



DESSA

DISABILITY EQUALITY
SPECIALIST SUPPORT AGENCY

Inclusion in the Mainstream

The Challenge for Childcare Providers



DESSA

National Community Development
organisation

Human rights perspective on the rights of
people with disabilities

Operates within two local development and
anti-poverty/social inclusion programmes –
Family Resource Centre Programme and
the Local & Community Development
Programme



Goal

To change society so that disabled children can participate on an equal basis with everyone else



Delivery of strategic supports to Community and Childcare Organisations



Organisations develop the skills and identify actions to include all children in their services



Principles

- Inclusion benefits all children and families
- Access to a childcare or play setting is a right for all children
- Each child's individuality and integrity should be valued
- Expectations should be high for every child
- Parents of children with impairments are the natural advocates for their children



Background

Childcare Inclusion Project 2006 – 2009

- inclusion of disabled children in mainstream childcare and play settings

Community Inclusion Initiative 2007 – 2010

- establishment of a parent peer support structure
- development of an inclusive childcare model of good practice

Supporting Families Social Inclusion Strategy 2010 – 2012

- A coherent integrated approach to supporting families experiencing disability



Consultations



“Staff just don’t feel they can cope with the extra burden of having a child with special needs”.

“We can’t include disabled children. We just don’t have the resources

“If it gets out that our service includes disabled children, they will come here from miles around.”

“Our building is not suitable. It’s too old and there’s no lift.”

Research – Key Findings

- 21% of childcare and play providers turned a disabled child away from their service
- Providers who have received some form of training are more likely to include disabled children
- Services linked to an agency which provides them with support are four times more likely to include a disabled child
- Three challenges to inclusion identified by providers are lack of trained staff, ensuring they are doing the 'right thing' and have an accessible space
- Main supports identified by providers to assist them in being inclusive are practical training for staff, access to information and support and being able to operate from an accessible building



Needs being addressed

- Disabled children have limited experience in accessing and participating in mainstream settings
- Fear and lack of understanding within community and childcare services in relation to working with families experiencing disability
- Families experience high levels of social isolation



Childcare Inclusion Work

To develop the knowledge, confidence and capacity of childcare and play workers, to develop inclusive policies and practice



Topics

What do we mean by Inclusion

Disability Equality

Legislation and Policy

Exploring current policy and practice
and planning for change

Developing the Inclusion Policy

Building relationships to improve
inclusive practice



What is inclusion?

- All children having the right to choose to take a full part in a service or programme and being equally welcomed and able to do so.
- Inclusive provision is open and accessible to all and takes positive action in removing disabling barriers so that disabled and non-disabled children can participate equally.

It Doesn't Just Happen: Inclusive Management for Inclusive Play Philip Douch, KIDSactive 2002

Inclusion

Inclusion is

the full and active participation of disabled children in a setting of their choice, alongside their non-disabled peer group



Inclusion is not
about meeting
'special needs';
It's about meeting
all children's
needs
in the same place
and in a variety of
different ways.





Inclusion isn't just about access for disabled people: inclusion is about all of us – irrespective of impairment, age, sex, religion, cultural background etc. It is about everyone being recognised and valued equally.

Inclusion is everyone's business



What is disability?

Impairment

The functional limitation within an individual caused by a physical, mental, intellectual or sensory condition, which differs from accepted norms

Disability

The disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a social organisation, which takes little or no account of people who have impairments, and thus excludes them from taking part in the mainstream of social activities

(Adapted from the International Year of Disabled People 1981)

Models of Disability

Medical Model

The disabled person has the problem and has to be 'fitted' into mainstream society. Impairment is a personal tragedy and that the disabled person will need to be 'cured' or 'cared for'.



Social Model of Disability

Disabled people are disabled by society's lack of recognition of their needs. Therefore, the restrictions imposed on disabled people are not a natural or inevitable consequence of their impairments but are a product of a social environment which fails to accommodate them



Medical model thinking	Social model thinking
Child is faulty	Child is valued
Diagnosis	Strengths and needs defined by self and others
Labelling	Identify barriers and develop solutions
Impairment becomes focus of attention	Outcome-based programme designed
Assessment, monitoring, programmes of therapy imposed	Resources are made available to ordinary services
Segregation and alternative services	Training for parents and professionals
Ordinary needs put on hold	Relationships nurtured
Re-entry if normal enough OR permanent exclusion	Diversity welcomed, child is included
Society remains unchanged	Society evolves

(Adapted from Micheline Mason 1994, R. Rieser 2000)

In conclusion.....

Our vision is a world in which all disabled children realise their aspirations and their right to an inclusive community which supports them and their families



The Challenges.....

Knowledge, awareness and confidence building

Partnership and collaboration

Resources

Accredited training

Accessible childcare and play spaces

