



## **Inclusive Education**

Adopted April 2013

Inclusive education involves every student, regardless of the severity of a student's disability, participating and learning in the same school and with the same classmates if they did not have a disability. True inclusive education requires instruction, curriculum and assessments, and physical environments which are universally designed and adaptable to meet unique goals and needs of individual students. Schools and school activities present a critical opportunity for children to develop lifelong friendships, learn social skills from one another and establish an understanding of how to accept and support one another regardless of their differences. The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council supports the rights of all children, including those with the most significant disabilities, to have full and equal access to curriculum, instruction and extracurricular activities in inclusive education environments that are available to all students.

Experiences during the school years set the stage not only for students with disabilities to gain the skills and relationships to be members of the community, but for all students to gain an appreciation for accepting and supporting their fellow citizens in all facets of community life. Progress made in Louisiana and across the nation in increasing inclusion opportunities has been a result of children growing up understanding and accepting diversity of abilities, talents and contributions of one another.

Inclusive education has numerous benefits over education provided in segregated settings. Inclusion results in individuals with disabilities having improved quality of life outcomes and enhanced skill development without negatively impacting the academic success of students without disabilities. All children benefit from the expanded range of social relationships and increased natural support structures experienced through learning and growing up with a diverse group of peers. It is essential that the building blocks for inclusion begins at an early age. Inclusive educational environments establish the foundation for society supporting the rights of all people to live as contributing and valued members of the community. The Council supports the full inclusion of all children, regardless of the severity of their disability, as full participating members of each and every school.