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Attitudes towards inclusive physical education: A preservice teacher perspective

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Physical Education (PE) is a unique learning environment that is often overlooked in research surrounding inclusive education. Teacher attitudes towards inclusive PE are critical to promoting positive learning experiences, as attitudes have been shown to drive intentions which lead to actual behaviours. The present study aimed to explore preservice teacher perspectives towards inclusion based on preservice teacher age, gender, and stream (age of the students) using the *Attitudes Towards Inclusive Physical Education* (ATIFE) questionnaire (Meier & Ruin, 2019). Participants (N = 167; 71.9% age 18-25, 76% female) were recruited from multiple Universities in southwestern Ontario, and were enrolled in either their first or second year of a preservice teacher training program. Based on the ATIFE questionnaire, attitudes were divided into wide (favourable) and narrow (unfavourable) perspectives towards inclusion. Multiple regression results demonstrated that attitudes towards inclusion were more favourable among males ($B = -.245$, $p = .036$, adjusted $R^2 = .020$) and preservice teachers who were in a stream oriented towards younger students (ages 4-11; $B = -.107$, $p = .004$, adjusted $R^2 = .045$), while preservice teacher age was not a significant predictor of attitudes. The findings provide further evidence for the importance of inclusion-based classes and experiences during preservice training programs to foster positive attitudes towards inclusion as teachers move into careers. There remains a need to identify which aspect of the preservice training program may have the largest impact on the development on positive attitudes towards inclusive PE.