OPENING DOORS:
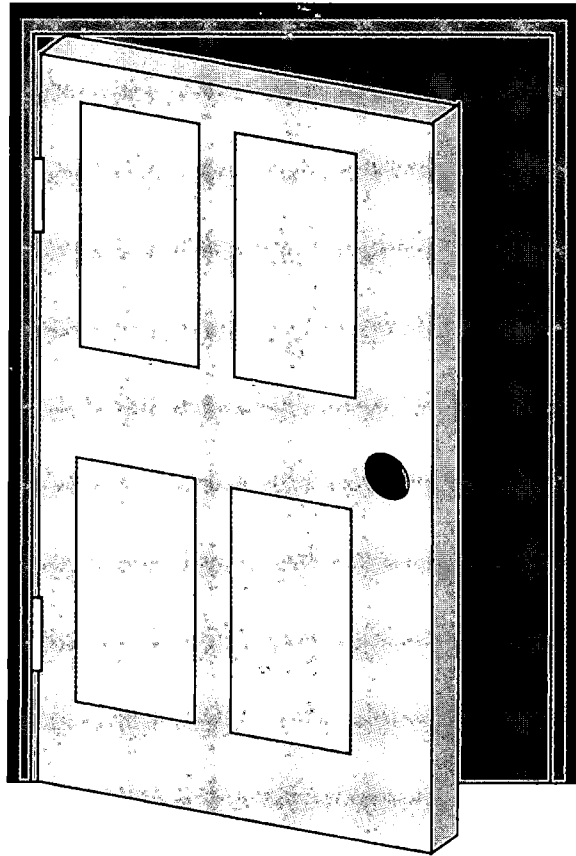

Strategies for Including All Students in Regular Education

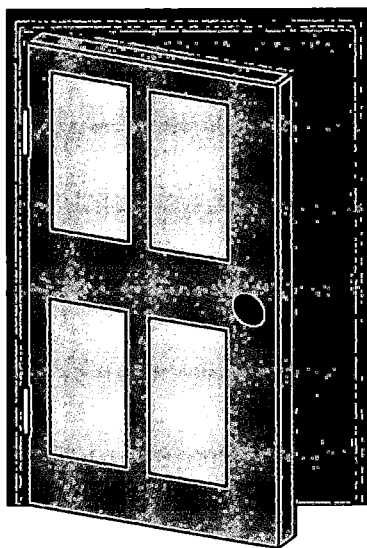Written By

C. Beth Schaffner
Barbara E. Buswell

OPENING DOORS:

Strategies for Including All Students in Regular Education

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INTRODUCTION

OPENING DOORS is a book about including all students in regular school classes and activities. It's a "how-to" book that addresses the question: *"How will I make this work?"* It describes strategies that educators, therapists, principals, families, and students have used to include students/classmates who were educated separately in the past. Since each student who receives special education services is very different and is to receive an INDIVIDUALIZED education, it is impossible to write a recipe book. Therefore, we have attempted to describe the processes, thinking, and approaches that successful implementers have used. This is not an all-inclusive book, but hopefully, it is a book to assist the readers — teachers, parents, and others interested in increasing quality educational opportunities — to open doors for students.

Why include students with disabilities in regular education classes and activities? Because it's the right thing to do, it's time, it's good for all kids, and it's the presumption of the special education law.

This concept of ALL children learning together and still meeting their own needs may cause some to be fearful and may seem perplexing because in our own school experiences, the majority of the American population was exposed only to traditional teaching methods, curriculum, and students. In our schools, there was little variation in the approaches used, and there was the assumption that all students in each grade level must meet the same skill levels and master the same curricula. As a result, students with disabilities were not included in regular classes — or in many cases in regular schools.

Public Law 94-142 was passed in 1975, ensuring the rights of children with disabilities to a "free, appropriate, public education" in the "least restrictive environment" (LRE). This least restrictive environment provision of the law states that children with disabilities must be educated with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible WITH necessary supports provided. The LRE provision was part of the law because separate education is not equal as seen in the Supreme Court decision of 1954 (Brown vs. the Board of Education) which states, "in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place."

However, because of intense efforts to implement P.L. 94-142 quickly and fully, a "special", separate education system evolved which frequently has operated under the assumption that in order to have their special needs met, students with disabilities can best be served in special, segregated settings. In the process of implementing the letter of the law (that students are entitled to education), the spirit of the law (that children have the right to learn together) was virtually lost.

In the past, we in the PEAK Parent Center Integration Project focused on the philosophical basis for integrating students with disabilities and developed the book, *Discover the Possibilities*. We then developed a collection of stories of families and students who had taken risks and had achieved inclusion in their neighborhood schools with appropriate supports and services in the book, *Breaking Ground*. We also outlined ways that parents and educators can use the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) process to build opportunities for inclusion. Now through our current grant, we have attempted to describe some of the "how-to's" that we have learned from many teachers, principals, therapists, educational leaders, parents, and students themselves.

No easy answers or quick fixes are possible. The strategies that work for including students depend on the teaching style and strengths of the particular classroom teacher(s), the child's needs, the chemistry of the classroom(s), the strengths of the various team members and the peers in the class. Providing supports to enable students with challenges to receive a quality education is a creative, challenging process that evolves, changes, and grows. It is a dynamic, problem-solving process which is ongoing. The challenge is to offer adequate supports to the child, make adaptations and accommodations to the environment, curricula, and teaching approaches but NEVER over-intervene.

When we read the emerging school restructuring literature for general education, it is apparent that those approaches recommended by these leaders, as you will see in Chapters 4 and 5, are precisely the same kinds of approaches that enable ALL students (including those students who have special education needs) to learn actively, successfully, and appropriately. Many traditional educational practices must change for all of today's students to be successful participants in the twenty-first century. New Mexico Governor, Garrey Carruthers, Chairman of the Education Commission of the States says, "We must radically change our education system. The world has changed. Schooling has not."[1] He further cites a recent ABC News poll in which nearly 90% of the people surveyed agreed that "America's children will have to be educated in a new and very different way to succeed in the future."[2]

After our studies through this project, we are hopeful about the potential of public education, schools, teachers, and classrooms. We are seeing increasing numbers of school communities that are building on their own strengths, making learning more active, involving students in determining their own learning goals, teaching interdependence in the learning process, AND including students who have been set apart and denied opportunities for learning.

And so, this book is a primer, hopefully an impetus, to open doors for schools, families, students, and communities to build new possibilities for educating students well.

C. Beth Schaffner
Barbara E. Buswell
December 1, 1990

SUGGESTED READINGS ON THE RATIONALE FOR INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN REGULAR EDUCATION:

Biklen, D. (1988). "The Myth of Clinical Judgment". *Journal of Social Issues,* 44(1), 127-140.

Biklen, D. P. (1989). "Redefining Schools". In D. Biklen, D. L. Ferguson, & A. Ford (Eds.), *Schooling and Disability*. Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education.

Biklen, D., Lehr, S., Searl, S.J., & Taylor, S.J. (1987). *Purposeful Integration... Inherently Equal*. Boston: Technical Assistance for Parent Programs.

O'Brien, J., Forest, M., Snow, J., & Hasbury, D. (1989). *Action for Inclusion: How to Improve Schools by Welcoming Children with Special Needs into Regular Classrooms*. Toronto: Frontier College Press.

Schaffner, C. B., & Buswell, B. E.. (1988). *Discover the Possibilities: A Curriculum for Teaching Parents About Integration*. Colorado Springs: PEAK Parent Center.

Taylor, S. (1988). "Caught in the Continuum: A Critical Analysis of the Principle of the Least Restrictive Environment". *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps,* 13, 41-43.

Chapter One
USING A TEAM APPROACH
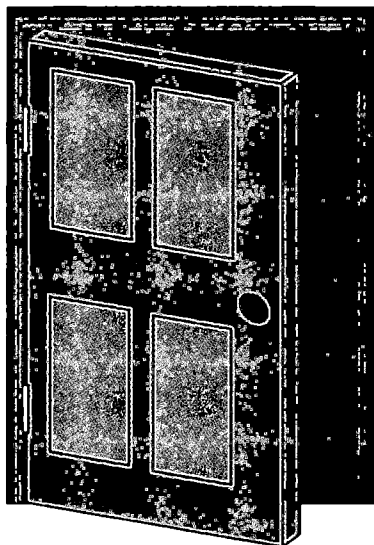
"I can't do this alone."

"Having a child with disabilities in my class will take a lot of extra time and work."

"I'm not sure I like the idea of all those specialists and extra people coming into my classroom."

Sally Norman was a third grade teacher at Oakwood School. She met with the school's principal, Marla Holmes, to discuss a new student, Jeffrey Wilson, who would be a member of her class next year. Jeffrey attended a special education class across the district for the past three years. His IEP team and parents decided that he would now attend his neighborhood school and participate fully in a regular class with students his own age.

Ms. Norman is a good teacher who enjoys her job. She likes children and is committed to meeting their needs. She had some immediate concerns, however, about including Jeff, with his special challenges, in her class. She had not been trained to work with children who have special needs. She asked herself, *"How will I know what to do? How can I be held responsible for his learning in addition to that of the other twenty-five children in my class? Where will I find the time to address everyone's needs?"*

The principal reminded Ms. Norman about Julie Maestas, the special education resource teacher in the building, who would work with her to plan and assist with Jeff's inclusion.

When the principal spoke to Ms. Maestas about Jeff's coming to Oakwood, she also expressed some apprehension about being able to meet his needs. Julie questioned just what her responsibilities would be. Since this was the first time that Oakwood Elementary had had a student with more intense needs, both teachers would have to reevaluate their roles. Sally Norman's students' abilities typically had fallen within what is considered "normal" limits. In the past, Julie had provided special education services by working individually and in small groups with children on their areas of difficulty. Both teachers' roles and responsibilities would now change with Jeff coming to their school.

Since including a student with challenges such as Jeff's was a new experience, everyone had apprehensions and concerns. The principal insisted, however, that collaboration among all of them would make it possible to include Jeff.

WHY IS COLLABORATION AN IMPORTANT PRACTICE FOR SCHOOLS?

Collaboration has become a key concept in educational leaders' descriptions of what is needed to make successful, effective schools for all children. The booklet, *What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning,* states, "Students benefit academically when their teachers share ideas, cooperate in activities, and assist one another's intellectual growth."[1] A spokesperson for the Coalition of Essential Schools at Brown University indicates that "if the goal is fundamental school change from the bottom up, ...it must come not through occasional advice from experts but in a more fluid collaborative way, sustained by an active network of teachers sharing their own experiences."[2]

By collaborating, each individual is able to contribute what he or she knows best. Collaboration is the key to building and implementing support plans so that all children, including those who have disabilities, can participate and learn together successfully in school. Jacqueline Thousand and Richard Villa, educators from Vermont, use the phrase "teaching teams" to describe the collaborative teaming arrangements that are being used in some model schools to educate all students, including students with severe disabilities, in regular classrooms in their neighborhood schools. They define a teaching team as "an organizational and instructional arrangement of two or more members of the school and greater community who distribute among themselves planning, instructional, and evaluation responsibilities for the same students on a regular basis for an extended period of time."[3] Teams can vary in size and in composition, involving any possible combination of the following key members:

- the student and the student's parents
- classroom teachers
- specialists
  (special educators, therapists, counselors, health professionals, etc.)
- the student's classmates
- school administrators
- instructional assistants
- student teachers

The inclusion of the student's parents on the team is important. Parents are the primary advocates for their children. Their commitment to the child's success extends beyond concern for current schooling to the big picture of the child's life and future. This perspective is needed to determine goals for the child as well as to develop the support plans to achieve those goals. One parent conveys, "Parents should be thought of as scholars of experience. We are in it for the distance. ...We have our doctorate in perserverance. We and the system must be in concert or the vision shrinks."[4]

HOW DO COLLABORATIVE TEAMS OPERATE IN SCHOOLS?

The collaborative team offers a framework through which the unique skills of each member can be tapped. Some examples of team collaboration are:

- Collaborative consultation (a regular educator, a special educator, and others meeting on a regular basis to develop strategies for supporting a particular student)

- Team teaching (a regular education and a special education teacher planning and teaching lessons together)

- Peer coaching (teachers modelling and providing feedback about effective teaching techniques for each other)

- The special education teacher planning and teaching a lesson to the whole class on a regular basis - (e.g. a special education teacher facilitating affective learning lessons where students explore and practice how to accept and get along with each other)

- A person not typically on a student's team but one with whom the child has a positive relationship helping with some part of a student's support (such as assisting a child to make new friends and participate with other students before and after school)

Planning together to make schools more responsive to students' individual needs may take extra effort, time, and coordination of schedules. District-wide administrators can play a key role by promoting policies and practices which encourage collaboration. Principals can create opportunities, incentives, and rewards for teachers to work together. Principals who support collaborative models in their schools have used some of the following strategies: developing a master school schedule that allows time for teams to meet, making resources available (such as substitute teachers to fill in when team members are planning), and expanding the use of in-service training time to enable instructional staff to learn together.[5]

CHANGING ROLES

The individual child's needs define the actions and activities the team will assume responsibility for. However, the role of the collaborative team is broader that that of the traditional planning team. In addition to planning, a collaborative team assumes responsibility cooperatively for instruction, necessary accommodations or adaptations, and evaluation. The team also assumes responsibility for coherence and integration of priorities throughout the student's day. Team members ensure that areas like helping children develop friendships, controlling their behavior, speaking clearly, telling time, or participating actively occur in all domains of the child's day, and all members support the child in ways beyond instruction in their particular discipline area. Schools that try collaborative teaming report that it requires reconceptualizing many long-held beliefs and habits which have become comfortable over time.

One of the most significant areas of reconceptualization is the way one views the child, assesses the child's needs, and determines how these needs will be met. A traditional way of viewing students with disabilities involved a "fix-it" approach with various specialists working to remediate the child's deficits in their particular areas of specialty whether it be speech therapy, remedial reading, counselling etc. This traditional approach often caused fragmentation of services and lack of continuity in the school experience of the child.

A different way of supporting students is to look at the individual as a whole being, an ecosystem in which each area of growth is dependent on the way needs in all the other areas are being met. Taking the analogy a step further, the child's team should constitute an ecosystem as well. Team members need to assure that all of a child's needs are met rather than simply assuming the roles for which they were trained. On a collaborative team, members may well play new roles based on their personal strengths and the immediate and long-term needs of the particular child. This benefits the student by distributing the creative insights and expertise of each person beyond the group of students for which he or she is traditionally responsible and beyond the limits of his or her discipline. As in any ecosystem, there must be balance.

Sally Norman, Julie Maestas, Marla Holmes, the Wilsons, and other members of Jeff's team learned that they each have unique qualities and areas of expertise. As a result of including Jeff at Oakwood School, they all began to perceive their roles differently.

Julie saw that she could be a valuable resource to regular educators because of her ability to analyze and break down material into meaningful, achievable components so that Jeff learned successfully. Sally Norman learned that in many ways Jeff's needs were not unlike those of other students' and could be met in her classroom with the support of other team members. She also realized how important regular class membership and participation are to Jeff's education, and how much she was able to contribute to his learning. With support and input from the principal, specialists, Jeff's parents, and the rest of the team, she gained confidence and skills to meet more creatively and appropriately the needs of all her students.

Jeff's parents also were important team members whose expertise as the people who know Jeff best and who have a long-range vision for his future was essential in determining how he is educated in school. The other team members recognized the value of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson's participation. The Wilsons were good at creating ways to adapt curricula and meet Jeff's support needs at school because of their years of experience in meeting the challenges which Jeff's disabilities presented.

Marla Holmes, the principal, envisioned herself as a key player in this process because of her responsibility to set the tone of the school. Her ongoing commitment to collaborate in order to better meet diverse needs provided a positive model for the staff and students and increased their skills in better educating all Oakwood students.

WHAT ARE OTHER BENEFITS
OF USING THE TEAM APPROACH?

Teachers who participate on collaborative teams report that this orientation is a very useful practice. One teacher who experienced collaborative teaming states:
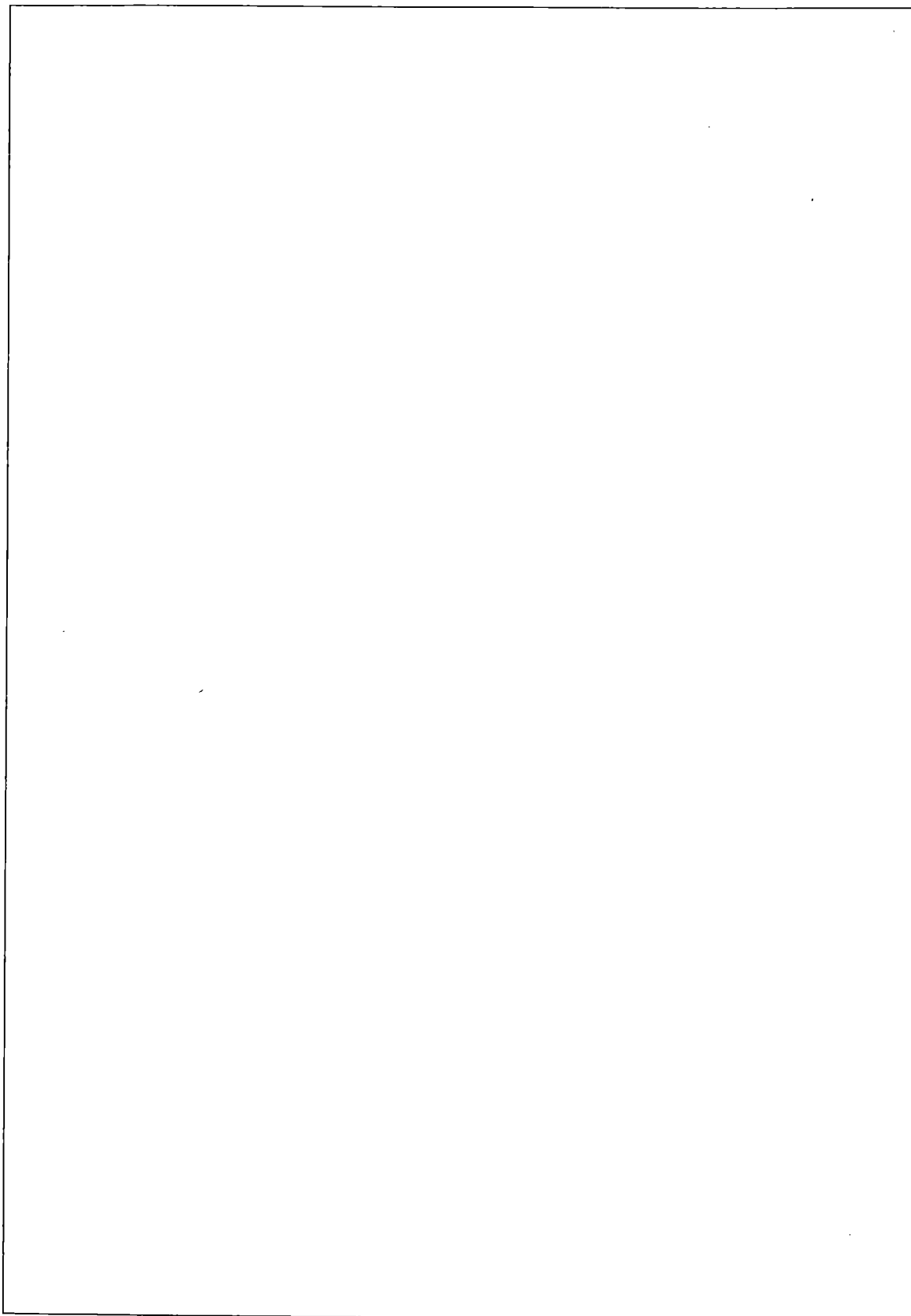
> "We discuss kids together. 'I'm having a problem with Bobby. Does anyone have any ideas?' And another teacher will say, 'Well, in my class, here's what worked...' So, you're not alone. You're in a whole support system." [6]

Thousand and Villa describe a number of benefits of collaborative teams. Collaboration allows teams to capitalize on the unique talents, skills, knowledge, experiences and diversity of team members. It facilities creative problem-solving and shared responsibility for addressing challenges. Team members receive positive emotional and moral support when they work together. Using specialists and teachers in a collaborative manner can better meet the needs of all students by creating a lower student-teacher ratio. [7]

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT USING A COLLABORATIVE TEAMING MODEL TO BUILD SUPPORT TEAMS FOR MEETING STUDENTS' DIVERSE NEEDS, HELPFUL RESOURCES ARE:

Buswell, B.E. & Schaffner, C.B. (1990). "Families Supporting Inclusive Schooling". In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Support Networks for Inclusive Schooling: Interdependent Integrated Education*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

California Research Institute. (1990). "Collaborative Teaming to Insure Successful Inclusion". *Strategies on the Integration of Students with Severe Disabilities*, 1 (3), 11-12.

Cushman, K. (1990). "Practice into Theory: Teachers Coaching Teachers". *Horace*, (Providence, RI: The Coalition of Essential Schools, Brown University), 7(2), 1-8.

Drummond, B.A. (1990, April). "Inclusive Teams for Active Integration". *Integration News*. Colorado Springs: Peak Parent Center.

Harris, K.C. (1990). "Meeting Diverse Needs through Collaborative Consultation". In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Support Networks for Inclusive Schooling: Interdependent Integrated Education* (pp. 139-150). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Pugach, M.C. & Johnson, L.J. (1990) "Meeting Diverse Needs through Professional Peer Collaboration". In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Support Networks for Inclusive Schooling: Interdependent Integrated Education* (pp. 123-138). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Thousand, J.S. & Villa, R.A. (1990). "Sharing Expertise and Responsibilities through Teaching Teams". In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Support Networks for Inclusive Schooling: Interdependent Integrated Education* (pp. 151-166). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Thousand, J. S. & Villa, R.A. (1989). "Enhancing Success in Heterogeneous Schools". In S. Stainback & W. Stainback (Eds.), *Educating All Students in the Mainstream of Regular Education* (pp. 89-104). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Vandercook, T. & York, J. (1989). "A Team Approach to Program Development and Support". In J. York, T. Vandercook, K. MacDonald, & E. Wolff (Eds.), *Strategies for Full Inclusion*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration.

NOTES:

Chapter Two
FOCUSING ON STRENGTHS
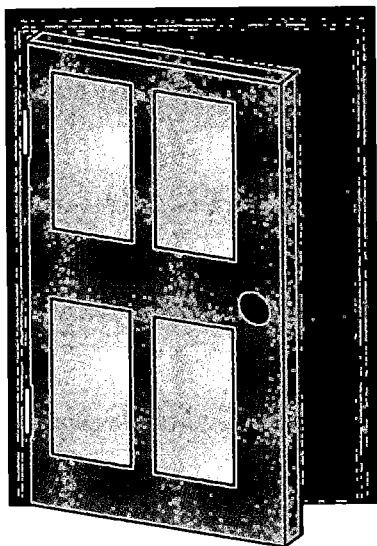
"There are so many things that kids with disabilities can't do."

"I don't see how these students can be included in my class."

WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS?

Are you good at details?	Mechanically inclined?	Artistic?
Athletic?	Philosophical?	Humorous?
Fun to be with?	A good listener?	

WHY FOCUS ON STRENGTHS?

All people have strengths — positive qualities and talents that are recognized by others. All people also have areas in which they are not strong. The nice thing is that people with different strong points complement each other. People rely on others' gifts and talents for help in areas which are not strengths for them.

All children have strengths and unique gifts which help weave the rich fabric of a diverse school community. Marsha Forest and Evelyn Lusthaus state that: "Because everyone has a contribution to make and has unique strengths and gifts, all children are 'gifted.' They go on to say, "Regular education for all presents the chance to teach our children that all are gifted in one way or another, and to build bridges between children who have not had the chance to know each other and to learn from one another."[1] Discovering a child's strengths, gifts, and interests is a very important key to figuring out how to support the child's inclusion in day-to-day regular classroom and school activities. Consider the following descriptions of two girls:

REBECCA

Rebecca is 11 years-old and has Down syndrome. Her I.Q. is 55. She has moderate mental retardation. Her receptive and expressive language are at the 4 year 6 month level. She has minimal basic academic skills. She requires constant supervision. Time on task and task completion skills are poor.

ANN

Ann is an active 11 year-old who enjoys being with other children and making friends. She has a good memory for details and for following through on activities that are part of the daily routine. She likes doing things independently. She's very curious about how things work and likes to explore. She's good at operating electronic equipment like computers, VCR's, and tape recorders.

A teaching team attempting to plan Rebecca's inclusion in a regular class would have a difficult time. The information given narrows the focus to Rebecca's problems. She appears to have few strengths. This type of deficit approach would be likely to lead to remedial solutions.

On the other hand, based on the description given, Ann would be an easier student to include. Her strengths and interests are highlighted, giving the team clues for creatively planning her successful inclusion. Because she enjoys other children, the team would know to provide her with many interactive learning opportunities. She could be a classroom helper by performing daily jobs that are a part of the class routine. She could be responsible for setting up the VCR when a video is scheduled. Since she is curious about how things work, science lessons would offer Ann many opportunities to explore and learn exciting new concepts in addition to working on other functional skills she needs, such as communicating more clearly with others.

In reality, Rebecca and Ann are the same child, Rebecca Ann Smith. The two distinctly different descriptions of Rebecca Ann point out that often significant information about a child is missing when the focus is on a student's weaknesses. This example shows that capitalizing on a student's capacities and abilities is essential. Identifying a student's positive characteristics and interests can provide vital information on approaches which will motivate her and actively engage her in class activities.

How many of us want to be introduced or described to others primarily by the things we can't do or by behaviors that might be considered to be problems? When planning for a child who has unique challenges, deficit-based descriptions like the one above for Rebecca serve to emphasize a child's differences and create a negative, "hopeless" picture. Such a focus can lead to "justification" for further isolation and specialization for the child rather than to full school and community inclusion and participation. When a child with disabilities is included, schools grow to recognize the gifts that the child's presence brings to the school community.

HOW DO YOU LEARN ABOUT A CHILD'S STRENGTHS, GIFTS OR TALENTS WHEN THEY MAY NOT BE READILY APPARENT?

It is often the classmates and friends of the child and his or her family who are most insightful in identifying the child's positive qualities and interests. To learn about a child's gifts and interests, it is important during the planning process to get to know the child by talking to:
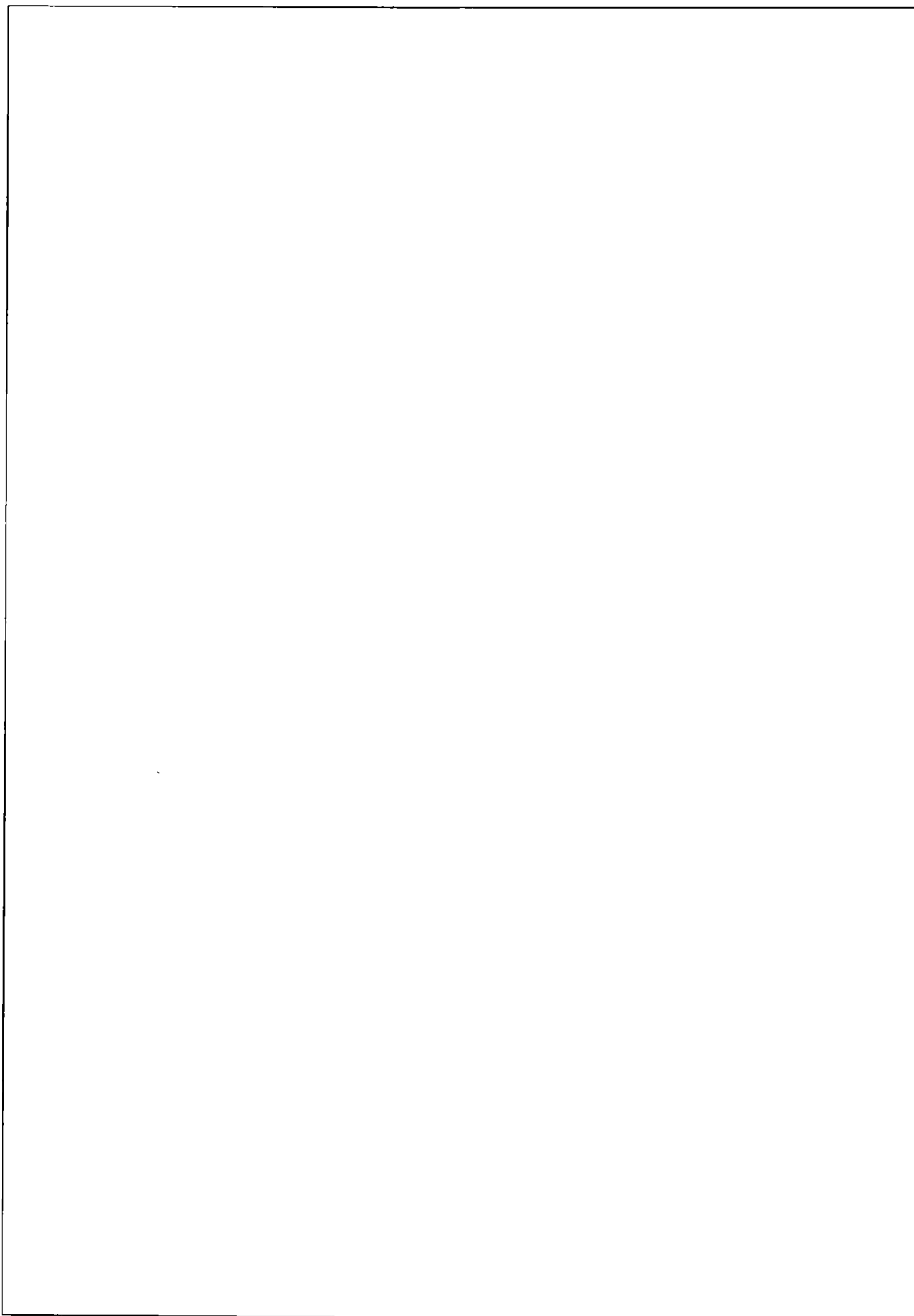
- the child her/himself
- the child's friends and other classmates
- the child's family
- the child's former teachers

Teachers, parents, and students report that focusing on strengths is a crucial part of making inclusion work. This theme recurs throughout this book. Chapter 8, in particular, has additional information on the MAPS process, which focuses on the child's strengths and interests and includes typical peers in planning the child's inclusion and support.

CHECK THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION AND STORIES WHICH FOCUS ON FINDING CHILDREN'S STRENGTHS AND GIFTS:

O'Brien, J., Forest, M., Snow, J., & Hasbury, D. (1989). *Action for Inclusion: How to Improve Schools by Welcoming Children with Special Needs into Regular Classrooms.* Toronto: Frontier College Press.

O'Connell, M. (1988). *The Gift of Hospitality: Opening the Doors of Community Life to People with Disabilities.* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University.

Mount, B., & Zwernik, K. (1988). *It's Never Too Early; It's Never Too Late.: A Booklet About Personal Futures Planning.* St. Paul, MN: Metropolitan Council.

Schaffner, C.B., & Buswell, B.E. (1989). *Breaking Ground: Ten Families Building Opportunities Through Integration.* Colorado Springs: PEAK Parent Center, Inc.

NOTES:

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
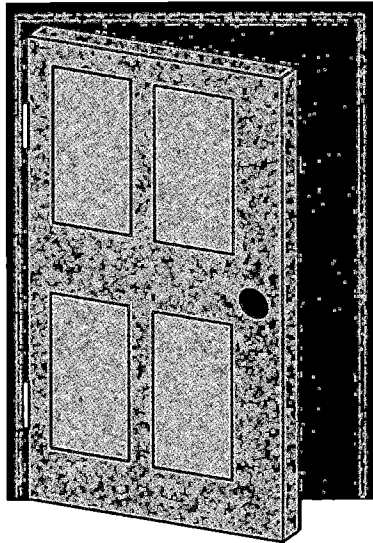
"What do kids with disabilities have in common with typical kids?"

"How can integration benefit the typical students and not detract from their learning?"

"You know how kids can be. They're competitive. Some children tease and ridicule a person who seems different."

"How am I going to help bridge the gap so that children can get to know each other in a positive way?"

Society has become conditioned to separating children with disabilities from other children and focusing primarily on their differences. As a result, it's sometimes difficult to understand the importance of children learning together in regular classes. Some people are skeptical as to whether or not positive relationships and friendships can develop. Some wonder if there are benefits to all children. Some may be especially concerned that the academic learning of typical children might be jeopardized. However, everyone agrees that forming relationships with others is essential in every person's life.

WHY ARE RELATIONSHIPS AND FRIENDSHIPS IMPORTANT?

All people desire and need friends for companionship, encouragement, and support. Friendships add richness and meaning to children's lives as well as teach crucial skills for getting along with others. School is where most of those first experiences with relating to others outside the family occur.

Friends are critical in every child's life. Valuable psychological lessons can be learned through each unique friendship. Borba and Borba state, "By exploring relationships, children learn more about themselves and their own growth, as well as learning more about other children and how they handle their successes and failures. Each new relationship enlarges a child's world picture."[1]

Participation in the rituals and day to day activities of a school, (e.g., class projects around certain themes, class fund-raisers, school carnivals, and yearbook signing) fill an important need for belonging in all children. The current general education restructuring literature has documented the importance of these typical school activities for developing a sense of belonging and learning to relate to one's peers.[2] Yet, traditionally, children with challenging needs have been excluded from participation in most regular school rituals and from opportunities to be with other students.

The most convincing testimonies to the fact that students with and without disabilities do become friends come from children themselves:

> "At first, being with Rob made me rather nervous because I didn't know how to act. Before Rob, I had always avoided situations where I had to interact with someone who had disabilities. I wasn't prejudiced, just ignorant. But once I got to know Rob, the situation changed. Our relationship has transformed itself from a nervous one into a special one for we both have so much to offer one another. Whenever we are together, it always seems we are laughing about something."[3]

> "I now see May as my friend — as one of us. I think she is really very smart but I didn't know that at first cause she had been in the 'retarded' room and acted real weird. I learned she has real feelings and that she feels real bad when people tease her - it hurts her. Before she was always by herself or with a teacher or adult. Now she has us to play with. She has friends."[4]

> "Not too many students came near me at first, but all that has changed. Students say hi to me in the hallway now. Tracy introduced me to some of her friends. We usually eat lunch together. Kids ask me to go to basketball and baseball games now. Sometimes they go with me, sometimes I meet them there. I play regular baseball with the gym class. Someone hits the ball for me and I run the bases. One day as I was running to third base, one kid got in my way. He jumped on my lap and we arrived on third base together."[5]

These students' comments show that this is not a one-way street; these budding relationships provide payoffs to everyone involved.

HOW TO FACILITATE FRIENDSHIPS— WHAT CAN TEACHERS AND PARENTS DO?

For the teacher who wants to foster positive relationships and friendships for all students, the first and most important step is to create a positive, cooperative classroom climate where all children feel valued and included. In such an atmosphere, each child's gifts, strengths, and differences are known and celebrated by all. Children feel free to be themselves and to learn and grow according to their individual capabilities. And, in this kind of atmosphere, positive relationships among children are natural outcomes.

Facilitating relationships is a unique process which is determined by the children's ages, personalities, experiences, interests, etc. Listed below are some techniques which teachers and parents have found useful for supporting relationships:

1. Present students in the most positive light.[6]
2. Watch children to identify budding relationships and then encourage them.
3. Model concern and interest in all students.
4. Structure activities in which students feel free to talk about their feelings and relationships.

5. Help build a support "Circle of Friends" for the child.[7]

   Forest and Lusthaus describe the "Circle of Friends" as "a network that allows for the genuine involvement of children in a friendship, caring, and support role with their peers."[8]
6. Offer Cooperative Learning groups for class activities.
7. Promote the inclusion of all students in extra-curricular clubs and high-status activities in school.
8. Encourage students to interact in groups of three or four if they are uneasy.
9. Follow through on school relationships by assisting parents to invite the child's school friends over to their house.

Although friendships cannot be mandated or forced, they can be facilitated and encouraged. In some cases, support may be required.

BEYOND FRIENDSHIPS — WHAT ARE THE ADDED BENEFITS OF STUDENTS LEARNING TOGETHER?

The importance of relationships goes beyond the basic needs all children have for the give and take, the support, and the sense of belonging that comes from having friends. Having relationships also assists children in forming the strong values, attitudes, and social skills necessary for becoming successful, contributing members of tomorrow's society. Educational futurist, Donald Heath, states, "...schools need a much richer conception of the goals of schooling. We've got to begin to expand the curriculum to include the development of values, attitudes, and interpersonal skills... the capacity to enter into the world view of other people, to understand others deeply and compassionately."[9]

Positive relationships enhance a student's self-esteem and increase the student's motivation to learn. In fact, Dr. Marsha Forest says, "Friendships and relationships are preconditions for learning in schools."[10] When children of differing abilities participate together in regular classes, learning possibilities emerge that go beyond the benefits of relationships mentioned above. All children profit academically when they become involved in each other's learning.

Thousand and Villa use the term "peer power" to describe ways in which students can actively support each other in the school, such as:

- Students as members of instructional teams
  — to help teach each other; to determine techniques for supporting their classmates
- Students as peer advocates
  — to attend planning meetings as advocates for classmates who have challenging needs
- Students as partners in school and classroom decision making
  — to serve as student representatives on school committees; to work with teachers to develop class and school rules; and determine consequences for violations[11]

Villa and Thousand go on to list some of the many benefits of "peer power" learning strategies which are:

- Enhanced critical thinking and reasoning ability
- Increased academic skills
- Heightened self-esteem
- Improved social skills
- Strengthened communication skills[12]

All children deserve to have allies and friends. As Douglas Biklen states, allies allow students with disabilities "interdependence while at the same time rejecting the debilitating, patronizing control of the charity relationship that is so often imposed on people with disabilities."[13] Peers and allies supporting each other is a crucial, sometimes overlooked, component of all children's education.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FRIENDSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND PEER SUPPORT STRATEGIES, CHECK THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:

Arsenault, C. (1990). *Let's GetTogether: A Handbook in Support of Building Relationships Between Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and Their Community*. Boulder, CO: Developmental Disabilities Center.

Biklen, D. (1989). "Making Differences Ordinary". In S. Stainback, W. Stainback, & M. Forest (Eds.), *Educating All Students in the Mainstream of Regular Education*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Biklen, D., Corrigan, C., & Quick, D. (1989). "Beyond Obligation: Students' Relations with Each Other in Integrated Classes". In D.K. Lipsky & A. Gartner (Eds.), *Beyond Separate Education: Quality Education for All*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Buswell, B.E. (1989). *An Introductory Workshop on Friendship-Building Strategies*. Colorado Springs: PEAK Parent Center, Inc.

Forest, M., & Flynn G. (1988). *With a Little Help from My Friends*. Niwot, CO: Expectations Unlimited or Toronto, Ontario: Centre for Integrated Education. VHS.

Lutfiyya, Z.M. (1990). *Affectionate Bonds: What We Can Learn by Listening to Friends*. Syracuse: Syracuse University, Center on Human Policy.

Mount, B., Beeman, P. & Ducharme, G. (1988). *What Are We Learning about Circles of Support?* Manchester, CT: Communitas, Inc.

Murray-Seegert, C. (1989). *Nasty Girls, Thugs, and Humans Like Us: Social Relations between Severely Disabled and Nondisabled Students in High School*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

O'Brien, J., Forest, M., Snow, J., & Hasbury, D. (1989). *Action for Inclusion: How to Improve Schools by Welcoming Children with Special Needs Into Regular Classrooms*. Toronto: Frontier College Press.

The People First Association of Lethbridge. (1990). *Kids Belong Together*. Niwot, CO: Expectations Unlimited, or The People First Association of Lethbridge. VHS.

Perske, R., & Perske, M. (1988). *Circles of Friends*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Schaffner, C.B, & Buswell, B.E. (1989). *Breaking Ground: Ten Families Building Opportunities Through Integration*. Colorado Springs: PEAK Parent Center, Inc.

Stainback, W. & Stainback, S. (1990). "Facilitating Peer Supports and Friendships". In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Support Networks for Inclusive Schooling: Interdependent Integrated Education* (pp. 51-63). Baltimore: Paul H, Brookes.

Strully, J.L., & Strully, C. (1989). "Friendships as an Educational Goal". In S. Stainback, W. Stainback, & M. Forest (Eds.), *Educating All Students in the Mainstream of Regular Education*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Villa, R. & Thousand, J. (1990, April). *The Power of Student Collaboration or Practicing for Life in the 21st Century"*. Paper presented at the meeting of the 68th Annual Council for Exceptional Children International Convention, Toronto, Canada.

ADAPTING CURRICULUM
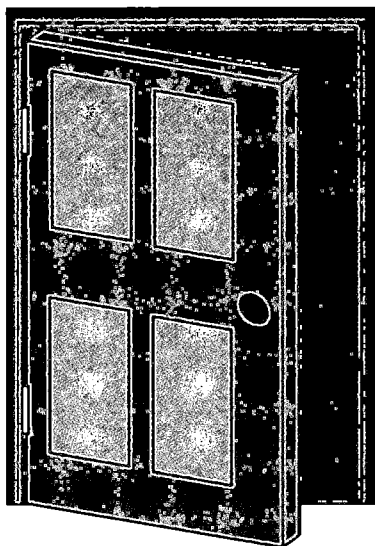
"How can the 'regular' curriculum meet these students' needs?"

"We are accountable for what our students learn. We can't pick and choose what we teach just to include a student with special needs."

"The curriculum we teach is set by the district."

HOW CAN THE "REGULAR" CURRICULUM MEET "SPECIAL" NEEDS?

Josh is a tenth grade student at his neighborhood high school. He has some challenging needs which in the past might have led to an assumption that he be "placed" in a self-contained special education classroom. One of Josh's classes this year, however, is Mrs. Madsen's tenth grade biology class.

One of the tenth grade biology units is on frog dissection. During the unit, Josh had an adapted vocabulary list which included words like "stomach", "lungs", "front", "back", and "blood" (which are words and concepts important for him to learn). Josh's worksheets and homework papers were "customized" to provide independent activities at his own reading and writing levels to help him learn these concepts and apply them to his daily life. Mrs. Madsen kept a copy of Josh's vocabulary list and learning goals at her desk, and each day during class discussions, included several questions based on Josh's learning needs that he could respond to.

During the frog dissection lab, Josh participated with his lab partners in a cooperative group where he had a key role in the dissection. His learning goals were to set up and put away materials, learn to use a knife, and learn to work with other students. The verbal interaction that naturally occurred around the dissection activity allowed Josh to practice important language skills as well.

Maria is in a seventh grade pre-algebra class in which she works on her own IEP goals while participating with classmates in common activities. Her primary learning objectives in math this year are addressed through various activities. To build number skills, she counts out the papers her

teacher needs for the class and then hands them out when requested. Maria also serves as time-keeper for the class, reminding them when activities are to be completed. When students are working in small problem-solving groups, Maria participates, and her specialty is addition and subtraction facts under ten. During seatwork time, Maria works on the classroom computer using software selected by her special education teacher. Another task Maria works on in pre-algebra class is reading her classmates' names since it is her responsibility to hand back graded papers. Maria is a proud and successful student in pre-algebra.

HOW DID ALL THIS HAPPEN?

In order to determine how to adapt the regular curriculum so that Josh and Maria could participate actively, their planning teams (the classroom teachers, the special education teachers, their parents, several classmates, and the students themselves) reconceptualized their ideas about traditional curriculum.

Because these students' abilities and needs were different than those of most biology or pre-algebra students, the teams had to grapple with some long-held beliefs about what curriculum is — and whether "regular" curriculum could accommodate students like Josh and Maria.

Some of the questions team members asked themselves were:
- Did Josh and Maria have to focus solely on traditional academic curriculum?
- Does this class teach only biology or pre-algebra facts or do the students learn a broader range of skills?
- Is the curriculum determined solely by a textbook curriculum guide or does the teacher typically adapt it based on her style and the make-up of a particular class of students?
- Are Josh's and Maria's goals too different from those of "regular""students for them to benefit from the "regular" curriculum?

During the process of exploring ways to include these students in the regular math or science classroom, their teams developed a deeper understanding of the potential of the regular curriculum. They concluded that curriculum is much broader than the subject matter or specific lessons taught. It is bigger than a set of academic objectives over which all students are expected to achieve the same mastery.

Curriculum is also:

- all the other things happening within the context of a class that are important for students to learn
- the way in which students relate to the subject matter based on their personal experiences
- the relationships the student has with other students in the class and with the teacher

Regular classroom curriculum is broad and more than just information on a particular unit or topic. Functional activities — even for learners with significant challenges — can take place in that context.

Though individual teachers sometimes regard parts of their curriculum as essential, there is actually a great deal of variability in the day to day content and procedures depending on a particular teacher's style. For example, a given school may have several third grade classes. Though the

teachers all "cover" the same basic skills, the approaches, activities, and content often look very different given the individual teachers' values, skills, and interests.

There can be different student goals for the same subject matter in any classroom as well. For example, in a science classroom studying temperature, some students may pursue the thermal properties as materials change from liquids to gases while other students learn which things are hot and cold.

CAN A CHILD WITH DISABILITIES GET HIS OR HER SPECIAL NEEDS MET WITHIN THE REGULAR CURRICULUM?

Students who receive special education services have individually designed instructional programs, known as IEP's (Individualized Education Programs). The IEP lists particular learning goals and instructional objectives for a child based on his/her needs, strengths, and learning priorities. A student's planning team can examine each subject area to see which concepts, themes, or skills are relevant and meaningful for that particular child. Josh, for example, had the goal of learning the names of the basic parts of the body while the rest of the class was learning about the functions of body systems by dissecting the frog. Josh was also learning critical thinking skills along with other students.

Susan and William Stainback offer the following example: During oral reading activities, "one student may be requested to read out loud, and another to listen to a story and answer questions, another to pick out a picture that describes the story, and another to pass out reading materials to classmates. In integrated, heterogeneous classrooms, what any student is requested to do...is based on what that student needs to learn and is capable of doing." Each student in a classroom does not have to master the same amount of work on the same level. [1]

Often, goals other than pure academic skills, like developing relationships with peers, increasing receptive and expressive language skills, learning to follow directions and complete tasks, and increasing social skills are on students' IEP's. Stainback and Stainback present criteria for helping teams determine what curriculum is useful for an individual child. They list the following:

- learning something that allows a student to participate with other students his age
- becoming more aware of his environment and the world
- increasing vocabulary
- learning skills in taking turns and interacting with peers
- practicing to remember, listen, and share ideas
- building relationships with others[2]

Most IEP objectives can be readily addressed in a typical classroom with other students the same age. For example, while some students are doing paper and pencil work in pre-algebra class, Maria can be doing any number of meaningful activities that address the goals on her IEP. In his biology class, Josh can work on his individual vocabulary words while other students are outlining key concepts in a textbook chapter. Students might also be doing related work on the computer, listening to an audio tape, or working in a small group or with another student on some dimension of the topic at hand.

Teachers can offer the content or subject matter in a variety of ways and meet the needs of all students as well as the overall goals of the school district. In fact, district goals may be better met when the curriculum and instructional methodology respect and reflect the diversity among the district's students.

Education leaders concerned with general school reform have proposed some of the following recommendations for education in the 21st Century:

- Target outcomes larger than just learning facts and broader than academics alone.

  The Johnson City School system in New York which uses the outcomes driven developmental model has identified the following "desired student exit outcomes":
  - Self-esteem as a learner and as a person
  - Cognitive skills developed to the person's individual ability level
  - Process skills (problem-solving, communication, decision-making, accountability, group process)
  - Self-directed student learning
  - Concern for others.[3]

- Focus on academic skills as merely one of several outcomes for students.

  If schools truly address their goals, they must approach curriculum broadly, and in doing so can meaningfully involve students with disabilities.

- Correlate the school's goals (the desired exit outcomes for students) more closely to day to day happenings in classes.

  Students need to relate details of subject matter to broader issues in their lives.

- Develop curriculum so that all students can have access, participate, and accomplish mastery on different levels.

  Slower students are denied access to curriculum, knowledge, and learning activities enjoyed by more able students by frequently being placed in lower track groups and classes where the focus is on remediation.[4]

- Consider the "implicit" curriculum of the school and classroom as well as the explicit subject matter taught.

  Curriculum is typically regarded as the "what" of school. There is also an "implicit" curriculum that is present in any class. This hidden curriculum consists of "those teachings that are conveyed by the ways the explicit curriculum is presented." The implicit curriculum is reflected in what is emphasized in class. (Is the focus on acquiring facts or solving problems? Is it on individual performance alone or is cooperation promoted? Are a variety of learning styles accommodated? Are positive social skills cultivated?) It is essential that the implicit curriculum be consistent with the values inherent in the school's goals.[5]

- View curriculum as dynamic and changing. The curriculum is never "set in stone."

  Curriculum needs to be fluid to adjust to a number of variables. Education leader Theodore Sizer, who has studied effective schools, discusses the interrelationship of the following variables in the classroom:
  - the teacher, with his/her particular knowledge, skills, interests, and talents
  - the student with her or his needs, skills, learning style, and interests
  - the subject matter with its breadth and depth.[6]

In order for a student to learn, the teacher needs to use his/her talent and skill to develop curriculum for the particular subject being taught based on the students' needs and interests.

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING INFORMATION RELATE TO INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES?

- All students deserve access to the same curriculum and opportunities for knowledge.

- Students don't have to learn the same things or have the same expectations for achievement to learn side-by-side meaningfully.

- Including students with diverse learning styles and proficiency levels does not require a change in the curriculum content so much as it does flexibility in teaching approaches.
    The basic curriculum content does not have to be changed drastically, but the teacher needs to draw from a repertoire of instructional methods. (See Chapter Five for more information.)

- When teachers broaden their beliefs about curriculum to accept that students can pursue different learning objectives in the same lesson, the effect is that all children's needs can be better met in regular classes.

HOW DO JOSH'S AND MARIA'S TEACHERS FEEL ABOUT INCLUDING THEM?

These two teachers say that they know they couldn't have figured out Josh's and Maria's participation in classes on their own. The support they got by being members of a team was crucial. The planning teams worked hard. They knew that a major key to making the inclusion work is in the collaboration.

THE CLASSROOM TEACHER PROVIDES WHAT NO ONE ELSE CAN

Only in typical classrooms can children with disabilities have a total learning experience. No other place offers the big picture of what happens in school for typical students. These learning opportunities cannot be simulated or created among a group of students all of whom have challenges. Therefore, just by opening the door to his classroom, the teacher gives a great deal to students with challenges by letting them experience the day-to-day comings-and-goings, discussions, routines, and rituals of school as well as the academic curriculum.

Some tips for regular educators :

1. Share information about your classes' curricular content and learning activities with the child's team.

2. Participate with the team in the process of translating your day-to-day plans into meaningful activities for the child with challenges. Use strategies that will accommodate the child's unique needs while including him in class activities, (e.g. Josh's biology teacher including questions using his vocabulary words in class discussions).

3. Utilize frequent input from other people on the child's team (including parents) on ways to adapt activities and include the child.

4. Actively mesh the child's learning goals with traditional goals for children at that grade level, (e.g. Maria working on addition and subtraction to ten within the class problem-solving groups).

5. Ask questions when there are concepts or issues that need clarification.

6. Ask for help when you need it. Be honest about your feelings when communicating with fellow team members.

7. Stop the team if they are talking "jargon."

8. Use a collaborative team approach to support and plan for all students in your class.

HELPFUL RESOURCES ABOUT CURRICULUM ARE:

Cushman, K. (1989). "Asking the Essential Questions: Curriculum Development". *Horace* 5(5), 1-8. (Available from The Coalition of Essential Schools, Brown University, Providence, RI).

Falvey, M.A., Coots, J., Bishop, K.D., & Grenot-Scheyer, M. (1989). "Educational and Curricular Adaptations". In S. Stainback, W. Stainback, & M. Forest (Eds.), *Educating All Students in the Mainstream of Regular Education*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Ford, A. (1989). *Syracuse Community-Referenced Curriculum Guide for Students with Moderate and Severe Disabilities*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Goodlad, J.K. (1984). *A Place Called School*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Sizer, T. R. (1985). *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Stainback, S., & Stainback, W. (1988). "Educating Students with Severe Disabilities". *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 21 (1), 16-19.

York, J., Vandercook, T., MacDonald, K. & Wolff, S. (1989). "Instruction in Regular Education Classes for Students with Severe Disabilities: Assessment, Objectives, and Instructional Programs". In J. York, T. Vandercook, C. MacDonald, & S. Wolff (Eds.), *Strategies for Full Inclusion* (pp.83-89). Minneapolis: Institute on Community Integration (University of Minnesota).

Chapter Five
VARYING TEACHING METHODS
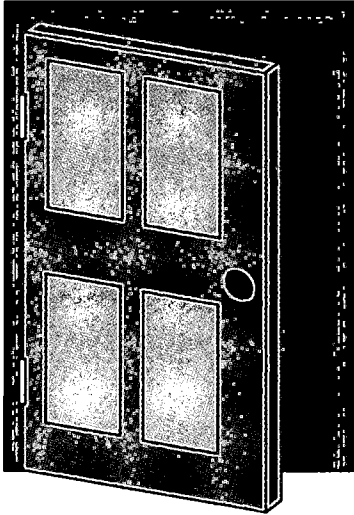
"Children with special needs require specialized instructional techniques which I'm not trained in."

"Does having this student mean I'm going to have to change the way I teach?"

"I don't know how I would grade a student whose abilities are so different."

Over the years, special education has evolved as a separate education system focused on meeting the needs of those students whose abilities have fallen outside of traditional limits. The existence of two parallel education systems, one labelled "special education" and one labelled "regular education", has reinforced the myth that children with disabilities learn differently and, therefore, require teaching methods different from those used for typical children. William and Susan Stainback state,

> "Fortunately, the long-standing assumption that there are two methodologies or psychologies of learning... is beginning to erode. It is being replaced with the view that the actual teaching strategies used with any child are but a part of the continually changing pattern of services provided in response to the individual and changing needs of the child."[1]

Therefore, instead of asking whether teaching methods need to change in order to include students with disabilities, it is more important to realize that teachers who regularly vary instructional methods are already able to teach students with diverse needs - including those students who have IEP's.

WHY VARY TEACHING METHODS — EVEN FOR "TYPICAL" STUDENTS?

- Varying instructional methods is good for all students.
    Teachers who use a variety of teaching methods assure all students' interest and accomplishment in learning.

- Learning should be active, not passive.
    Benjamin states, "Future-oriented educators advocate a shift from a view of learning as the passive acquisition of discipline-based subject matter to one of process--the active seeking of knowledge by each student."[2]

    A change in focus is needed that requires students to do the work, rather than making the teacher the deliverer of instructional services. When teachers become managers, facilitators, coaches, and resource people who restructure their teaching to make it more satisfying to students, students become more actively involved in their own learning.

- Critical thinking skills are essential for the future.
    In order to work successfully with the vast amounts of knowledge which will characterize life and work in the 21st Century, Benjamin states the workers of the future will need the following skills: "the ability to manage information and to work with people. Workers will need high-level thinking skills as well as the ability to adapt."[3]

- Learning involves more than just hearing and remembering.
    Emerging theories about the development of the brain indicate that there are more components to an individual's learning ability than cognition or thinking. For a student to develop to his/her potential, learning activities must integrate thinking, feeling, physical sensing, and intuition.[4]

- Learning to get along with and work with others is equally important to students' academic learning.

WHICH INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES LIMIT STUDENTS' GROWTH?

Many adults recall their teachers using only a few standard instructional methods. In a recent study of a number of schools throughout the nation, Goodlad confirmed that these practices still exist. He found little variation among schools in the narrow range of teaching practices used, even though other characteristics of the schools varied significantly.[5]

The following practices, when used as the *primary* teaching approaches in classrooms, limit student learning:

    lecturing or telling students the information
    asking questions about what was just "told"
    having all students use the same textbook
    using worksheet exercises from the text
    memorization
    rote learning
    giving quizzes and fact-based tests as primary assessment tools
    teaching students in homogenous groups
    using competetive grading systems to motivate student learning[6]

WHAT ALTERNATIVE METHODS PROMOTE ACTIVE LEARNING?

Students must actively participate in learning activities. Benjamin states that "Learning [should not be] seen as students sitting at a desk listening to a teacher lecture; students [should be] 'doing' things."[7]

Some teaching practices that involve students actively are:

- Using small group discussions

- Organizing Cooperative Learning groups, learning teams, and other collaborative activities

- Involving students in making decisions about their learning

- Gearing expectations for mastery to students' individual learning goals and needs

- Having students demonstrate mastery of skills in a variety of ways other than tests, such as essays, oral reports, portfolios of work, demonstrations, exhibits

- Changing instructional groups and methods frequently to match changing purposes of lessons

- Evaluating student progress in a way which involves the student and provides intrinsic rewards

    Therefore, the student sets personal goals, has internal control and feels pride in the accomplishments. Competetive grading systems use external control to motivate student learning.[8]

- Altering the physical layout of the classroom to facilitate student-directed exploration and learning and to promote student interaction and cooperation

- Using experiential activities such as:

role playing	story writing	drawing
body movement or acting	building models	using learning centers
computerized instruction	problem-solving or application projects	

- Providing opportunities for all students to instruct their peers.

HOW CAN TEACHERS DETERMINE WHICH TEACHING METHODS TO USE?

Consider first:

- How do the various students in this class learn? (Which students are visual learners? Who is concrete or literal? Which students are auditory learners? etc.)

- What are the vocabulary levels of the students in this class?

- How self-confident are these students as learners?

- What do I want students to learn through participating in the various lessons that I teach?

Second, to include a student who has an IEP, ask the special educator and other "specialists" on a child's team to suggest techniques and accommodations for meeting a child's needs in the classroom. Since each child who receives special education supports has unique needs, adaptations or accommodations will be determined according to the individual student's needs.

A few examples of such accommodations might be:

- Using hand signs for key words when giving the class verbal directions (so that students who have trouble understanding also get a visual cue)

- Giving a student who has a reading disability the option of taking a test orally with a tape recorder rather than taking a written test

- Allowing a student who has trouble processing oral language extra time to formulate responses to questions during class discussions

- Offering a student hints or prompts when she has trouble responding

- Giving a student his vocabulary list prior to the lesson in which the words are covered

- Providing "hands-on" experiences whenever possible for a student who has trouble conceptualizing a lesson

- Using a multiple-choice format for worksheets, assessments, etc. since this is a procedure which can vary difficulty of choices

- Capitalizing upon teachable moments when interest and readiness to learn are at a peak

Jerome Bruner, educational leader, states: "Any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectual form to any child at any stage of development."[9] Teachers who vary their instructional methodologies to encourage active learning by all their students experience personal satisfaction and growth in watching students become more highly motivated learners.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON VARYING INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS, PLEASE CONSULT THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:

Clark, B. (1986). *Optimizing Learning: The Integrative Education Model in the Classroom.* Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Company.

Cushman, K. (1990). "Performances and Exhibitions: The Demonstration of Mastery". *Horace,* 6 (3), 1-12. (Available from The Coalition of Essential Schools, Brown University, Providence, RI.)

Fagan, S.A., Graves, D.L., & Tessier-Switlick, D. (1984). *Promoting Successful Mainstreaming: Reasonable Classroom Accommodations for Learning Disabled Students.* Rockville: MD: Montgomery County Public Schools.

Goodlad, J. K. (1984). *A Place Called School.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Johnson, D., & Johnson, R. (1986). "Mainstreaming and Cooperative Learning Strategies". *Exceptional Children,* 52, 553-56.

Johnson, D., & Johnson, R. (1986). "Impact of Classroom Organization and Instructional Methods on the Effectiveness of Mainstreaming". In C. J. Meisel (Ed.), *Mainstreaming Handicapped Children: Outcomes, Controversies, and New Directions* (pp.219-250). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawerence Erlbaum Associates.

Kagan, S. (1989/1990). "The Structural Approach to Cooperative Learning." *Educational Leadership,* 47(4), 12-15.

Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Stainback, W, & Stainback, S. (1988). "Educating Students with Severe Disabilities". *Teaching Exceptional Children,* 21(1).

Stainback, W. & Stainback, S. (1989). "Classroom Organization for Diversity Among Students". In S. Stainback, W. Stainback & M. Forest (Eds.), *Educating All Students in the Mainstream of Regular Education.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Thousand, J.S. & Villa R.A. (1990). "Sharing Expertise and Responsibilities through Teaching Teams". In W. Stainback & S. Stainback, (Eds.), *Support Networks for Inclusive Schooling: Interdependent Integrated Education* (pp. 151-166). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Villa, R. & Thousand, J. (1988). "Enhancing Success in Heterogeneous Classrooms and Schools: The Powers of Partnership". *Teacher Education and Special Education,* 11.

SUPPORTING UNIQUE NEEDS
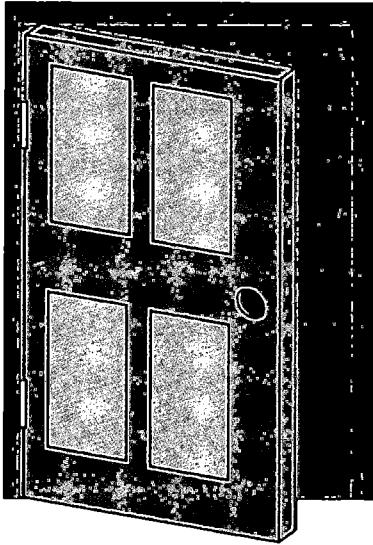
"Don't special education students need specialists to work with them to do their therapies? They don't have time to waste in my class, and I don't have the specialized training to meet their needs."
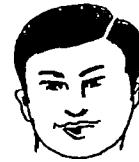
"Don't children need a full-time aide in order to be in a regular class?"

"And what about students with severe physical disabilities who need help with positioning, or toileting, or feeding? I wouldn't be able to handle them and still run my class."

All people need support at various times in their lives to accomplish certain tasks or to meet various challenges. Students who have disabilities sometimes require extra supports or accommodations to participate in school.

Public Law 94-142 entitles students who have IEP's to the extra supports and services they need. These are referred to in this law as "related services." The law does not say that these services need to be offered away from the typical classroom. However, in the past, related services frequently have been provided to children in isolated settings. This violates the spirit of the provision in P.L. 94-142 that services are to be offered in "the least restrictive environment" and that students with disabilities are to learn with their peers who do not have disabilities.

USING NATURAL SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

Full inclusion of students with disabilities can be facilitated greatly by the use of "natural supports" --children or adults providing in less formal ways just the assistance that is needed. Grouping children who need extra support into special rooms was once thought necessary to make special services cost effective. Such thinking was grounded in the now-discredited belief that all supports had to be provided by adults with special training. This is not to imply that trained support staff are not needed. However, it does mean that a child who is included in a regular education

setting or activity may need such a trained adult much less than if he were in an isolated setting. This also can mean that trained adults offer services by consulting with, modeling for, and training others to be able to assist the student.

When a child is an actively participating member of a regular class, the other students get to know him as a peer. In these settings, it becomes natural for a classmate to help a child use the pencil sharpener when she asks for assistance, or for a couple of students to push their friend in his wheelchair to music class while the student in the wheelchair carries his friend's books. William and Susan Stainback state: "To help classrooms with heterogeneous class membership to function smoothly and to foster good citizenship values, there is a need to assist and encourage students to learn to recognize others' needs and to support each other whenever possible."[1]

When schools use the collaborative approach described in Chapter 1, team members share ideas, expertise, and resources in planning for a child. In addition to planning what the child needs to learn and how the child is going to learn it, the team also determines what supports the child requires in order to access school environments and to meet her/his needs through classroom learning opportunities.

Different children require different supports. Some of the kinds of support a student might need are:

1. Positioning (for children who use wheel-chairs)

2. Personal care (e.g. feeding, mobility assistance, toileting, etc.)

3. Support with behavior challenges (e.g. implementation of behavior support plans, assistance in a crisis,etc.)

4. Extra support for participation in activities which would otherwise not be possible, (such as gym for a student with a physical disability or a film for a student who is blind)

5. An interpreter for a student who is deaf

6. Teaching other students a student's alternative communication system.

Even when it is necessary to develop a specific plan for a student's support because her needs are very intense, planning teams often brainstorm ways to use natural supports already available in the classroom or school so classroom aides or specialists may not be necessary. Judie Walker, a parent whose son has challenging physical needs, states: "We've found people to help Casey who were already there at school: natural supports...So when people say, 'Oh, we'd have to get an aide in order for this kid to be integrated', that's not always the case."[2]

School teams who are creative determine natural supports in all kinds of ways. Some examples are:

- the school secretary lending a hand at lunchtime or helping a student in the bathroom

- the custodian offering support for a child having behavior challenges

- a speech therapist teaching a language lesson to the entire class so the teacher is free to plan with the special education teacher

- a classroom teacher learning how to tube feed a child to be able to be a backup if the usual person who feeds the child is absent

- an occupational therapist offering penmanship "clinics" in a classroom where she is working with a particular student

- a student activities sponsor assisting a student to do sales at the concession booth for sports games

- a media coordinator assuming responsibility for a student with challenges to work alongside the student media assistant

MINIMIZING "SPECIAL" ASSISTANCE

When adult support for a child is necessary, the roles that the adults play must be determined carefully. An instructional aide should not assist only a single student with the special needs. Instead, by becoming a resource person for the entire class, this aide has a much broader and more useful role. And the student is permitted to develop more natural relationships with classmates. In addition to providing direct support for the child, an instructional aide or support person can also serve as a model for students and other school staff to assist them in learning support techniques. An adult hovering over a particular student — even if the child has intense needs for personal assistance — can be stigmatizing, can emphasize differences, and cause other students to distance themselves from the student rather than promote inclusion.

Another reason that one paraprofessional should not be assigned to a single child is to decrease the potential for fostering dependence (by either classmates or other adults in the school) or conveying the message that only one "special" person is competent to assist this student. Thus, carefully delineating the roles of the support person and limiting the amount of direct support to only what is essential has the following benefits:

1. Encouraging independence in the child

2. Promoting more natural interactions with other students

3. Building confidence and competence among school staff and students in supporting the child themselves

4. Making the support person available to work with other students in the class and to relieve the teacher of some of his/her tasks

It is important NOT to assume that an instructional aide or a support person will always be needed. The goal should be to phase out "formal" support as natural supports emerge and/or the child develops more independence.[3]

Sometimes students need support people indefinitely. Examples might include an interpreter for a student who is deaf or a person to provide assistance for a student with intense physical challenges. In these situations and particularly when assistance is of a sensitive nature (e.g., personal hygiene), expecting other students to help is rarely appropriate. Even in these situations, however, supports should be provided as unobtrusively as possible.

WHAT ABOUT SPECIAL THERAPIES?

Traditionally, related service personnel like language, occupational, and physical therapists have worked with children by providing direct service in separate settings. Another approach that many therapists are now employing looks at the child's day when planning support and integrates the services a child needs into the typical school routine. This more practical approach enables the child to learn the skills in the context in which he/she will actually use them.

Previously with the traditional related services approach, each specialist pursued individually-developed, isolated goals. For example, a student worked on decreasing tongue-thrust for eating with his occupational therapist, moving his tongue for sound production with his speech therapist, and on beginning sounds for reading in the special education resource room — potentially a very confusing, fragmented experience for the child. Also, the therapists frequently "pulled the child out" to work with him in a private space, isolated from the classroom or other real-life locations where using the skills had function and meaning. This isolated approach led to fragmentation, overlapping of services, and skills lacking relevance in the child's real life.

There are other problems with the "pull out" approach as well. This approach places a burden upon the child for pulling together the skills taught in isolation by different adults into a functional, meaningful whole. It often unfairly expects students (particularly those with significant disabilities) to generalize their learning to new environments and situations. Skills learned in isolated, artificial therapy sessions are rarely carried over successfully to "real-life" situations. To be successful, children need to learn and apply these skills throughout the day.

In separate environments, therapists could structure simulated experiences, have extensive equipment etc., but students who were able to be successful in these separate environments were still frequently unsuccessful and isolated in real life settings. For example, a student may be able to use a non-portable, computer communication system quite well in a therapist's office or room but still have no functional means of communicating in his classroom, at lunch, or at a concert with friends. When therapies are provided in integrated settings, therapists are forced to make functional adaptations that work in the child's real life.

When integrating related services, the student's planning team develops the child's goals together, looking at the needs of the whole child instead of isolating specific areas of need. This approach increases the potential for relevance and coherence in the child's program and for implementation of adaptations and supports in the "mainstream" of the school day and life. Support services from specialists are then provided to assist the child in achieving unified goals rather than to work on isolated skills.[4] Therapies, become "means" to an "end" instead of being specific ends in themselves. The student learns to access the school environment, benefits from classroom learning opportunities, and learns important "life-skills".

Using this integrated model, in addition to participating on a student's planning team, therapists provide various types of support in actual classroom and school activities. Therapists help students learn and practice needed skills by:
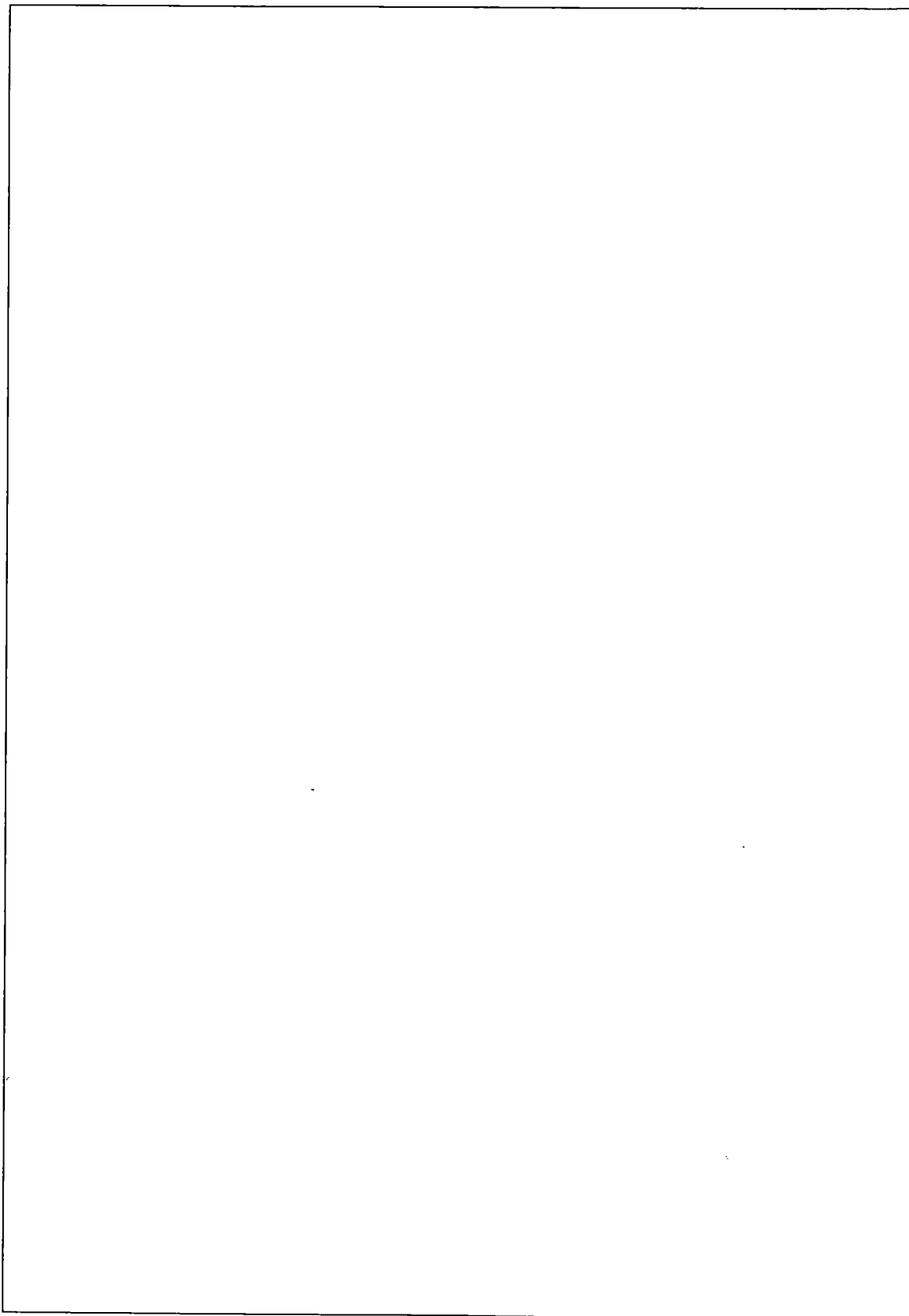
- Working directly with a student in the regular classroom to develop skills in the appropriate sequence

- Consulting with teachers on how accommodations can be made to support the child's participation while she develops skills

- Working with a student on the skills in the "real" settings where those skills are used (e.g. practicing eating skills in the lunchroom when the child has lunch with his classmates, learning to drive her wheelchair on the playground at recess, learning to handle conflicts with other students in the lunchroom, etc.)

- Working in the classroom with groups which include the student with the challenges to facilitate modeling of typical children.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MEETING THE SUPPORT NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, CONSULT THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:

Giangreco, M. F. (1990). "Making Related Service Decisions for Students with Severe Disabilities: Roles, Criteria, and Authority". *The Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps,* 15 (1), 22-31.

Giangreco, M.F., Cloninger, C. J., & Iverson, G. S. (1990). *Cayuga-Onondaga Assessment for Children with Handicaps (C.O.A.C.H.) (Version 6.0).* Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Center for Developmental Disabilities (distributed by National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials, Stillwater, OK.). 77 pp.

Stainback, W., & Stainback, S. (1990). "The Support Facilitator at Work". In W. Stainback & S. Stainback, (Eds.), Support Networks for Inclusive Schooling: Interdependent Integrated Education (pp. 37-48). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Vandercook & York, (1989). "A Team Approach to Program Development and Support". In J. York, T. Vandercook, C. MacDonald, & S. Wolff (Eds.), *Strategies for Full Inclusion.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration.

NOTES:

Chapter Seven
SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS
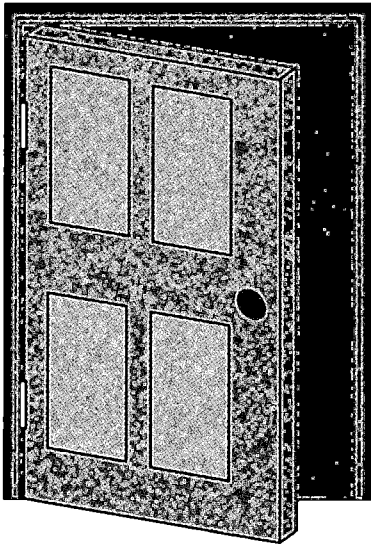
"If I have students with challenging behaviors in my class, how will I handle it when they have a crisis?"

"What if he disrupts the class or hurts someone else?"

"It's challenging enough to deal with the minor day to day discipline problems occurring in my classroom without having children with severe problems to deal with."

Behavioral challenges have long been an enigma to teachers. Of all the challenges that children can pose in the classroom, behavioral problems are the most perplexing, disquieting, and alarming. This chapter will address a wide range of aspects about behaviors including a way for teachers to think about and interpret behaviors, steps that teachers can take to address or prevent challenging behaviors, and issues and strategies for supporting those students with the most significant emotional disturbances. The supports described in this chapter are less concrete than many others listed earlier in this book because there is less experience, information and research about them. Nonetheless, these supports are essential for children even though they are not as definitive as a wheelchair, an interpreter, or a special computer program.

WHAT CAN STUDENTS' BEHAVIORS TELL US?

Donna is in a first grade class in her neighborhood school. She is a bright, loving child who enjoys other children and likes to be active. Because of a severe physical disability, Donna is not able to voluntarily move any part of her body except to blink her eyes and raise one arm; nor is she able to speak. Donna's team and especially her teacher were very frustrated early on in the year, because several times each day, Donna cried and made "droning" noises. Sometimes the noises lasted for ten minutes.

In addition to disrupting the classroom routine, the noises were perplexing because the teacher did not know why Donna was making these sounds or how to make her stop. She wondered if Donna was "droning" to be naughty, or if she was in pain, unhappy, or bored. The teacher felt that she should take some disciplinary action but had no idea what was appropriate. She didn't want other students to get the idea that behavior like this was okay in her class.

Donna posed a challenge to her teacher and school. Because her behaviors are atypical, she had difficulty fitting into the traditional school routine. If all students are entitled to learn together, to learn to interact with others, to have access to information and curriculum content and to have strong role models, then teachers, schools, and parents must proactively address these issues of students who pose behavior challenges.

BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION

Behavior is communication. What is seen by others as "misbehaving" may be the only way that a student is able to communicate his or her needs at a particular time. The idea that behavior communicates important information about a child can be applied to many classroom discipline challenges. William Glasser indicates that the reason students have behavior problems is because school is not satisfying their basic needs to belong and love, to gain power, to be free, and to have fun. Students' behavior problems are, therefore, an expression of these unmet needs. In his book, *Control Theory in the Classroom,* Glasser states: "We are far too concerned with discipline, with how to 'make' students follow rules, and not enough concerned with providing the satisfying education that would make our over-concern with discipline unnecessary."[1]

HOW CAN SCHOOLS SUPPORT A STUDENT WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS?

Because behavior is one form of communication, the child's actions can provide information about who the child is and what his/her needs are. Therefore, it is important to ask as objectively as possible,*"What is [the] child saying by her/his actions?"*[2]

Donna's teacher and team asked themselves what she might have been feeling to cause her to cry and make noises. (Fear? pain? frustration? anger? loneliness? a desire to communicate?) Why might she feel that way? What was going on in the classroom when she cried? How long had she been involved in an activity when the noises began? Might she have felt left out of a class activity? Was she uncomfortable in her wheelchair? Were her friends interacting with her and including her as a member of the class? Were the other students ignoring her? What was the teacher doing before, during, and after the behavior occured?

By asking questions like these, Donna's team was able to interpret the information presented through her behavior. They discovered that she was communicating several messages through these behaviors. She made the noises when she was not included in class activities which required manipulating materials like using Cuisinnaire rods in math. Donna also cried when she had been in the same position in her wheelchair too long and needed to be repositioned. Her classmates suggested that Donna was feeling left out and isolated during reading when she was in the classroom but working alone with an adult.

Once they discovered what Donna was communicating, the team was able to develop a behavior support plan. One member of the team suggested using cooperative learning groups to do class activities. Donna would be a group member and have responsibilities like everyone else. Her group would use the tray on her wheelchair to manipulate the rods. The roles Donna might have in the group could be the "checker," (who checks with group members to see if they understand), or the encourager, (who lets group members know they're doing a good job). Since Donna's teacher had been interested in cooperative learning, she agreed to try it with support from the special education teacher. Based on the information they gathered collectively, the team also developed other specific plans such as repositioning Donna more often and setting up a "circle of friends."

Donna's example involves a student with significant physical challenges. However, the same theory and approach used to develop support strategies for Donna can be used also to support other students whose behaviors pose challenges for teachers. In addition, teachers can ask themselves questions about the classroom atmosphere to be sure that it is enabling students to get the "satisfying education" that Glasser advocates. Teachers report that questions like the following are useful to examine:

- Is learning seen by the students as exciting and fun?

- Do all students feel like they belong?

- Is there a feeling of cooperation among students and between the teacher and the students?

- Are mistakes treated as learning opportunities or as failures?

- Are students allowed control of their own learning? (Do they have choices; are they expected to make decisions and accept responsibility for their learning?)

- Is student participation encouraged in determining class rules and figuring out how to support classmates so that they can be successful in school?

WHAT ARE PRACTICAL STEPS TEACHERS CAN TAKE IF BEHAVIOR CHALLENGES ARISE?

The following list of suggestions is compiled from behavior consultants, teachers, and families:

1. Do the least intervention necessary.

    If the teacher assesses that the behavior will probably stop on its own, that no one will be harmed, and that there will not be a "ripple"effect in which other students begin to model the behavior, then the best strategy is to ignore the behavior and avoid giving negative reinforcement to the child.[3]

2. If the behavior continues, someone is being hurt, or there is a ripple effect, try one of the following short-term techniques:

    a. Remove events, situations, or objects, which may be triggering the behavior.

    b. Try to interrupt the behavior by moving closer to the student, injecting humor, gaining instructional control by positively communicating to the student what he/she should be doing, assisting the student to express anger or frustration by using active listening techniques, or helping the student to calm down with relaxation techniques.[4]

3. Enlist help from people who know the child well:

    Consider parents, classmates, former teachers, special education teacher, behavior consultant, school counselor, principal, mental health professional, neighbor, clergy, or others from the school or community.

4. As a team, explore all the factors which might currently be affecting the child's behavior.

5. Develop a plan to support the child so that he or she can be successful.

6. If the initial plan does not work, go back to the team and develop another one.

A "no-fault" approach is an important consideration. Teams who confront challenges with problem-solving techniques are much more effective in assisting a student to be successful than are teams who try to determine fault.

WHAT ABOUT STUDENTS WITH SERIOUS EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES?

Since there is a growing number of students who have severe emotional challenges, schools must assume responsibility for addressing the complex needs of these children and adolescents by providing supports for them. Developing a proactive rather than a reactive approach is very important.

Students with emotional challenges need to learn to gain control of their own behavior and not just be "managed". Management strategies should be used as tools to help students gain control. This approach challenges the "curriculum of control" that frequently is used by schools with students with challenging behaviors. According to Knitzer, "Behavior technologies are used as not only a means, but an end, in a way that preempts a serious examination of the academic curriculum, the social skills curriculum or even close observation of how students behave, and what situations are useful for them."[5]

Other strategies that are useful in supporting students with emotional disturbances are the following:

1. Enriching support options in regular education

    Using pre-referral strategies to assist teachers to expand their instructional, nurturing, and management skills

    Bringing resource teachers into classrooms to enhance skills of regular ed teachers

    Using a behavioral support consultation model to assist teachers and schools[6]

    Providing crisis intervention, short term counselling, and consultation for *both* teachers *and* students

    Collaborating with mental health agencies

2. Allowing students to function as active learners and work with other students

3. Using related services more creatively
    Using staff such as psychologists and social workers that previously focused on evaluation to work directly with teachers and students to assist with ongoing support and crisis interventions

4. Involving the student actively on the planning team

5. Capitalizing on a student's strengths in developing a support plan

6. Developing procedures for crisis management for extreme behaviors that could endanger the child or others

As noted in Chapters 4 and 5, curriculum approaches and teaching styles are highly important for all students, but particularly for students with emotional and behavioral challenges. Knitzer's research shows that "the academic life for children with behavioral and emotional disorders is typically an impoverished one, defined by dittoed worksheets and isolation." Teachers frequently use very restricted teaching approaches to control these students. Knitzer goes on to state that these students who often need to be engaged most actively "are often not permitted to talk, inquire or function as active learners; teachers feel and are reinforced to feel successful if their class is 'in control'."[7]

WHAT IS THE ROLE FOR REGULAR EDUCATION WITH STUDENTS WHO HAVE SEVERE EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS?

There are differences between students who "act out" and students who have problems that for various reasons have become serious. Can these students learn successfully in regular education classes? At this point in time, the answer is yes *when appropriate planning, supports, and services are provided.* The goal in educational programming for students with intense emotional disorders is to integrate them to the maximum extent possible. These students in particular often have great difficulties with social relationships. In order to develop appropriate social skills, these students must have the opportunities to interact with typical students. Developing appropriate social skills without contact with positive role models is very difficult if not impossible. Social skills "kits" and curricula taught in a self-contained classroom in isolation without opportunities for application with support throughout a student's day are rarely successful[8].

HOW CAN TEACHERS BE SUCCESSFUL: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE STRATEGIES THAT WE NOW KNOW?

1. Teachers can include a student with intense emotional disturbances when a very active support system exists. This support team may well be configured much more broadly than most IEP teams for students. These school support teams often actively include people from community agencies who are also involved with the child and family. Representatives from foster care, social services, the judicial system, substance abuse programs, medicine, and mental health agencies are often key players in addition to traditional school system support staff.

2. Families must be an integral part of the process as well. Research shows that many students with intense emotional needs may be from families in distress. Some families are in severe economic or emotional distress. Other families are stressed from heavy caregiving responsibilities with little relief. Some families are forced to relinquish custody of their child in order for the child to receive services. It is essential that the school reaches out to families in sensitive ways. "Cultural factors and the extent to which professionals recognize and honor cultural difference are a vital component for effective collaboration," Richard Vosler-Hunter states.[9] Thoughtful, congruent links with the school can create a positive impact on the family, assist with continuity for the child, and effect tremendous changes.

3. The timing and approaches for offering supports to these students and families may well be beyond the traditional school day and school-family interactions. Supports need to be available also between 3:00 P.M. and 8:00 A.M. This is one reason why it

is so critical to have agencies who typically offer services during these non-school time periods as part of a student's team. In addition, schools may well need to reconfigure the locations and ways they provide support services to be able to serve these children effectively. Some schools meet with families in their homes.

The needs of children with serious challenges require much more support than a typical brief counselling period with the school social worker once a week. Qualified mental health personnel need to be actively involved in the student's life at school and at home, working closely at all times with parents and extended family members as well as the teachers. Plans and supports for intervention during crises must be an integral part of each student's plan. During a crisis, teams must often provide very high levels of support for as long as is necessary to keep students in school and in their family.

4. Families should be encouraged and assisted to be involved with other parents. These connections can assist families with support, decrease feelings of isolation and despair, provide a forum for families to practice articulating the issues and plan advocacy strategies on behalf of their own children and for systems' change.

5. Teachers should refer parents to and use the resource organizations listed at the end of this chapter to gain the most current information about research, emerging practices for supporting students with serious emotional disturbances, and the contacts available in your area.

Supporting students with emotional or mental health needs requires an intense commitment and effort on the part of many people — schools, special education personnel, community agencies, and families. Strong channels of communication and active collaboration are essential if the student is to be supported adequately.

These students are "tough" kids to support. However, schools, parents, and teachers must not give up and cast these children aside. Children who pose behavioral challenges are entitled to accommodations, adaptations, and supports in order to participate in regular classes and school activities just as children with other challenges are. These students must be allowed to retain their membership status in their schools, classes, and neighborhoods — even if their behavior should require a temporary intensive intervention away from those settings. In addition, there must be collaboration among all the people involved to refashion schools and support systems that work for these students.

The test of the team is the long-term commitment to the child rather than giving up and sending the student away. Even when solutions or strategies for supporting the child are not apparent, children deserve adults who rally around them, continue to dialogue, and keep trying new approaches. Solutions, as much as they can exist, often lie in the process of grappling with the issues. This struggle often points the way to strategies that work.

The book *At the Schoolhouse Door: An Examination of Programs and Policies for Children with Behavioral and Emotional Problems* offers numerous suggestions for approaches that schools and community support agencies can take. Knitzer and her colleagues state: "...it is clear to us and to many others that making schools more supportive for children, challenging their minds, and treating them with respect can go a long way toward ensuring that the vast majority of behavior and emotional problems can be dealt with within regular ed without labelling children."[10]

HELPFUL RESOURCES ON DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS ARE:

Resource Organizations:

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
c/o National Mental Health Association
1021 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health
Portland State University
Regional Research Institute for Human Services
P.O. Box 751
Portland, OR 97207

National Clearinghouse toll free number (800) 628-1696

Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health
University of South Florida
Florida Mental Health Institute
13301 Bruce B. Downs Boulevard
Tampa, FL 33612

Research and Training Center on Community Referenced Behavior Management
Department of Child and Family Studies
Florida Mental Health Institute
13301 Bruce B. Downs Boulevard
Tampa, FL 33612
Toll free number (800) 451-0608

Child and Adolescent Service System Programs (CASSP)
Each state has a CASSP grant through the state's Department of Mental Health at the state capitol.

Written Resources:

Casey-Black, J. & Knoblock, P. (1989). Integrating Students with Challenging Behaviors. In R. Gaylord-Ross (Ed.), *Integration Strategies for Students with Handicaps* (pp.129-148). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Early, T. J. (1989). *What You Need to Know About Your Child with an Emotional Disability and the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas School of Social Welfare.

Forest, M. & Pearpoint, J. (1990). Supports for Addressing Severe Maladaptive Behaviors. In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Support Networks for Inclusive Schooling: Interdependent Integrated Education* (pp. 187-197). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Glasser, William. (1986) *Control Theory in the Classroom.* New York: Harper and Row.

Goldstein, A.P. (1989). Teaching Alternatives to Aggression. In D. Biklen, D.L. Ferguson, & A. Ford (Eds.), *Schooling and Disability.* (pp. 168-207). Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education.

Janney, R.E., & Meyer, L.H. (1990). "A Consultation Model to Support Integrated Educational Services for Students with Severe Disabilities and Challenging Behaviors". *The Journal for the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 15 (3), 186-199.

Knitzer, J. (1982). *Unclaimed Children: The Failure of Public Responsibility to Children and Adolescents in Need of Mental Health Services.* Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund.

Knitzer, J., Steinberg, Z., & Fleisch, B. (1990). *At the Schoolhouse Door: An Examination of Programs and Policies for Children with Behavioral and Emotional Problems.* New York: Bank Street College of Education.

LaVigna, G.W., & Donnelan, A.M. (1986). *Alternatives to Punishment: Solving Behavior Problems with Non-Aversive Strategies.* New York: Irvington Publishers.

Lehr, S. & Lehr, R. (1989). *Why Is My Child Hurting: Positive Approaches to Dealing with Difficult Behaviors.* Boston: Technical Assistance for Parent Programs.

Lovett, H. (1985). *Cognitive Counseling and Persons with Special Needs.* New York: Praeger Publishers.

McGee, J.J., Menolascino, F.J., Hobbs, D.C., & Menousek, P.E. (1987). *Gentle Teaching.* New York: Human Sciences Press.

Meyer, L.H., & Evans I.M. (1989). *Nonaversive Intervention for Behavior Problems: A Manual for Home and Community.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Willis, T. and LaVigna, G. (1985). *Emergency Management Guidelines.* Los Angeles, CA: Institute for Applied Behavior Analysis.

PLANNING FOR INCLUSION
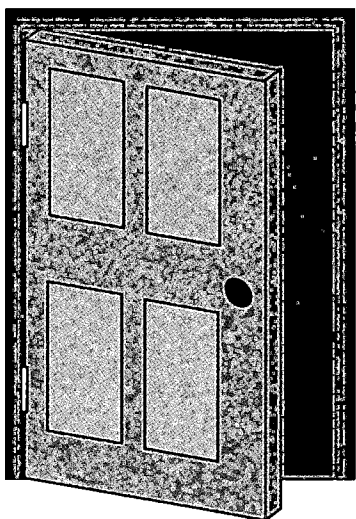
"Whenever I go to an IEP meeting for a child, I feel confused and like my participation isn't important."

"The meetings are so long and I often feel like we don't get down to discussing what's really important--the day to day plan for helping the child be successful in school."

"I'm not convinced the IEP staffing is the way to make full inclusion work."

Teams who are including students with challenging needs quickly learn that there are no easy answers or recipes to be found in books on full inclusion. Because every child is unique, each student's support plan looks different.

The common threads necessary for successful planning for any child are:

- Inclusion of the student and the family as key planning team members to ensure that the family's hopes and dreams are listened to and valued.
    Families can provide valuable information as strategists for their child's support plan because they know their child well and have long-range vision and commitment.

- Involvement of the student's classmates and friends on the planning team.
    The student's same-age peers are often the most resourceful and creative strategists on the team.

- A positive view of the student based on his/her strengths.

- Participation in the planning process by others who know the student well, from within the school as well as from the student's neighborhood community.
    This participation promotes a holistic approach to planning for the student.

- A common commitment among team members to making inclusion successful for the child.
    When a group of people combine their creative energy and expertise to work toward a common goal, there is no end to what they can accomplish.

BUILDING INCLUSION WITH THE IEP

As the teachers' comments at the beginning of this chapter express, IEP meetings sometimes come up short of one's expectations for proactive, strength-focused, efficient planning sessions. However, IEP's are an essential component of the law which protects the rights of children who have disabilities (P.L. 94-142).

Therefore, it is important to insure that the IEP process facilitates planning and implementing a child's inclusion. IEP meetings can be refocused to become positive planning sessions for including students and still meet the requirements of the Law. Some strategies team members can use to make this happen are:

- Develop individual lists of the child's strengths, goals, and needs prior to meeting.

- Begin the IEP meeting by brainstorming all the student's positive qualities, strengths, and accomplishments and list them on wall charts easily viewed by the entire team.

- Designate a team member to serve as an integration facilitator. This person's primary function is to make sure that things happen day-to-day as they are supposed to.[1]

- Address the following when listing the child's needs:
  - the need to develop relationships with typical peers from the child's neighborhood
  - the need to participate in all regular class and school "rituals" including such activities as pep rallies, school-wide fundraisers, outdoor education trips, etc.
  - the need for typical role models to learn social skills and positive school behavior
  - the need for strong typical peer models to develop good language skills.

- At the end of the meeting, schedule a regular time for key team members to meet to determine the specifics of the child's support plan, to monitor the child's success, and to make adaptations as needed.

NEW TOOLS TO ASSIST WITH SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION

Some exciting planning processes have emerged in recent years which can be used in addition to the IEP process to help facilitate a student's inclusion.

1. MAPS, (McGill Action Planning System, also called Making Action Plans), which was developed by Marsha Forest and Evelyn Lusthaus, is a visionary process that places primary emphasis on the inclusion, participation, and learning of students with disabilities in regular classrooms and activities. MAPS treats the school as a community and emphasizes the fact that communities are built on friendships and other positive relationships. MAPS involves the student, the student's family and the student's classmates as primary participants in the process.

How does it work? MAPS is a two-part process that starts with the team members' collective responses to seven key questions. An initial meeting of the entire team creates a profile of the student and identifies the direction to be taken to realize full inclusion. Groups meet subsequently to develop, implement, and revise these plans. Following are the seven questions of the process (with the first three questions being directed first to the parents):

(1)   What is your child's history?
(2)   What is your dream for your child?
(3)   What is your nightmare?
(4)   Who is the child?
(5)   What are the child's strengths, gifts, and talents?
(6)   What are the child's needs?
(7)   What would the child's ideal day at school look like and what must be done to make it happen?

Responses to these questions are elicited by a facilitator and written for all to see by a person who serves as recorder.

The essence of the MAPS process is the team's collective vision of the child's life. The subsequent work of the team is to help the student realize this vision in an integrated school and community. An actual MAPS planning session can be seen in the video entitled *With a Little Help From My Friends.*[2]

2. C.O.A.C.H. (Cayuga-Onondaga Assessment for Children with Handicaps, Version 6.0)[3] is an assessment and planning tool that helps families and educators develop relevant educational programs to be delivered in fully integrated classrooms.

C.O.A.C.H. is a structured way to look at the traditional school curriculum from different perspectives. It helps determine what content is important for the student to learn, it explores how the learning environment can support other I.E.P. goals (that are non-academic) and other learning outcomes. Specifically, it provides detailed procedures to:

(1)   determine a student's top learning priorities, as identified with strong family input
(2)   translate these priorities into goals
(3)   determine the breadth of curriculum beyond the top priorities
(4)   identify the management needs necessary to be done to or for the student to allow or encourage learning to take place
(5)   develop short-term objectives based on annual goals
(6)   create an individual educational plan within the framework of the school's established schedule and routines

The C.O.A.C.H. provides methods for meshing the child's IEP goals with regular class activities, other learning outcomes, and management needs. By completing a matrix, the team can match each of the child's individual needs with the daily classroom activities which will help the child meet those needs. A further step in the process is to determine what adaptations or added supports are needed at which times of the day. Classroom teachers can use this goal/activity matrix to identify the many opportunities that regular classroom participation provides for meeting a student's individual goals.

Teams find that this process reduces concern as to how the regular classroom will be able to meet the child's "special" needs. The C.O.A.C.H. can be an effective planning tool because it provides a "road map" of steps to mesh meeting the individual child's needs into a typical school day.

PROACTIVE PLANNING: A KEY STRATEGY

Schools find that the structure of their IEP meetings and other planning meetings changes after they begin using a proactive collaborative model to plan for a student's inclusion and support. In traditional IEP meetings the various specialists report on their evaluations, and the classroom teacher relates how the student is doing in class. The resulting picture of the student enumerates areas of difficulty which need to be remediated. A disability label is identified, and the student's special education placement is based on that label. It is then the responsibility of the special education teacher and other specialists to plan and implement special programming for the student.

When teams include the common elements for successful planning described in this chapter, their meetings become positively-focused strategizing sessions for the student rather than legally mandated special education formalities. Because there is an assumption that the student will be a fully participating member of a regular, neighborhood school class with the necessary supports and services to effectively meet his or her needs, the planning sessions can focus on the "hows" of the student's support. The team doesn't need to spend precious planning time evaluating options to determine "appropriate" special education placement.

Proactive, strengths-focused, collaborative planning is a key to successful inclusion.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON PLANNING FOR INCLUSION, CHECK THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:

Buswell, B. E., & Veneris, J. (1989). *Building Integration With the I.E.P.* Colorado Springs: PEAK Parent Center.

Forest, M., & Flynn, G. (1988). *With a Little Help from My Friends.* Niwot: CO: Expectations Unlimited, or Toronto, Ontario: Centre for Integrated Education. VHS.

Forest, M., & Lusthaus, E. (1989). "Promoting Educational Equality for All Students: Circles and Maps". In S. Stainback, W. Stainback & M. Forest (Eds.), *Educating All Students in the Mainstream of Regular Education* (pp. 43-57). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

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CONCLUSION

In the introduction to this book, we stated that including students with disabilities in regular education classes and activities is important because it's the right thing to do, it's time, it's good for all students, and it's the presumption of the special education law. In addition, full inclusion of students with challenges *works* — when there is unwavering commitment to students, strategic planning, willingness to grapple with hard issues, a focus on the strengths of all the players (including the student), and a commitment to restructuring and building quality schools that meet the needs of *all* students. It is our hope that *OPENING DOOORS* will inspire readers to work collaboratively to build new possibilities for educating all students well.

> *"In some ways, educators about to integrate students with disabilities are analogous to parents who have just given birth to a child with a severe disability. They are asked to make a leap of faith, to believe that what they are about to undertake will be good for them and the students. Like parents, they may envision a profoundly trying existence, one clouded by anxiety. Yet, by working together, however difficult the experience, schools have the chance of discovering, as many parents have, that a commitment to working with and relating to youngsters with disabilties is good both for the person with a disability and for her allies and friends."*[1]
>
> --- Douglas Biklen

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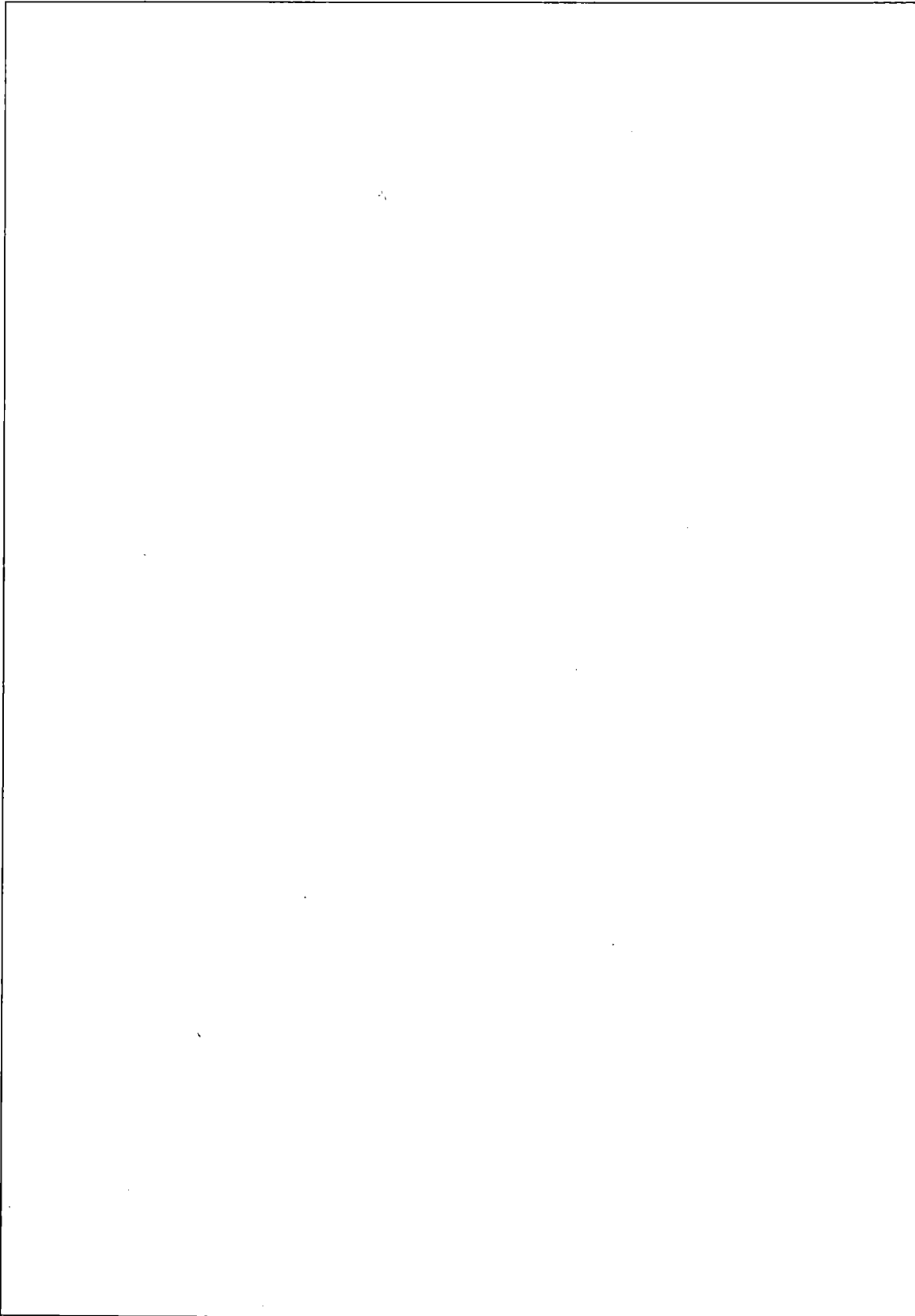
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