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The National Autism  
Resource & Information Center

A national initiative of The Arc



**The Arc**



# Inclusion

**People who support inclusion believe all people should be welcomed into and be active participants in the community.**

Specifically, people who support inclusion think that:

- Everyone should be able to participate in community activities if they want to do so;
- Supports and services that help people participate in community activities should exist so everyone feels welcome to join in activities;
- Everyone should be welcomed in communities, even though people may have different beliefs, different faults, and distinct gifts;
- People should not be excluded from the community because they might need supports to meaningfully participate; and
- People should not behave in ways that demean others and, if they do, they should change their behaviors.

## **Benefits of Inclusion**

Inclusion can help all people:

- Build friendships, relationships and networks throughout the community;
- Encourage and enable all people to access community activities and opportunities;
- Gain knowledge of other people's strengths and weaknesses, which may change people's perspectives on what other people can achieve; and
- Gain a greater appreciation and acceptance of all types of diversity and personal differences.

## **How has inclusion influenced our lives?**

Inclusion has been important in transforming policies that impact people with disabilities. Before inclusion, people with disabilities were often placed in institutions separate from the community, taught only in special classes, and told that they could not compete with workers without disabilities. However, the idea of inclusion and work of people who believe in it have led to changes in federal policies and legislation.

Some key legislation includes:

- Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – Prohibits discrimination because of disability in all programs that receive federal funds.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – Requires public schools to provide services that children with disabilities need in order to learn alongside their peers who do not have disabilities. IDEA requires public schools to prepare students with disabilities for further education, employment, and independent living.
- Americans with Disabilities Act – Made discrimination based on disability illegal and requires services and employers to provide reasonable accommodations for the needs of people with disabilities.



## **How can I help promote inclusion?**

- Notice your surroundings and make sure that all people can use the facilities and participate in the programs.
- Share success stories. If you know someone with autism or any other disability that is thriving because of inclusion, tell others!
- Respect a person's unique abilities. Assume competence; do not exclude people because they are different.
- Respect a person's individuality when they choose to participate in a community or event. Everyone has a viewpoint that should be valued.
- Anticipate challenges that someone may have with an activity. Work with the person to identify additional assistance that they may need to succeed in an activity. If you have a challenge that you need to address, talk about this with the people around you to form a plan so that you can participate.

## **Resources:**

### **National Inclusion Project**

<http://www.inclusionproject.org/index.php>

### **Kids Included Together**

<http://www.kitonline.org/>

### **Disability is Natural**

<http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/>

### **US Department of Education: Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/reg/narrative.html>

### **The Americans with Disabilities Act**

<http://www.ada.gov/>

### **US Department of Education: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home>

### **The Administration on Developmental Disabilities**

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/add/>

## **About The National Autism Resource & Information Center**

**The National Autism Resource and Information Center** is a dynamic and interactive central point of quality resources and information for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and other developmental disabilities, and their families.

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