

**PROFESSIONAL  
STANDARDS  
OF PRACTICE**

*for*

**SPECIAL**   
**EDUCATORS**

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## Chapter Thirteen

### **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: PROBLEMS, AND REMEDIES**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

The term 'Special Needs Children' is a term that has been substituted for handicapped or disabled children. Special needs children are children that require special attention and equipment from significant others in their life.

This is because their impairment or disability in the areas of intelligence, physique, social behaviour, communication and sensory perception and so on prevent them from functioning effectively in their environment. The term 'special needs children' clearly depicts that children with disabilities have numerous needs that require special attention before they can be met.

These needs cut across educational, vocational, psychological, social, counseling, physical etc. classifications.

In an attempt to satisfy their educational wants children with special needs receive their education separately from children who are without disabilities. This method of educating the children with special needs is termed as segregated education system. The inability of segregated education to meet the total needs of children with special needs has led scholars to advocate and argue in favour of inclusive education. Inclusive education is, therefore, a new concept in special education programmes recommended for the education of children with special needs. Other terms used synonymously are inclusive integration, mainstreaming and open education.

The word 'inclusive, which has its origin in the word from 'include' from a dictionary point of examination means to make somebody or something part of something else (Cambridge International Dictionary of English 1995). From this interpretation, inclusive education for special needs children will therefore, mean the inclusion of special needs children in the educational programme designed for children without special needs or disabilities. Differently stated, it involves the full placement of children with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities in regular classrooms where children without



disabilities are educated.

From a professional point of scrutiny, the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (2002) as cited in Okobah (2007) defines inclusive education as:

*A programme for all children and young people with or without disabilities or difficulties learning together in ordinary pre-primary provisions, schools, colleges and universities with appropriate netw.37).*

Similarly, the Individual with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 equally defines inclusive education as students with disabilities learning in the same classroom as their peers without disabilities even though their educational goals may be different. The Act further notes that inclusion of special needs children in schools goes beyond simple placement of students with disabilities into the classroom but also include to what extent the students are participating in classroom activities and assignment. Kochlar, West and Taymans (2000) equally stated that inclusion in special education means that schools, classes and activities are scheduled for students with disabilities so that opportunities for their participation are maximized.

The use of 'inclusive education' started in the 1970's. Special education practitioners unanimously adopted its usage at a world conference on special education. The principle underlying the adoption is the belief that when special needs children are allowed to be educated with their peers without special needs it gives room for an all-round development in the areas of education, vocation, and socio-personal endeavours.

The goal of inclusive education as rightly observed by Knight (1999) is not to erase differences in children but to enable all children to belong to the same educational community. When inclusive education is properly and fully implemented, Giorcelli (1993) listed the following as its principles:

- appropriate age and grade placements;
- no special classes or schools;
- cooperative learning practiced;
- special education support given to regular education; and
- collaborative efforts needed to provide service to all who need them.

### **RATIONALE FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

A number of factors necessitated the adoption of inclusive education. These include:

- the failure of segregated education to properly prepare special needs children for community life;
- the failure of segregated education to improve academic performance of children with special needs.
- the world itself is an inclusive community wherein people with diverse gender, race, colour, religion, culture, belief and so on relate together;
- the need to equalize educational opportunities for all children irrespective of their nature of disabilities.

### **BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

The implementation of inclusive education system as against segregated education system has a number of advantages. These include the fact that it:

- encourages students without disabilities to accept and tolerate children with special needs;
- improve the sociability of children with special needs;
- reduces the cost of providing separate education for children with and without special needs;
- eliminates or reduces social stigma associated with people with special needs;
- provides an all-round development of the child with and without special needs; and
- enables children without special needs develop positive attitude towards people with handicapping conditions.

### **PROBLEMS HINDERING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

A number of factors hinder the full implementation of the inclusive education programme. These include:

- difficulties encountered in the process of providing infrastructural materials and other needs of special needs children;
- designing the school environment to meet the needs of children with and without special needs;
- controversies amongst protagonists and antagonists of inclusive and segregated systems of education;
- societal attitude towards the change from segregated to

inclusive system of education;

- employment of other professionals to meet the demands of inclusive education;
- training and retraining of teachers to acquire skills and knowledge necessary for an inclusive type of education;
- Overpopulation of children in classroom.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The discussion above justifies the adoption of inclusive education for children with special needs. The challenges facing its implementation, however, require prompt attention if its goal is to be maximally-attained.

Consequently, government and non-governmental agencies should ensure that:

- students are not over-populated in the name of implementing inclusive education programme;
- adequate number of special educators that will cater for all the categories of special needs children are employed;
- facilities/equipment for the special education programme should be locally and internationally provided; and
- enlightenment programme in the electronic and print media on inclusive education programme, should be organized.

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