

The slide features a black background with two tilted rectangular boxes. The top box is yellow and contains the title 'Preparing the Child and Family for Inclusive Education' in bold black text. The bottom box is orange and contains the name 'Dr Bob Jackson' and the website 'www.include.com.au' in black text. On the left side, there is a logo for 'Include' with the tagline 'inclusion through skills development' and the website 'www.include.com.au' in green text. At the bottom left, the date '29/8/18' is displayed, and at the bottom right, the text 'R. Jackson www.include.com.au' is shown.

Preparing the Child and Family for Inclusive Education

Dr Bob Jackson
www.include.com.au

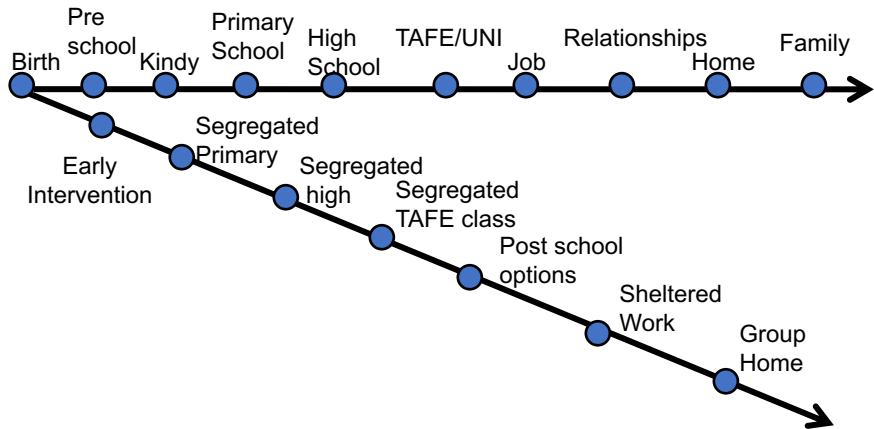
Include
inclusion through skills development
www.include.com.au

29/8/18 R. Jackson www.include.com.au

Preparing families

- To prepare families for inclusion, they will need to have a clear idea of 'why include?'
 - The vision: What would the ideal look like for their child at the end of primary school? At the end of high school? What is most likely to achieve this?
 - The research evidence.
 - The UN and local legislation on the rights of the child.

TWO VISIONS OF THE FUTURE An Ordinary Life, or A Segregated Life



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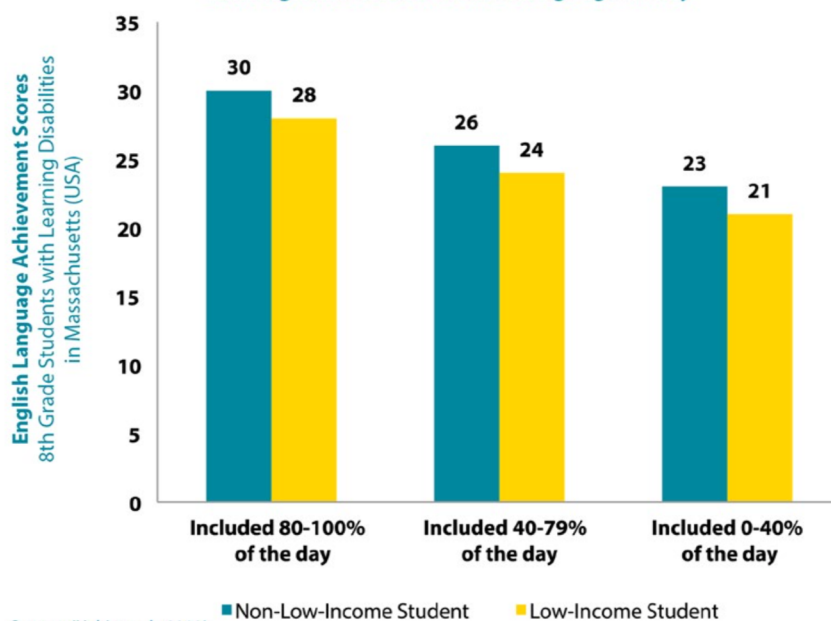
Preparing families – Evidence for Inclusion

- History has taught us that segregated education normally leads to a segregated life.
- We now have 5 decades of research comparing segregation to inclusion:
 - Children with disability do better academically and socially.
 - The more they are included, the better they do – 100% is better than 50% is better than 20%.
 - Pulling out for special classes is usually detrimental academically and socially.
 - The learning of the other students is not harmed by children with disability sharing the class, and their attitudes are better.
 - In the most inclusive schools the academic performance of ALL students goes up as teachers become better at teaching to diversity.

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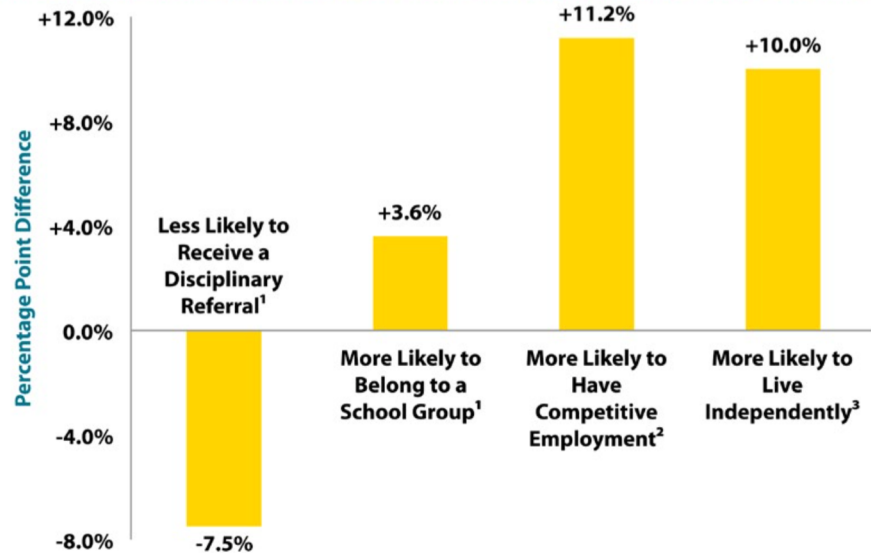
Students with disabilities who spend more of their school day in inclusive settings earn higher scores on tests of language ability



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Source: (Hehir et al., 2012)

The benefits of inclusion for students with disabilities extend beyond academics



Source: (Marder et al., 2003; Wagner et al., 1993)

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United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with a Disability (CRPD)

- General Comment number 4 (2016)
- Section 10:
 - Inclusion in education is a *fundamental human right of all learners. The rights of the family are subordinate to the rights of the child.*
- Section 11:
 - *Exclusion* –when child is prevented from education in any form.
 - *Segregation*- separate schools, units or classes are segregation.
 - *Integration* – Placing child in mainstream class without adaptation. E.g. with a teacher aide. It is NOT inclusion.
 - *Inclusion*. Participation in the same lessons and school activities with peers, adapted as necessary. Requires a whole system approach.

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The vision

- Having a clear vision of the ideal life for the child as a teenager, young adult and older person is key.
- Every family that I know that has achieved an included life has had a clear vision.
- It is the measure against which all advice can be assessed:
 - Will following this advice make my vision more or less likely to be achieved?
 - If I follow this advice, what will my child's life look like in 2 years, 10 years?

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Preparing the child

Beginning School or Preschool

- Teachers and Principals will know less about disability/specific syndromes than you in most cases. They will however know the societal stereotypes.
 - Hence you may be seen as a bit threatening.
 - Your child may be a cause for them to be uncertain, even scared because of the societal stereotypes.
 - However most are willing to be inclusive if they feel that they are being supported and they will get support.
 - We have an historical habit of treating children with a disability differently and in segregated settings. This habit is ingrained and will be seen as 'right' by many/most.

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Preparing the child

Beginning School or Preschool

- Determine what supports there are in the school or preschool environment.
What can you contribute as a parent?
- Get a feel for the welcome you have been receiving. Inclusion depends on *will* and *skill*. Is the *will* there in the school for inclusion? If not, real inclusion is likely to be hard to achieve.
- Is it possible to build a better partnership with the school? Would a better partnership be possible with a different school?

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Preparing the child

Beginning School or Preschool

- Organise visits to the classroom(s) where the child is likely to be going.
- Ask for the key skills that will be required in the main school and the child's future classroom. Start teaching those skills if your child has not got them. This will make the transition easier but *the child does not have to have certain skills in order to be included*.
- Skills likely to be helpful are:
 - Following instructions.
 - Working in groups. Sharing, taking turns.
 - Using scissors, glue, paint.
 - Staying in a set area.
 - Sitting on a mat looking at a board/teacher.
 - Cooperating on a task with another child/children.
 - Academic skills e.g. alphabet, numbers.
 - Reasonable noise level.

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Preparing the child

Beginning School or Preschool

- **Prepare a booklet** "Introducing Mary". We must get across the fact that 'Mary' is a **child first** with an individual personality, a range of strengths and similar needs to other children. In addition she will need some specific attention to some areas due to particular needs, but she is a child first who needs to belong.
- Some suggestions for an 'introductory book'
 - Picture of your child on the front.
 - If it works for you, write it in first person as though your child is talking.
 - Introduce your child as you might introduce yourself to someone at a social gathering with whom you have become friendly. For example:
 - Family background, facts about your child and where you live etc.
 - Interests, important prior events in your child's life.
 - Areas of particular need for assistance.
 - Likes, dislikes, things to avoid etc.
 - Consider making a film or PowerPoint presentation if you are able. This can be left with the teachers to see and could also be an aide in introducing the child to class peers.

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Hi, my name is Jesse

- Some people think it's spelled Jessie, with an "i", short for Jessica, but...
- It's just Jesse...
Jesse Louise Makley



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Preparing the child

Transitioning to the next class

- Find out who the next year's teacher is. If the Principal is supportive he/she will have thought this through and arranged a teacher already at the school. (Not always possible).
- Meet the new teacher and give him/her the 'introductory book'.
- Ask what you can do to help to prepare your child for next year.
- Ask the teacher for advice on how to teach particular skills (teachers love to be asked for advice).
- Arrange for your current teacher, yourself and the new teacher to meet and discuss broad arrangements for next year.

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High School

- For all parents and children, transition to high school is scary
 - Over 1000 students
 - Multiple teachers
 - Moving from lesson to lesson
 - Different peer group to a large extent
 - Concurrent with hormonal and life changing developments – child to adult, dependence to independence, parental control to self control.
- Benefits
 - Range of teachers, some of whom will be supportive.
 - Likely that some teachers will really 'get it' and be innovative and influential on their peers.
 - Not stuck with a poor teacher for too long each day.
 - Always some students with maturity and caring who can be called on to help include.

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Be careful what you ask for ...

... or you might just get it.

- Every time that you ask for something 'special', you are moving away from the ordinary. E.g.:
 - An aide permanently attached to the student
 - Therapy sessions
 - Special programs
 - Separate curriculum
 - Time off for appointments

All of these are likely to lead to a weaker inclusion, even though there may be other benefits (in most cases, the losses are greater than any gains)

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Advice from families down the path ...

- **Make the least dangerous assumption.** You and your child are surrounded from birth with low expectations about possible life outcomes. These expectations tend to hold your child and you back. *Better to set a high expectation and fail to meet it than to set and meet a low expectation.* For example, if your child can't talk, the safest assumption is that he or she understands everything around them.
- **Positive works much better than negative:** With you, your child, the school, the government etc. (You may want to take revenge for real injustices --- don't).

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Advocacy

- It is likely that you will experience problems because:
 - The education system has been developed when the diversity in the classrooms was small.
 - The education system is normally working from the medical model: The 'problem' is within the student (i.e. the disability). They need to learn how to 'fit in'.
 - Teachers often have had no training or experience in teaching to diversity.
 - There is a widespread (incorrect) belief that 'students with special needs' are best taught in specialist segregated settings.

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Human Nature

- People respond better to positivity than negativity.
- *Everyone* can be influenced. We need to work out how.
- People normally change their position for emotional reasons rather than being persuaded by 'facts'.
- People can be inspired to be different.
- Public praise is extremely powerful in framing a person as a supporter of some position.
- Principals and teachers love to be asked for advice.

This means that we should only go the negative/forcing route as a last resort -- when positives have failed.

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Getting Organised- Strategies

- Look to your vision. What is the key outcome(s) that you are after here?
- Big fish and little fish: What can't I compromise on and what might I trade off? Knowing this beforehand means that you will always come across as clear, committed and flexible.
- Be prepared for transitions months or years in advance – home to school; class to class; primary to secondary; school to work; home living to independent living.

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Partnerships

- Inclusion works best when there are partnerships between key people: parents and principal; parents and teacher; parents and aide; parents and support worker; principal and teacher; teacher and aide; parents to other parents etc.
- Always look for opportunities to build and strengthen partnerships.
 - Helping out
 - Praising
 - Asking for advice
 - Avoiding criticizing small problems
 - Agreeing to minor issues as long as big picture is safe.

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Praising

- The most powerful way of praising is to WRITE TO THEIR BOSS.
 - Principals for teachers
 - Regional director for principals.
 - CEOs for agency staff
 - Ministers for departments
 - Press for Agencies or systems
- Praising to their boss 'outs them' as being supporters and makes it harder for them to retreat in future.
- It builds up your reputation so that if you do have to be critical in future, you are more likely to be listened to as a positive person.
- You avoid being classified as a 'complainer'.

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Summary

- Preparing families
 - Be aware of the push to segregate.
 - Prepare a vision
 - Read the research
 - Know the law.
- Preparing children
 - Determine priorities.
 - Build partnerships with the school.
 - Be strategic: Big fish and little fish.
 - Reward good inclusion by writing.

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