive teaching, which is difficult to provide in a general education classroom setting. As a result, research shows that students with learning disabilities are often neglected (Zigmond, 2003a). The concern is that one size does not fit all, and lumping all students with learning disabilities into the general education classroom ignores the notion of individualized instruction (Crockett & Kauffman, 2001; Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Johns, 2003).

Empirical research does not identify *one* educational setting as the "most effective." Moreover, no one educational setting is effective for all students. What is much more important than the setting is the question, "What kinds of instructional and learning opportunities are (or can be) made available to students within different educational settings?" More important than the educational setting is the kind of instruction students receive. Students with learning disabilities need instruction that takes into account their individual differences, and they need explicit instruction to learn (Zigmond, 2003).

Did You Get It?

The law applying to the continuum of alternative placements stresses the least restrictive environment, mandating that _____ be made available to accommodate the needs of students with diagnosed disabilities.

- a. a single resource
- b. several resources
- c. an array of resources
- d. unlimited resources

4.4 Types of Educational Settings

In selecting an educational setting for a particular student, the IEP team should consider (1) the severity of the disability, (2) the student's need for related services, (3) the student's ability to fit into the routine of the selected setting, (4) the student's social and academic skills, and (5) the student's level of schooling (primary, intermediate, or secondary). Teams often recommend a placement that combines elements of several types of educational settings.

Parents must agree to the educational setting in writing. If parents and school personnel disagree, parents can ask for mediation at no cost to them, the school can request a "resolution session," or the parent may request a due process hearing (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004).

educational setting

The student's placement for instruction.

In what types of settings are students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities currently receiving instruction? The U.S. Department of Education (2008) reported information on the educational environments of students with disabilities in terms of the percentage of time students were outside the general education class. The classifications for educational environments are: outside the general education class (1) less than 21% of the time out of the regular class, (or the general education classroom) (2) 21–60% of the time out of the regular class (or the Resource Room), and (3) over 60% of the time out of the regular class (or the special class).

4.4a Environmental Options

As indicated earlier, most students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities are instructed in general education classrooms. Data from the U.S. Department of Education (2012) show that 87% of students with learning disabilities are in general education classes. This number includes both students whose educational placement is in the general education classroom only (52%) and those students who are both in a resource room for part of the day and in a general education classroom for the rest of the day (35%). About 12% of students with learning disabilities receive instruction in separate classes. A small percentage (1%) are in other settings, such as separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital settings (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The various educational settings are described in this section. Most students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities receive services through general education classrooms, resource rooms, or special classrooms.

Sometimes a combination placement is a viable alternative for a particular student. For example, a student could be in a special class for a portion of the day or the week and in a general education classroom for the remainder of the time.

general education classroom

The regular class, in which most students in school receive instruction.

General Education Classroom As shown in Table 4.1, students in a general education environment are outside of this class for less than 21% of the day for special education and related services (U.S. Department of Education,

2012). The general education classroom is considered the least restrictive environment in terms of being with students who do not have disabilities. Effective integration of students with disabilities into the general education classroom requires careful planning, teacher preparation, team effort, and a complete support system. Mere physical placement in a general education classroom is not enough to ensure academic achievement or social acceptance. Students



Teacher helping students.

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with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities have specific needs that require targeted and specialized instruction and attention.

Ideally, general and special educators share responsibility for teaching. The special educator may collaborate with the general education classroom teacher, provide materials for the student, or actually teach the student within the general education classroom. The general education classroom teacher must also have the skills, knowledge, and willingness to work with students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities.

The composition of students in today's general education classroom is changing dramatically. The general education classroom is likely to include the following: most students in the general education classroom do not have disabilities, some students in general education classrooms have disabilities that have been identified through an IEP, some students who do not have an IEP but are eligible to receive accommodation may have a Section 504 Plan (see the example of a Section 504 plan in Figure 4.2), some students in the general education classroom have suspected but undiagnosed disabilities, and some students in the general education classroom may be English-language learners (ELL) and have limited English proficiency. Thus, the general education classroom today has many different types of students with special needs. The percentage of students with disabilities in general education classrooms is increasing, while the percentage in other settings is decreasing.



Student: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Date of Implementation: _____ Termination: _____ Review: _____

Statement of Student's Achievement as it Relates to this "Plan": _____

FIGURE 4.2
Section 504 Plan for
Students in General Education

INTERVENTION/ STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTOR(S)	MONITORING DATE	COMMENTS

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Specific Accommodations Needed

Resource Room Students in a resource room are outside of the general education environment for 21% to 60% of the day for special education and related services (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). A resource room is an educational setting that provides educational services to students with disabilities on a regularly scheduled basis for part of the day. Students spend the remainder of the school day in a general education classroom. The resource room offers flexibility in terms of the curriculum offered, the time students spend in the program, the number of students served, and the teacher's time. As noted in Figure 4.1, the percentage of students receiving resource room instruction is decreasing.

resource room

A special instructional setting, usually a room within a school. In this room, small groups of children meet with a special education teacher for special instruction for a portion of the day. Children spend the remainder of the day in the general education classrooms.

Care must be taken in scheduling students for a resource room session. For example, if the pupil enjoys physical education, the teacher should avoid preempting this period for the resource room session. In addition, the classroom teacher must be consulted about the optimum time for the student to leave the classroom. Resource rooms should be pleasant and have an abundant supply of materials. Because students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities often have short attention spans, it is wise to provide a change of pace by planning several activities during a teaching session.

separate class

A special class for children with disabilities taught by a teacher with special training. Children in a separate class usually spend most of the day in this setting.

Separate Class Students in a separate class are outside the general education environment for more than 60% of the day for special education and related services (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The separate class within the school was one of the first placements used in the public schools to provide education to students with disabilities. Separate classes are typically small, containing about 6 to 15 students at a time. The separate class offers the opportunity for highly individualized and closely supervised intensive instruction. Even with the growing inclusion movement, the percentage of students with learning disabilities placed in special classes is about 12%.

Some separate classes are *categorical* (consisting only of students with one category of disability (such as learning disabilities); others are *cross-categorical* (consisting of students with various mild or moderate disabilities). Often schools cluster the categories of learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, or mental retardation in special classes.

Separate classes are beneficial for certain students who appear to have a better self-concept than similar students in general education classrooms, possibly because regular class competition sets achievement criteria that these students cannot meet. With its lower teacher-pupil ratio, separate classes can offer more intensive individualized instruction in which students spend more time learning. The separate classroom may provide the most appropriate setting for the kind of intensive and comprehensive intervention needed by students with the most serious and severe learning difficulties.

separate schools

Schools for students with learning disabilities that students attend during the day. They return home after school.

Separate School Often private (but sometimes publicly supported) separate schools are special educational facilities established specifically for students with disabilities. Some students attend the separate school full time. Other students attend the separate school only half a day and may spend the balance of the school day in the public school.

The disadvantages of separate schools include the high expense to parents, the traveling distance, and the lack of opportunity to be with students in the general education population. The advantages of separate schools are that they often serve students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities well, and they sometimes provide the only feasible option for certain students. Successful pilot programs are often developed at separate schools, which are then used in other settings.

residential facilities

Educational institutions in which students live away from home and receive their education. A residential facility may be sponsored by a government agency or may be privately managed.

Residential Facility Full-time placement for students away from their homes can be provided by residential facilities. The students receive education in a public or private residential facility. Relatively few students have disabilities that are severe enough to warrant such placement. However, in some cases—if the community lacks adequate alternative facilities, if the behavioral manifestations are extremely severe, or if the emotional reaction among other members

of the family is debilitating—residential placement on a 24-hour basis may be the best solution for both the student and the family.

The disadvantages of residential facilities are that they remove the student from home and neighborhood and provide fewer opportunities for social experiences in the larger community. However, for certain youngsters, residential placements become the most appropriate choice, and they have successfully helped many students learn, adjust to the world, and achieve very rewarding careers and lives.

Homebound or Hospital Setting Students in homebound or hospital settings often have a medical condition requiring these placements. Often the school sends teachers to the home or hospital settings to provide instruction.

One-to-One Instruction The type of instruction known as one-to-one instruction occurs when one adult works with one student. It is not an educational environment identified in IDEA-2004. The research shows that it can lead to substantial improvement in student achievement. One-to-one instruction works because the teaching is highly individualized, and the student receives intensive instruction over a period of time by a skilled teacher who can tailor the instruction to the specific student needs. Sometimes students need one-to-one instruction, and they tend to do well with this individualized instruction (Slavin, 2000; Vaughn, Gersten, & Chard, 2000).

one-to-one instruction
Teaching with one teacher and one student.

In the real world, of course, the cost for schools to provide a teacher for each student is impractical, so parents must often turn to private specialists or clinics to receive this highly individualized form of instruction. Therefore, it is important for schools to seek ways to get as close as possible to one-to-one instruction (Slavin, 2009). Methods for providing individualized instruction include using computer instruction and aides and volunteers as tutors in the classroom. Aides or volunteers must be supervised by an appropriately certified teacher.

Computers offer a way to individualize teaching. A good computer software program is like a tutor because it presents the information, gives students abundant practice, assesses their level of understanding, and provides additional information if it is needed. Computer programs can be quite effective in presenting ideas and in using pictures or graphics to reinforce concepts. Because most students are motivated by the computer, they will work longer and harder than they will with paper-and-pencil tasks. Students utilizing computer programs must be monitored closely to ensure that they are actually working on the designated program and are benefiting from it.

Using *aides and volunteers* offers another procedure to approximate one-to-one instruction. The volunteer movement is alive and growing. Some 60 reading and literacy groups, such as *Literacy Volunteers of America* and the *Laubach Program*, support one-to-one programs, using volunteer adult tutors. Moreover, research demonstrates that tutoring works by increasing a student's reading achievement, confidence, and motivation, in addition to providing a sense of control of the student's reading ability. Even when a student receives the very best in-class instruction, some students still require extra time and assistance to meet the high levels of reading skills needed in school, in the workplace, and throughout life. Tutors can provide the explicit instruction that produces positive results (Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, 1998; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998a). Tutoring is especially critical during long school

breaks, such as summer vacation. Research shows that during these vacation periods, students lose many skills they have learned (Wasik, 1998). Tutoring should be conducted by a well-trained individual who coordinates efforts with the classroom teacher and who gears instruction based on the individualized needs of the student as delineated by the IEP. When teacher aides or volunteers are used, it is important to remember that the teacher is the one who is responsible for planning the instruction for the student. The aide or volunteer must work under the supervision of a teacher who is knowledgeable about how to deliver the specialized instruction needed by the student.

Did You Get It?

When a parent or guardian does not agree with the planned-for educational setting—for any reason whatsoever—he or she can take steps to resolve an impasse. Which step or right is inaccurate in relation to this process?

- a. A parent or guardian *must* agree in writing to the proposed placement
- b. A parent or guardian can request a resolution session
- c. A parent or guardian can request a no-cost mediation session
- d. The parent or guardian may request a due-process hearing

4.5 Collaboration: Partnerships Between General Education Teachers and Special Education Teachers

As a greater number of students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities receive their instruction in general education classrooms, procedures that promote partnerships between general education and special education teachers become especially important. For successful inclusion of students, it is important to find ways to facilitate a team effort.

4.5a Collaboration

collaboration
Teachers working together to plan and teach a child, usually a general education teacher and a special education teacher.

Collaboration is a style of interaction that provides a way for individuals or groups to work together. Through collaboration, two or more individuals interact in a supportive manner that benefits each member, as well as the people they are supporting. The process of collaboration involves people with diverse areas of expertise (such as classroom teachers, special education teachers, and related professions) who work together to find creative solutions to mutually defined problems. Collaboration is essential for effective inclusion (Friend & Cook, 2010; Walther-Thomas, Korinek, & McLaughlin, 2000). Successful collaboration requires the following ingredients (Friend & Cook, 2010):

- Mutual goals
- Voluntary participation
- Equality among participants
- Shared responsibility for participation and decision making
- Shared responsibility for outcomes
- Shared resources

Some principles and strategies for effective collaboration are given in Teaching Tips 4.1, "Effective Collaboration."

4.5b What the General Education Teacher Needs

The responsibilities of the general education classroom teacher are increasing as the inclusion movement continues to expand. Classroom teachers today are accountable for a wider range of students, including more children with disabilities and other special needs. What kinds of supports should be provided for general education teachers who are responsible for inclusion?

- **Participation in the IEP.** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 requires that general education classroom teachers be part of the individualized education program (IEP) team. Being on the IEP team helps classroom teachers understand the problems, strengths, and needs of students with disabilities.
- **Reduced class size.** Having many students with special needs in a general education classroom makes the teaching task more difficult. A smaller class size could help teachers cope with this added responsibility.
- **Time for planning.** Time should be allocated during the school day for general education classroom teachers to plan with the special education teacher and other professionals for meeting the needs of students with disabilities.
- **Paraprofessionals.** Paraprofessional personnel and aides in the classroom can help general education classroom teachers meet the needs of each student.
- **Volunteers.** Many schools are successful in attracting volunteers to help in the classroom. Senior citizens and volunteers from business organizations sometimes can be recruited to assist.
- **Collaboration with special educators.** Special educators should be available to help general education classroom teachers solve problems, discuss issues, and manage the many situations that they confront in the classroom.
- **Continuum of alternative placements.** Some students with special needs will require more than the inclusive, general education classroom can offer. For these students, other placement options, such as the resource room or special classes, are needed.
- **Availability of related professionals.** The IEP may indicate that the services of related professionals, such as speech-language experts or occupational therapists, are needed for a student. It is important that such services be provided.
- **Opportunities for learning.** General education classroom teachers need to be supported when seeking additional training by attending conferences, seminars, workshops, or learning activities.



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Watch the TeachSource Video Case entitled "Inclusion: Classroom Implications for the General and Special Educator." In this video, a general education teacher in a classroom receives support from special education specialists. This video shows the work of occupational and speech therapists with students in the general education classroom.

QUESTIONS

1. Based upon what you read in the chapter, do you find the classroom profiled within this video case to be an effective inclusion classroom? Give some specific examples of its effectiveness.
2. How can an educational therapist help students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities?

TEACHING TIPS 4.1

Effective Collaboration

Principles for Collaboration

Establish common goals

Successful partners share *mutual goals* and a *common philosophy*.

Participation should be voluntary

Collaboration cannot be forced by directives from superiors. Individuals must take mutual responsibility for a problem and freely seek solutions.

Recognize equality among participants

Each person's contribution is equally valued. Each person has equal power in decision making.

Share responsibility for participation and decision making

Each person should share the responsibility for participation and decision making.

Share accountability for outcomes

Everyone shares, whether the outcome is successful or not. If the outcome is successful, they share the credit. When it is unsuccessful, they share responsibility for the failure.

Share resources

Each person has resources to contribute.

Activities That Work

- ✓ Develop a relationship
- ✓ Engage in small-scale efforts initially
- ✓ Develop common perceptions

- ✓ Involve key stakeholders
- ✓ Invite participation

- ✓ Use names, not titles, when interacting
- ✓ Rotate and share team roles
- ✓ Structure ways to facilitate participation

- ✓ Share perspectives about the problem
- ✓ Balance between coordination of tasks and division of labor
- ✓ Brainstorm before decision making
- ✓ Establish clear delineation of agreed upon actions as follow-up procedures

- ✓ Acknowledge risks and potential failure
- ✓ Celebrate success together
- ✓ Learn from the failure together

- ✓ Identify respective resources
- ✓ Use joint decision making about resource allocation

Professional Resource Download

4.5c What the Special Education Teacher Needs

The responsibilities of special educators and learning disabilities teachers are difficult to define because they are changing so rapidly. Special education teachers are expected to wear many hats because they are responsible for (1) setting up programs to identify, assess, and instruct students; (2) participating in the screening, assessment, and evaluation of students; (3) collaborating with general education classroom teachers to design and implement instruction; (4) knowing both formal assessment measures and alternate assessment methods; (5) participating on IEP teams; (6) implementing the IEP through direct intervention,

coteaching, and collaboration; (7) interviewing and holding conferences with parents; and, perhaps most important, (8) helping students to develop self-understanding and to gain the hope and the confidence that is necessary to cope with and to overcome their learning disabilities.

To accomplish these goals, effective special education teachers need to have two different kinds of competencies: (1) competencies in professional knowledge and skills (having the information and proficiencies for testing and teaching) and (2) competencies in human relationships (the art of working with people).

4.5d Coteaching

Coteaching occurs when two or more teachers deliver instruction to a diverse group of students in a general education classroom. Coteaching between general educators and special educators has become a common method for delivering instruction to all students in a general education classroom. The teaching is shared by all teachers involved. Coteaching can be mutually satisfying, but the teachers must be willing to share and accept responsibility. In fact, coteaching has been likened to a marriage. To be successful, the teachers have to make a 100% effort (Friend & Cook, 2010; Friend & Bursuck, 2002; Gately & Gately, 2001). There are several types of coteaching, and they are described in Table 4.2.

coteaching

The process of two professionals working together within an instructional setting to seek a joint solution. Often refers to the joint efforts of the special education teacher and the general education classroom teacher to work together in the general education classroom

TABLE 4.2

Types of Coteaching

Type	Description
One teaches, one supports One group: One lead teacher, one supportive teacher	One teacher has primary instructional responsibility. The other teacher serves in a supportive role (e.g., observes, tutors, manages behavior)
Station supportive teaching Two groups: Each teacher teaches one group	Divide the content into two parts; then divide the groups into two groups (A and B). Teacher 1 teaches half of the content to Group A, while Teacher 2 teaches the rest of the content to Group B. Then the groups switch. Teacher 2 teaches the rest of the content to Group A, and Teacher 1 teaches the rest of the content to Group B
Parallel teaching Two groups, two teachers: Each teacher teaches one-half of the class	Each teacher instructs half of the class. Both teachers use the same instructional materials. Teachers may differ in their instructional styles. Essentially, the class is smaller, so students have more opportunities to participate
Alternative teaching Two groups: One small, one large	The class is divided into two groups—a large group and a small group. One teacher teaches the large group; one teacher teaches the small group. More intensive and direct instruction is usually used in the small group
Team teaching Both teachers share leadership in teaching the group	Both teachers are equally engaged in the instructional activities. For example, Teacher 1 may begin the lesson by introducing vocabulary while Teacher 2 provides examples to place the words in context

TEACHING TIPS 4.2

Strategies for Two Teachers Working Together

Activities of Teacher 1	Activities of Teacher 2
✓ Lecturing to the class	✓ Writing notes of key ideas on the board during the lecture
✓ Giving instructions orally	✓ Writing instructions on the board
✓ Giving instructions orally	✓ Checking for understanding with a small group or individual students
✓ Checking for understanding with the large group	✓ Working with the other half of the class in preparing for a debate
✓ Working with one half of the class in preparing for a debate	✓ Providing suggestions for modifications, accommodations, and diverse learners
✓ Creating basic lesson plans for standards, objectives, and content curriculum	✓ Reviewing homework with small groups
✓ Providing large group instruction	✓ Providing modifications
✓ Providing enrichment activities	

Source: Adapted from "Tips and strategies for coteaching at the secondary level," by W. Murawski & L. Dieker, 2004, *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 36, p. 56. Reprinted with permission of the Council for Exceptional Children.

It is important for school personnel to consider the strengths of the family. Involvement of parents and families through family-school collaboration is encouraged by informal communication, such as written notes between school and home, parental involvement in the classroom and in extracurricular activities, face-to-face conferences, telephone contact, and e-mail messages (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Smith, 2004).

Parents can play a crucial role in helping their child. They must (1) be informed consumers, continually working to learn more about the problem of learning disabilities; (2) be assertive advocates, seeking the right programs for their child at home, in school, and in the community; (3) work to ensure that their child's legal rights are being recognized; and (4) be firm in managing their child's behavior while remaining empathetic to their child's feelings, failures, fears, and tribulations. Parents must also give time and attention to other members of the family and try to make a life for themselves.

Parenting a child with disabilities is challenging, but it can also be rewarding. Parents need support from the school, the extended family, and other professionals. With this support, encouragement, and the sharing of expertise, the child can emerge from the school years academically, emotionally, and socially intact, as well as prepared for the challenges ahead.

There are no easy answers or simple solutions for parents of children with disabilities. The feature Student Stories 4.1, "Parents' Thoughts," offers several accounts of the parent's role in helping their child.

STUDENT STORIES 4.1

Parents' Thoughts

- All during the evaluation process, I continued to search for a school for Allegra. I applied to many schools in the city, and one by one they rejected her. It was the same each time, a voice on the phone telling me, "She doesn't belong here." With each rejection came a deeper sense of despair. As the list grew shorter, my despair began to be overcome by something close to panic.
- I was frightened. I didn't know what to do. What in the world can anyone do if a child is denied a basic education? Her future was falling apart before my eyes. I knew the only chance she stood of making it in this world was to find a school, *any* school, that would accept her; yet, with each one I continued to hear, "She doesn't belong here."

Source: From *Laughing Allegra* (p. 40), by A. Ford, 2003, New York: New Market Press

- My son has a learning disability.... I remember his coming home from first grade and crying over his reader. He could not decode! The only way he managed to get through first grade was to memorize the readers he brought home. He accomplished this by going over and over them with me. I don't think his teacher was ever aware that he memorized.

- Teacher comments were predictable: "He is just immature." "He could do it if he would just try." "He's just sloppy because he rushes through his work." "He's just lazy." If only they had been with him as he cried over his homework.

Source: From "A mother's thoughts on inclusion," by M. Carr, 1993, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 26(9), 590.

- No one would accuse Kerri ... of lacking smarts or motivation. The ... fifth grader has an IQ of 118 and enthusiasm to spare. Unfortunately, she's never had an aptitude for linking letters to sounds. She recognizes many words by their appearance on the page, but at 11, she still can't spell or write. Common sense says she's dyslexic. But, (by the standards set in her state) Kerri is not entitled to special help. It's sad. She may waste her time in school until she fails badly enough to qualify as learning disabled.

Source: From *Overcoming dyslexia* (p. 29), by S. Shaywitz, 2003, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

REFLECTIVE QUESTION

1. What are some common themes in the above stories?

4.6a Sensitivity to the Cultural and Linguistic Diversity of Families



In the process of interacting with families, teachers should strive to be responsive to cultural views and attitudes about disabilities. Teachers should realize that there are cultural differences in attitudes about communication, personal space, eye contact, wait time, tone of voice, and touching. Teachers should be sensitive to these issues in interacting with families (Lerner, Lowenthal, & Egan, 2003).

4.6b Suggestions for Parents

Some useful things parents *can* do are presented in Teaching Tips 4.3, "Suggestions for Parents and Families."

Teachers may also wish to recommend reading materials to parents to help them become better acquainted with learning disabilities and with ways of helping their children. Table 4.3 lists a selection of appropriate books and websites for parents.

4.6c Parents' Rights

IDEA-2004 strengthens the rights of parents and families in the educational process of their children. A fundamental provision of the law is the right of

TABLE 4.3**Books and Websites for Parents and Families****Books**

- Barkley, R. (1995). *Taking charge of ADHD: The complete authoritative guide for parents*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Ford, A. (2003). *Laughing Allegra*. New York: New Market Press.
- Goldstein, S., & Mather, N. (1998). *Overcoming underachievement: An action guide to helping your child succeed in school*. New York: John Wiley.
- Hall, S., & Moats, L. (1999). *Straight talk about reading: How parents can make a difference during the early years*. Chicago: Contemporary Press.
- Lavoie, R. (2005). *It's so much work to be your friend: helping the child with learning disabilities find social success*. New York: Simon and Schuster, A Touchstone Book.
- Lerner, J., Lowenthal, B., & Lerner, S. (1995). *Attention deficit disorders: Assessment and teaching*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Osman, B. (1997). *Learning disability and ADHD: A family guide to learning and learning together*. New York: John Wiley.
- Silver, L. (2006). *The misunderstood child: A guide for parents of children with learning disabilities*. New York: Three Rivers Press. Crown Publishing.
- Smith, S. (1991). *Succeeding against the odds: Strategies and insights from the learning-disabled*. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher.

Websites

- Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: <http://www.chadd.org>
- Learning Disabilities Association of America: <http://www.lidaamerica.org>
- Schwab Learning: <http://www.schwablearning.org>

parents to participate in the educational decision-making process. Parents have the right to:

- A free, appropriate public education for their child
- Request an evaluation of their child
- Notification whenever the school wants to evaluate their child or change the child's educational placement
- Informed consent (parents understand and agree in writing to teaching plans and may withdraw their consent at any time)
- Obtain an independent evaluation of their child
- Request a reevaluation of their child
- Have their child tested in the language that the child knows best
- Review all of their child's school records
- Participate in their child's individualized education program (IEP) or individualized family service plan (IFSP) for young children
- Be informed of their child's progress at least as often as parents of children who do not have disabilities

TEACHING TIPS 4.3

Suggestions for Parents and Families

1. **Be alert to what your child is good at or likes to do.** By discovering an area of interest or a talent, you can give your child a new chance for success. Even small tasks, such as folding napkins or helping with specific kitchen chores, can give your child a sense of achievement.
2. **Do not push your child into activities for which the child is not ready.** The child may react by trying halfheartedly to please you; rebelling, either actively or passively; or just quitting or withdrawing into a world of daydreams. When a child is forced to meet arbitrary and inappropriate standards imposed by the adult world, learning becomes painful rather than pleasurable.
3. **Simplify family routine.** For some children, mealtime can be an extremely complex and stimulating situation. Your child may be unable to cope with the many sounds, sights, smells, and so on. It may be necessary at first to have the child eat earlier and then gradually join the family meal—perhaps starting with dessert. Search for other such examples in your routines.
4. **Try to match tasks to the child's level of functioning.** Think about the child's problem and find some way to help. For example, easy-to-wipe surfaces and break-proof containers can reduce mess and breakage when the child uses these materials. Drawing an outline of the child's shoes on the closet floor can indicate left and right.
5. **Be direct and positive in talking to your child.** Try to avoid criticizing; instead, be supportive and provide guidance. For example, if your child has trouble following directions, ask him or her to look at you while you speak and then to repeat what you have said.
6. **Keep the child's room simple and in a quiet part of the house.** As much as possible, make the room a place to relax and retreat.
7. **Help your child learn how to live in a world with others.** When a child does not play well with other children, parents may have to go out of their way to plan and guide social experiences. This may mean inviting a single child to play for a short period of time, arranging with parents of other children for joint social activities, or volunteering to be a girl scout leader or boy scout leader.
8. **Children need to learn that they are significant.** They must be treated with respect and allowed to *do* their own work. They should learn that being a responsible and contributing member of the family is important—probably more important than learning the academic skills demanded by the school.
9. **Keep your outside interests.** Try to relinquish your child's care to a competent babysitter periodically. Parents need time off for independence and morale boosting.

Professional Resource Download

4.6d The Family System

A family of five is like five people lying on a waterbed. Whenever one person moves, everyone feels the ripple (Lavoie, 1995).

It is useful to view the family as a system. The fundamental idea of the family systems theory is that whatever happens to one part of a family or system affects all the other parts. In the family system, all members of the extended family are interdependent, and each member has an interactive effect on all other members. The family system involves the child, parents, siblings, grandparents, other people living in the home, or those who are part of the child's family.

The entire family system is affected by a child with learning disabilities or with related mild disabilities. Day-to-day living can be stressful from the start. As infants, these children may be irritable, demanding, and difficult to soothe, which can make parents feel incompetent, confused, and helpless. As the child enters school and begins to face learning failure, the parents may have feelings of guilt, shame, or embarrassment. As they become frustrated, they may blame each other for their child's problems. One parent may accuse the other of being too strict or too lenient in raising their child, putting extra strain on the marital relationship. Siblings and

other family members are also affected when a brother or sister has learning disabilities. The siblings may be embarrassed or feel angry or jealous if their parents pay more attention to the sibling with learning disabilities. For these reasons, it is necessary in some cases to include the entire family in the treatment process, with counseling for the family system as an important part.

4.6e Stages of Acceptance

When parents are faced with the quandary of a child with a disability, they are likely to pass through a series of predictable stages of acceptance (Kübler-Ross, 1969; Lavoie, 1995). These stages are universal and apply to anyone who experiences a loss. In this case, the parents have lost their hope for a normal child.

Some parents go through a mourning process when first told that their child has learning disabilities. The stages in the process are shock, disbelief, denial, anger, bargaining, and acceptance. For each parent, the number of stages or the length of time spent in each stage is different. Often, too, the parent returns to an earlier stage.

- *Shock* is the numb, distancing feeling that engulfs the parents when the bad news is being delivered.
- *Disbelief* is the stage in which parents do not believe the diagnosis.
- *Denial* is a stage in which parents refuse to even consider that the child has a disability and seeks an alternative diagnosis. Some examples of statements of denial include “There’s nothing wrong,” “That’s the way I was as a child—not to worry,” and “He’ll grow out of it.”
- *Anger* occurs as the denial breaks down and the child’s condition becomes more real and apparent. Angry feelings are exhibited when parents say things like “Why did this happen to me?” or “It isn’t fair,” “The teachers don’t know anything,” or “I hate the neighborhood, this school, and this teacher.”
- *Bargaining* is evident when the parent decides that dedication will somehow alleviate their child’s condition. For example, they may say, “Maybe the problem will improve if we move.”
- *Acceptance* is the stage at which the parents can look past the disability and accept the child as he or she is. A stage beyond acceptance is to *cherish* the child for those differences and for how that child has made the parents’ lives better.

This roller coaster of emotions has a profound impact upon the parent and upon interactions with the child. Because the two parents will probably not go through these stages at the same time, each parent must learn to respect the other’s right to travel through the stages at a different rate.

The goal is to reach acceptance so that the parent is able to make decisions that are unclouded by undue emotion. When parents accept their child along with their child’s disabilities, they are then able to provide for the child’s special needs while continuing to live a normal life and tending to family, home, civic, and social obligations.



Parents can play a critical role in helping their child.

stages of acceptance

The different emotions parents go through when they learn they have a child with disabilities.

4.6f Parent Support Groups and Family Counseling

Establishing healthy parental attitudes and ensuring parent–teacher cooperation are, of course, desirable goals. Parent support groups and family counseling can help in meeting these goals.

parent support groups

Small groups of parents who meet to obtain information about their children with disabilities and to discuss common problems.

Parent support groups offer parents a way to meet regularly in small groups to discuss common problems. They can be organized by the school, family service organizations, professional counselors, or parent organizations, such as the Learning Disabilities Association (LDA). The opportunity to meet with other parents whose children are encountering similar problems tends to reduce the parents' sense of isolation. Furthermore, such parent support groups have been useful in alerting the community, school personnel, other professionals, and legislative bodies to the plight of their children. To find local parent groups, see the LDA website at <http://www.ldaamerica.org>.

Parent support groups and family counseling offer the following benefits:

- Help parents to understand and to accept their child's problem
- Reduce anxieties stemming from apprehension about the psychological and educational development of their child; parents can discover that they are not alone and that other parents have similar problems and have found solutions
- Help parents realize that they are an integral part of their child's learning, development, and behavior; they can learn to perceive their children differently and to deal with their problems more effectively
- Help parents learn about discipline, communication skills, behavioral management, parent advocacy, special education legislation, social skills development, helping one's child make friends, home management, and college and vocational opportunities

4.6g Parent–Teacher Conferences

Parent–teacher conferences are a bridge between the home and school. Both parents and teachers tend to shy away from these private conferences, parents fearing what they will hear and teachers fearing that parents will react negatively. Yet, these conferences, at which the student's progress and problems are discussed, should be viewed as an opportunity to help the student. Parents and teachers can work together to enhance progress.

In setting up a conference, teachers should reassure parents that they are going to communicate with someone who cares about their child. Teachers must impart a sense of confidence without being arrogant and should convey a sincere interest in the student and respect for the parents. Parents also want to know what they can do at home.

Did You Get It?

Although most parents ostensibly have unconditional love for their children, you would be irresponsible to minimize the " _____ " toll that children with disabilities can place on their parents.

- a. financial
- b. emotional
- c. devastating
- d. abusive

I Have a Kid Who...

BERNICE and a Coteaching Team

Bernice, age 9, is in fourth grade in the general education class. Bernice's IEP indicates that she has learning disabilities, and her IEP has goals for improving her reading fluency. Ms. George is her general education teacher, and Mr. Peters is the special education teacher who works in Bernice's class. Ms. George and Mr. Peters have formed a collaborative arrangement to work with students who have special needs. Whereas Ms. George works with most of the class in a large group, Mr. Peters works with students who require special attention in a small group in the class. Several other students in the fourth grade need help in developing reading fluency. Mr. Peters has a group of 4 students in the general education class who need help in building skills in reading fluency.

Mr. Peters plans to use these strategies for building reading fluency with this small group in the general education class: repeated reading, using predictable books, choral reading, and the neurological impress method.

QUESTIONS

1. How can Mr. Peters use *repeated reading* with his small group of students?
2. How can Bernice benefit from the neurological impress method?
3. What read-along technology could Mr. Peters use?

Chapter Summary

- Important concepts about educational settings
- The least restrictive environment
- Continuum of alternative placements
- Types of educational settings
- Collaboration: Partnerships between general and regular educators

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. Discuss two key concepts about educational settings that are features of the special education law. Do you think these two features are compatible or in conflict? Explain your position.
2. Discuss some of the recent trends in educational settings. How do you think these trends will affect students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities?
3. Describe the advantages and shortcomings of the inclusion placement model.
4. Compare and contrast the three most common educational settings for students with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities.
5. Discuss activities for coteaching between the special education teacher and the general education teacher.
6. Discuss the various needs of the general education teacher and the special education teacher.

Key Terms

collaboration (p. 116)

continuum of alternative placements (p. 109)

coteaching (p. 119)

educational setting (p. 111)

general education classroom (p. 112)

one-to-one instruction (p. 115)

parent support groups (p. 126)

residential facilities (p. 114)

resource room (p. 113)

separate class (p. 114)

separate schools (p. 114)

stages of acceptance (p. 125)