

Family Support and Inclusion

What does it mean?
Why is it important?

Inclusion

- Definition: *to be included is to be accepted and to be able to participate fully within our families, our communities and society.*
- ***Give examples of how we can include all children and families? Now how we exclude children and their families?***

Exclusion

- What is it?
- How is it defined? -- *Those who are excluded, whether because of poverty, ill-health, gender, race, or lack of education, do not have the opportunity for full participation in the economic and social benefits of society.*

Why do they need community based programmes such as FRP's etc?

- Healthy child development
- As a resource for Families
- To connect to other families in their communities
- To form informal networks
- As a social network for children and parents
- Informal Parent Education

Everyone Benefits from Inclusion

- Now consider LGBTQQ families....
- “When good inclusion is in place, the child who needs the inclusion does not stand out. The inclusive curriculum includes strong parental involvement, students making choices, and a lot of hands on and heads on involvement” (Heston, Iowa)

Family Support Principles

The Guiding Principles of Family Support

1. Family support programs are open to all families, recognizing that all families deserve support.
2. Family support programs complement existing services, build networks and linkages, and advocate for policies, services and systems that support families' abilities to raise healthy children.
3. Family support programs work in partnership with families and communities to meet expressed needs.
4. Family support programs focus on the promotion of wellness and use a prevention approach in their work.
5. Family support programs work to increase opportunities and to strengthen individuals, families and communities.
6. Family support programs operate from an ecological perspective that recognizes the interdependent nature of families' lives.
7. Family support programs value and encourage mutual assistance and peer support.
8. Family support programs affirm parenting to be a life-long learning process.
9. Family support programs value the voluntary nature of participation in their services.
10. Family support programs promote relationships based on equality and respect for diversity.
11. Family support programs advocate non-violence to ensure safety and security for all family members.
12. Family support programs continually seek to improve their practice by reflecting on what they do and how they do it.



FRP Canada

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Next Steps

- Using an Inclusion Lens: gives a method of looking at programs, situations, and experiences.
- Values of Inclusion:
 - Social Justice: Distribution of the social and economic resources of society for the benefit of all people.
 - Valuing Diversity: Recognition and respect for diversity of cultures, races, ethnicity, languages, religions etc.

Family Support as defined by bell hooks: Teaching Community a Pedagogy of Hope:

- “One of the dangers we face in our educational system is the loss of a feeling of community, not just the loss of closeness among those with whom we work and with our students, but also the loss of a feeling of connection and closeness with the world beyond the academy” (hooks, 2003)
- “It is the outcome of life transforming dialogues that take place in the context of community building” (hooks 2003).
- This is what occurs daily in Family Support Programs and the Family Support Principles engage staff in making this a moment by moment experience for parents, children and caregivers.

Values of Family Support:

- What are values that exist in all of our programmes that guide our decisions about diversity and what it means?

Video: Its Elementary

- While the film is worth its price for the teaching strategies employed and displayed by the educators whose classrooms were highlighted, the power of Its Elementary transcends teaching techniques and pedagogy. Chasnoff and Cohen broach topics that even people in the Multicultural Education community often find difficult to discuss. More importantly, the film challenges several assumptions made by educators and lay-people alike about student interest in, and ability to intelligently discuss, gay issues. And it does so in a way that is accessible, not intimidating, for viewers who most desperately need to be pulled into a discussion about gay issues as they pertain to self, school, and society.

http://www.newday.com/films/Its_Elementary.html

After the Video: Why include Queer Theory?

- *Queer Theory: The disruption and deconstruction of Normative Practices....*
- Queer theory provides an opportunity to create change by disrupting and decentering the normative beliefs held by the dominant culture about education. (Early childhood, JK,SK and who are responsible for implementation:
- Teachers, ECE's, Child and Youth workers.... Who Else could influence the structures that are embedded in our system....

Further Support for Change:

- Dei and Calliste argue that “targeting educational institutions as one of the foremost places for producing societal change and transformation” (2000, pg. 11) will promote both knowledge transformation and meaning and understanding to individual and collective experience and action.
- Peter Moss (2007) “Rather, it lies in the possibility of a more dialogic, plural and democratic early childhood field, and more effective resistance to dominant and stultifying, discourses: not the prospect of finding one true way, but the possibility of finding many ways to many truths.” (pg.243)

Best Start, First Duty and FRP Canada

- *The Toronto First Duty partnership tested early childhood service integration but the prime goal was to influence public policy; to bridge the disconnect between child care, education and family support programs; and to demonstrate the advantages of comprehensive, universal service provision to policy makers, families and communities. (Corter, 2007)*
- “Integrated early childhood development programs should create holistic environments for young children and their families. They should integrate existing program pieces across education, social services and health sectors.” (Clyde Hertzman, 2000, FRP Canada Position Paper, January 2002).
- *Best Start Network of Toronto brings together service providers, government and staff to continue to vision the work of TFD and others despite no funding since the advent of the Harper Gov’t.*

Reflective Practice and Family Support

- <http://www.literacyjournal.ca/literacies/9-2008/pdf/brown&dryden.pdf>
- Questions for thought: What changes in perspective and practice would help families?
- What kinds of resources do these families need in order to be effective?
- What are the implications for policies of programs and for the family support field?
- “We believe that we always need to be ready to reflect critically on our own practices, policies and assumptions” (Brown, 2008).
- Reflective practice is an effective process for removing institutional barriers and dispositional barriers... and to do this in family support is an effective way to make reflective practice second nature to community builders.

Comments on It's Elementary and the process of increasing inclusion in your programmes..

- Examples of change based on reflective practice of inclusion....
- Examine children's books for diverse families' and children
- Examine parents book selections for more current family issues
- Join or subscribe to organizations and programmes that support LGBTQQ families

What now?

- Think
- Read
- Act on what you know.
- Reflect on your experiences and those others have shared with you
- Create Change in your community

Thanks for listening.