



Inclusive Education

Tips for Families from Families



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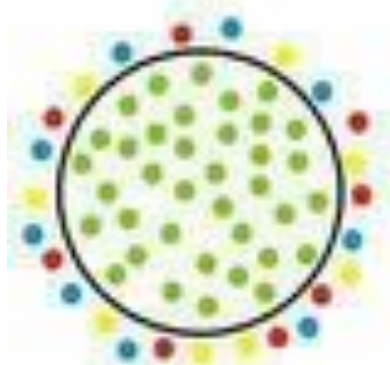
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Introduction

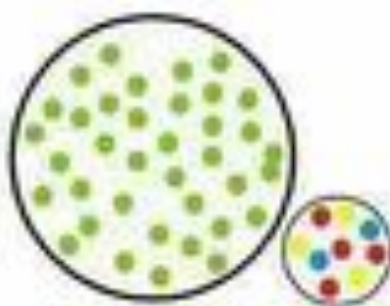
We asked 6 parents to share their top tips with other families. These families are at different stages of their child's school journey, but have experience in thinking creatively, laterally and have worked in partnership with schools in order for their children to experience an inclusive education. Inclusive education is complex and requires thoughtful planning and collaboration to realise success. That is why Imagine More has collated what was shared in the small booklet. We are so grateful for the families who have kindly taken the time to pass on what they have learned. You know who you are....thank you!



Inclusion



Exclusion



Segregation



Integration

What are your tips for adapting the classroom environment?



Multimedia



Visual Schedules

1. Visual schedules that feature the day's activities.
2. Reducing clutter and sensory overload
3. Lots of visuals used for the whole class - so your child is not singled out as being the only one who needs them
4. Small number of chairs available for kids during group time on the floor if kids have low muscle tone and/or sensory cushions for all/most of children
5. Try combination of different ways experimenting to see what works for the group as a whole
6. Adjustable tables
7. A fruit bowl/crunchy veggie snacks that are available throughout the day for all children
8. Clear visuals, roles and routines
9. Minimise 'special furniture'. If supports are needed, make as 'typical' and as similar to what everyone else is using
10. Visual schedule for the day on wall at children's height
11. Using multimedia to support the individual
12. Space to move around the classroom
13. Fidget toys
14. Provide opportunities for every student to contribute to the running of the class
15. Ensure your child is seated with others - NOT isolated in a 'special corner or desk'
16. Visual schedule chunked into morning/mid/afternoon session on children's desks
17. Touch screen and iPads (either with or without keyboard depending on year level to look like other students) - earphones
18. Students choice of seating
19. Timers
20. Identify and celebrate all the diversity in the cohort

21. Ensure your child does the SAME THING; but modified. Eg, doing a worksheet like everyone else, but modified to their ability
22. Be clear to teachers with what your expectations are for your child in that classroom or describe what you think inclusion is
23. A non-toxic environment
24. Use appropriate language and narratives for all differences
25. Use large font, ensure reading glasses are worn (if needed), seat closer to board if visual challenges
26. desks or seating positions to be consistent for all students so not make obvious the differences
27. Use Classroom adaptations that are good for all kids (eg Brain breaks, movement breaks)
28. Only display what is referred to for learning
29. Provide ownership for all students
30. Provide choice for all students
31. Facilitate friendships and opportunities to succeed
32. Consistent structures ad routines
33. High yet realistic goals
34. Respectful and reciprocal culture (I use circle time and collaboration)
35. Minimise classroom aid involvement as much and as early as possible to prevent 'learned helplessness'
36. Drawing a visual plan (treasure map) including each step of the day OR a specific event. Review before and during event or day.
37. SIPN - inclusion (Facebook site)

What are your tips for learning the same curriculum?



Different modes of teaching



Peer teaching

1. Maximising peer support
2. Using visuals
3. Identify opportunities for Peer modeling for both content and method
4. Differentiate the curriculum so it is accessible. This also allows the student to stay with peers
5. Look for different methods of delivery other than auditory. Use videos, hands on experience and group work
6. Be clear with teachers that you expect your child to be accessing the same curriculum as the other children
7. Make the lessons creative and fun ...I love it when other students are jealous of what my kid is doing
8. Using A-B-C data sheets to determine functions of behaviour (Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence), to better identify successful teaching strategies
9. Provide choice for all students
10. Allowing opportunity to turn take
11. Make it messy
12. Adjusting the number of tasks to be completed
13. Presume competence and don't assume everything needs to be modified
14. Avoid the use of LSAs/Aides. Remove the velcro connection between LSA & student - perhaps remove them altogether
15. For high school, include group work with assigned roles eg. Each person is given one of the following roles facilitator, recorder, presenter, timekeeper, and artist
16. Being engaged in the classroom discussion either in large or smaller groups
17. Encourage students to get messy and creative too
18. Seek student input on what is meaningful for them

19. Let the teacher teach the child, NOT the aide
20. Use concrete materials (age appropriate)
21. Adapting Apps to address specific to needs allowing access to the same curriculum as the other children
22. Encourage other students to come up with creative ways to include the child with a disability
23. Vary method and mode but gather information on levels of engagement and effectiveness to utilise in future plans
24. Ask how the ILP meets the curriculum; set curriculum goals in ILP
25. Start by identifying what are the 3 top outcomes for a particular unit of work that you would expect all students to learn. 1 eg. Who wrote Romeo and Juliet?
26. Using audio and have sequencing pictures based on same things in the curriculum for students enabling someone who cannot read to participate equally
27. Build the value of parental contribution and encourage local school to adopt kids matter / mind matter approach and ensure childrens and young peoples voices are included in the evaluations and to give their needs /voice a place to be heard and measured at a whole school level.
28. Share resources to help your child's teacher understand child's need (e.g. vision, student profile, how to respond to their needs)
29. Offer to bring in a specialist of SMART goals and with the principal if they are not giving an effective goal setting and performance measures
30. Look at ways to improve the school environment for all students including more inclusive practices
31. Include in the ILP: student vision and student profile; support, structure or circle of security for student/child; support for Educator to access knowledge, training and support to improve situation for child/student.
32. Expect peers to give natural supports, with directions if required

What are your tips for transition?



Meet the teachers



Share your vision

1. Preparing a document that lists your child's strengths, interests, challenges and strategies that work best, to share with educators at the beginning of the year.
2. For your child to visit the high school before starting and use a transition booklet that includes photos that helps your child become familiar with where the key areas are, location of toilets, main office, canteen, picture of principal and key staff etc...
3. Clear long-term vision that is about whole of education and anchors to family vision
4. Prepare the upcoming school / teacher about the student; with positive attributes (NOT DEFICIT BASED)
5. Movement breaks for all children to be woven into daily routines. eg. when moving from floor to desk
6. Know what your child's strengths are and emphasize those to teachers
7. Planning. Planning. Planning
8. Asking the school to help prepare a social story that includes the new teachers, classroom and other details that you can use for your child over the end of year holidays.
9. Don't apologise, don't excuse and don't settle for just being there
10. Lots of transition visits - meet the peers
11. Ask child that often falls behind to lead the group from one class to the next, assign the role of 'leader'
12. Know what your child might be unsure about - look for cues
13. Sometimes it's just luck

14. Asking the school if your child's friends will be in the same class the following year.
15. Resources and funding are the role of the school and administrators. Don't take on that role.
16. Social stories for the student about what to expect
17. Teachers to share with what has worked to engage the student with the next years teacher
18. Put together a social story about something that is different and have goals in mind
19. Go with teachers that express desire to have your kid in their classroom. Forget about experience
20. Find one things to contribute to that has no direct obvious link to your child
21. Information for peers about the student – strengths focused
22. Provide a photo/video of the next years teacher sharing their interests and what they are looking forward to next year. This is sent to the child in the Christmas holidays
23. Take time to introduce your child into the new environment
24. No child is 'ready for school'. All children are ready to learn.
25. A buddy system may work although be careful about how
26. Visual time table /colour coded
27. Build rapport with teachers - share your vision and aspirations

What are your tips for social inclusion at school?



Ask that your child eats with peers



Invite other children over after school

1. Engaging with parents to build friendships in the community out of school that will also translate into the classroom
2. Be a sleuth - what are the classmates interested in?
3. Ask/ensure teachers model inclusive behaviour
4. Set up a Bunch of Mates – for an intentional focus on friendships
5. Find out who your child spends time with at school
6. Allow heaps of floor time. All kids love floor time
7. Using peers to model typical social interactions
8. What's the typical family like in your child's main group and how can you 'infiltrate' that Group? Working parents only seen at after school care? Or the group that pickup from one specific spot? Those that head to the local coffee shop? More than 3 volunteers at tuck shop on a particular day?
9. Start a school circle of support (eg Bunch of Mates, 'BOM')
10. Parents to shamelessly invite kids over
11. Ensure that your child is not being followed around by an LSA
12. Ensure your kids are eating with their peers
13. Be present, be practical and try new things
14. Be open to all opportunities for connections - invite families to playdates, coffee etc.
15. Always have a birthday party
16. See if school can organise the children from the class to eat together to see whether that leads to more interactions in the playground
17. Allow other kids to push wheelchairs. Sometimes the wheelchair IS the barrier
18. Don't put all your child's eggs in one basket - school friends, cousins, pool friends, sport friends, library friends
19. If issues arise, ask the BOM or class to brainstorm how they would solve it. A knowledgeable adult (pref. one with SRV training!) guides this problem solving. le; encourage buy-in
20. Get involved in the school yourself. eg. join P&C, help at the school fete, organise things for your child's class, go on excursions

21. Look for specific activities available for students to be involved with at school ie. band, choir, sport
22. Bake or buy - children of any age have to eat. Bribery with baked goods goes a long way
23. Keep communication open so you can be aware of emerging signs of exclusion, and address it as soon as possible
24. Friendships are at the heart of school, if kids have a sense of belonging they will more likely learn academically
25. Go to functions that the school puts on to socialise with other parents, students and teachers
26. Expect your child to be included in their own way and at their own level
27. Communicate within the learning team – tears, fears and cheers
28. Structured and facilitated activities available at recess/lunch
29. Encourage children to play together, explain behaviours (in an age appropriate way), so children can understand. It may make the person with a disability “less scary”
30. Push for disability to be part of the curriculum in Primary. Knowledge can demystify and unite.

What are your top tips for home-school communication?



Volunteer at the school



Share photos and video

1. If possible communicating regularly on email with the teachers and principal.
2. Calm, clear and complementary
3. Talk informally to the teacher whenever possible
4. Pick up the phone
5. Email when something works well rather than just focusing on negative
6. Be IN the school. Not busting their butts but offering help and letting them know that you're learning too
7. Acknowledge what is going well and not just the issues.
8. Modify your approach to match and mollify every teacher and every year
9. Email teacher. Or use communication book (preferably not completed by the LSA)
10. Take photos/videos and share between home and school
11. Make yourself available for phone calls - make time
12. Letting school know ahead of time if your child has had a difficult start to the day.
13. Document in a way you can maintain for your own records. Photos of notes on coffee shop serviettes still capture information...
14. Have a presence at school (volunteer where possible for school activities)
15. SeeSaw App to capture photos of school work to share with home
16. Build a relationship with inclusion support by having regular meetings with teachers (no child present)
17. Sharing your child's evolving goals with the school as well as your preferred strategies to achieve them.
18. Always assume you will need an extra meeting above the allocated time for parent/teacher interview slots

19. With queries: email first then follow up by either informal chat or meeting
20. Ask questions starting with 'how' and 'what'. eg. How can we help your daughter connect with the other kids?
21. Send social stories in form of app like Pictello for child to share something special or an event if they cannot read use photos
22. Only written communication doesn't build or repair as much rapport as needed for success
23. Take notes in meetings and if relevant, email pertinent notes and action items back to the school, so there is a record
24. Be honest
25. Be consistent - Resist the urge to put your needs before your child. For example, if you go into school for any reason do not talk to LSA's or teachers about your child's day in front of your child without first seeking your child's permission, or more importantly learn to include your child in those conversations and use these opportunities to role model to school what your expectations are for inclusion.
26. Be proactive – introduce yourself and your child
27. Work together – not against each other
28. Communicate and include your child in decisions
29. Communication. Showing respect. Willingness to learn new concepts.

What are your top tips for good relationships with teachers?



Attend school events



Craft emails carefully

1. Schedule time early in the year to meet with the teacher.
2. Be realistic about availability - theirs and yours
3. Be willing to work with teachers/school for best outcome of the student
4. Direct communication with the teacher is the only way to build relationships
5. Make a time to meet with the teacher that is mutually beneficial
6. Offer to help
7. Provide additional materials that your child might need in the classroom.
8. Don't only engage when there are issues to discuss and recognise progress (your child's not the teacher's!)
9. Respect teachers but remain mindful that they are paid to teach. All kids. Also remember it is not the parents job to make the teacher feel good about themselves!
10. Provide context when things are not going well
11. Share your culture or beliefs with your teacher
12. Come up with time saving solutions like google classroom and seesaw.
13. Always let the teacher know that you are on their side, working towards the same goals.
14. Be prepared to follow up
15. Have a presence at school and try to 'connect' with teachers (without being ingratiating or syrupy)
16. Acknowledge we are learning together, inclusion is complex and when we all grapple with complexity together that is when we find the answer.
17. Let the teacher know when something they do has an impact
18. Help problem solve

19. Don't assume the previous teacher/school/setting handed over any info
20. Make friends with the office manager / reception / front desk - they can hold amazing power!
21. Be honest
22. Go to school events
23. Assure them they don't have to have all the answers. You can discover them together.
24. Smile
25. Offer teachers and schools help with your student (again, within reason, where appropriate, and without being syrupy)
26. Use email appropriately - if your emotional best to leave it or get support from someone else before making contact.
27. Believe in your child's potential - if you don't, no one else will!
28. This is the big adventure for your child and it's a marathon so there is time and opportunity to modify and regroup.
29. Feel the fear and do it anyway! Inclusion can be hard but its crucial
30. A good education requires partnership between families and schools
31. Stick by your values
32. It can get overwhelming - don't be afraid to ask for support when you need it.
33. Know the curriculum but use that knowledge for the good of your child not power plays
34. Be honest with yourself and know when you make a decision for yourself (BAD!) rather than in the best interests of your child (GOOD!)
35. Work together
36. Pick your battles - not all are worth fighting
37. Many others have succeeded in this journey - make use of the wealth of resources available online to learn about inclusion, what works and what doesn't.
38. Most teachers go home to children too
39. Choose your battles
40. Have a vision for your child - share your family values
41. Have a vision - so you know what battles are worth choosing
42. Be aware of your child's rights - give your perspective on these be subtle and assertive not angry or forceful
43. Don't sign anything you're not happy with
44. Educate yourself (workshops, conferences) and connect with others also seeking inclusive lives; maintain the fire!
45. Go prepared for meetings and always take someone with you – NEVER go alone.
46. Redirect conversations if they become negative using 'how can we make this work'
47. Have someone else in the room (as note taker) when meeting with teachers/school/executive, particularity when things not going well



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