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What are the benefits of inclusive education?

Inclusive education is about everyone learning, growing and flourishing – **together** – in all our diversity. Inclusive education recognises **the right of every child and young person** – without exception – to be included in general education settings. It involves adapting the environment and teaching approaches to ensure genuine and valued full participation of all children and young people. It embraces human diversity and welcomes all as **equal** members of an educational community.



Research evidence **overwhelmingly** supports inclusive education. As well as positive outcomes for social justice and a sense of community and belonging, there are benefits for learning outcomes and for the social, behavioural and physical development of children and young people who do and do not experience disability. Below is a summary of just some of the benefits of inclusive education.

Benefits for students who experience disability:

- better academic and vocational outcomes than their peers in non-inclusive settings
- greater social interaction, resulting in more opportunities to establish and maintain friendships
- increased independent communication and speech and language development, in turn supporting greater inclusion and active participation
- a sense of belonging and a self-concept of not just being a receiver of help but also a giver of help
- access to a broader range of play and learning activities, which can stimulate physical development and enhance children's experiences.

Benefits for all students:

- a more positive sense of self and self-worth
- improved behavioural development, with less 'challenging' or 'disruptive' behaviour
- greater independence
- greater social development and the opportunity to develop friendships they may not have considered or encountered otherwise
- enhanced communication and language development

- the development of qualities such as patience and trust, as well as greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of others
- an increased awareness and valuing of diversity, and understanding of individuality
- higher quality education and care
- higher quality instruction that is better suited to individual needs.

Children and young people who do not experience disability have also been found to benefit academically from inclusive education, with equal or better outcomes than their peers in non-inclusive settings.

Benefits for teachers and educators:

- professional growth
- higher quality of engagement with students
- increased personal satisfaction
- greater confidence in their ability as an educator.

Benefits for families and the community:

- greater psychological and economic wellbeing for parents
- parents may feel more supported and confident to return to work
- a more inclusive school community
- greater community cohesion and the breaking down of discriminatory beliefs and ableist practices.



This fact sheet is drawn from the 2019 report *Towards inclusive education: a necessary process of transformation*. It was written by Dr Kathy Cologon, Department of Educational Studies, Macquarie University for Children and Young People with Disability Australia.

For more information and to read the full report, visit www.cyda.org.au



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