

When Innovation Meets Compassion: Reimagining Preschool Inclusion

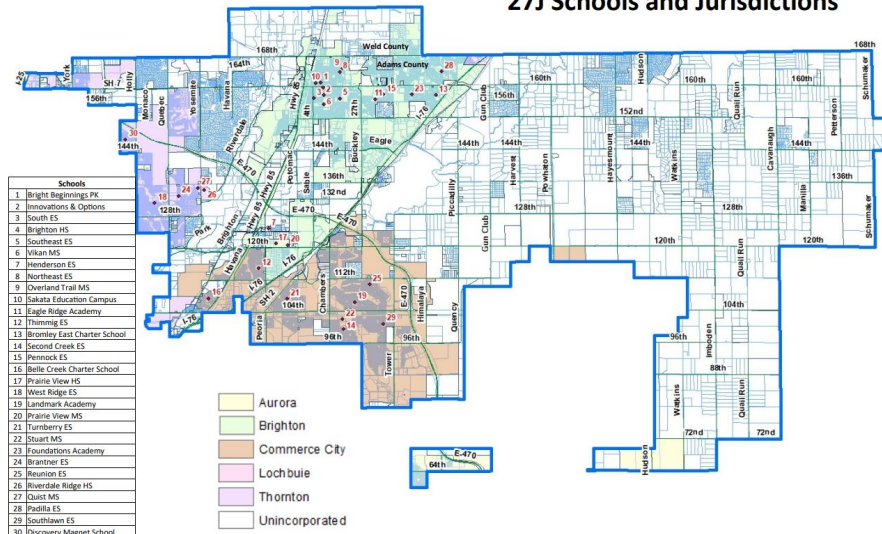
Kristin L. Schrader, PhD, NCSP, LP
Shay Markle, OTR/L, DSc
Jill Sprafke, M.Ed, ECSE
Barb Umsted, MS, CCC-SLP



In partnership with our families and the community, 27J empowers every student today to take control of their future tomorrow.

- Serving portions of Adams & Weld counties - Brighton, Thornton, Commerce City and unincorporated Adams County (small portion of Aurora and Lochbuie)
- * • Geographically - 215 square miles

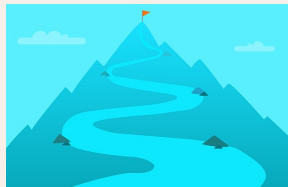
27J Schools and Jurisdictions



- **27J Growth**
 - 4th highest district in Colorado for growth in enrollment from 2013-2023
 - 38% = 6,000 students
 - Total enrollment 17,000
- **Funding**
 - 175th of 178th for funding in 2022
- **Growth in students requiring intensive preschool programming**
 - Approximately 200% growth in 9 years
 - Refined social communication indicators

Where it all began...

- **The challenge**
 - Increase in significantly impacted students with autism and global development delays
- **Teacher and classroom impact**
 - Fully inclusive model was not meeting the needs of our most impacted students
 - Not all teachers equipped with training to meet the needs of these students
 - Levels of differentiation required
 - Insufficient paraprofessional staff
- **The result**
 - High teacher stress
 - Reactive instructional practices



The Development

- **Invested group of educators and administration**
 - Identify the barriers
 - Collaborate to develop student centered programming options
- **Financial & personnel impacts**
 - Reallocating resources in a different way
 - Cost neutral
- **Student centered**
 - Quality programming
 - Positive outcomes for all students
- **Collective understanding of the purpose**
 - Student learning and outcomes
 - Define the type of learner appropriate for this programming



Creativity, risk and flexibility!

The Progression of Intensive Flex

- **Plan-Do-Study-Act**
 - Ongoing
 - Responsive to the needs of our community
 - Best version of the program (for now)
- **Adult belief systems and values**
 - Strengths-based mindset (students & staff)
 - High expectations for students
- **Recruiting and retaining staff**
 - The right people
 - The right conditions
- **Integrity of programming**
 - Social-communication
 - Meaningful inclusion

Every day is a new
opportunity to be better
than you were yesterday.
Focus on growth, not
perfection.

Progress is the real
success.



Components of the Intensive Flex program

- **Teams of teachers working together to meet needs of all students**
 - ECSE IF specialist and a UPK/ECSE/ECE teacher(s)
 - Highly trained, full time paraprofessionals
 - Multiple classrooms (2-3) to share instructional ownership for all students
- **Differentiated curriculum and instructional materials**
 - Collaborative planning
 - Instructional flexibility to meet the needs of students
- **Dedicated related service providers (OT, SLP, mental health)**
 - Dedicated support equipment, materials, and space
 - AAC, sensory, SEL materials
- **Specialized administration for support and capacity building**
 - Understand the needs of student and mission of program

The IF Classroom Structure

- **Multiple classrooms**
 - Share instructional ownership for all students
- **Most common structure:**
 - 2 ECSE
 - 5 paraprofessionals
 - 2 classrooms share both IF and UPK students
- **Intensive Flex (IF) Students**
 - Most significantly impacted students
 - Disabilities that are rooted in social-communication needs
 - **Other students with disabilities continue to receive services in a typical integrated classroom**



Strengths-based approach & mindset

- ◆ All students deserve meaningful inclusion
- ◆ All students have strengths and can learn
- ◆ All behavior is communication of a need
- ◆ All communication can be honored
- ◆ "Simple" successes are to be celebrated
- ◆ All staff have strengths and can learn
- ◆ No one person has all the answers, **it's ok to not know**
- ◆ Kids' needs are complex and driven by multiple factors



Strengths-based approach & mindset

- ◆ All families deserve a strengths-based approach

IEP Outline & Note-Catcher

<u>Strengths</u> "He can..."	<u>Needs</u> → "He can't yet..."	<u>Skills To be Taught</u> "We will teach...."	<u>Accommodations</u> "In class, we will..."

Embedding Evidence-Based Practices

Indicators of High-Quality Inclusive Environments

- ☐ Generalized use of skills across the day
- ☐ Teaching IEP goals, independence, and engagement throughout the day
- ☐ Intensity = about the frequency of learning opportunities throughout the day
- ☐ All children have multiple opportunities to interact with peers

Evidence-based practices for inclusion

1. Naturalistic teaching
2. Embedded instruction
3. Direct instruction
4. Milieu teaching
5. Peer-mediated interventions
6. Activity-based instruction
7. Curriculum



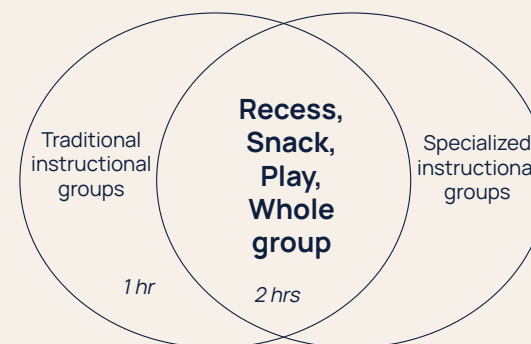
The National Professional Development Center on Autism

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Augmentative & Alternative Communication | 15. Naturalistic Intervention |
| 2. Antecedent-Based Interventions | 16. Peer-Based Instruction & Intervention |
| 3. Ayres Sensory Integration® | 17. Parent-Implemented Intervention |
| 4. Behavioral Momentum Intervention | 18. Prompting |
| 5. Cognitive Behavioral/Instructional Strategies | 19. Reinforcement |
| 6. Direct Instruction | 20. Response Interruption & Redirection |
| 7. Differential Reinforcement | 21. Self-Management |
| 8. Discrete Trial Training | 22. Social Narratives |
| 9. Exercise & Movement | 23. Social Skills Training |
| 10. Extinction | 24. Task Analysis |
| 11. Functional Behavioral Assessment | 25. Technology-Aided Instruction & Intervention |
| 12. Functional Communication Training | 26. Time Delay |
| 13. Modeling | 27. Video Modeling |
| 14. Music-Mediated Intervention | 28. Visual Supports |

National Professional Development Center on Autism (Oct 2024). *Evidence-Based Practices*. <https://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/ebps/>

Innovative Structure for Automatic & Meaningful Inclusion

- Inclusion for minimum of 50% of day
- Staff act as **one team** and go where they are needed
- Integration time is increased as students show readiness

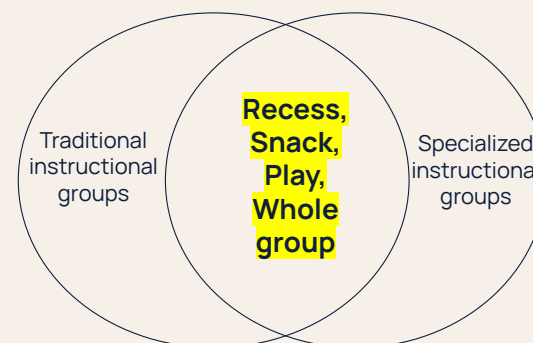


Example of supports embedded for increasing integrated time



Inclusion - Naturalistic opportunities + direct instruction

- High frequency of interactions between students with disabilities and NT peers
- NT peers explicitly taught about differences and how to communicate & play with their peers with disabilities



Integrated experiences Snack



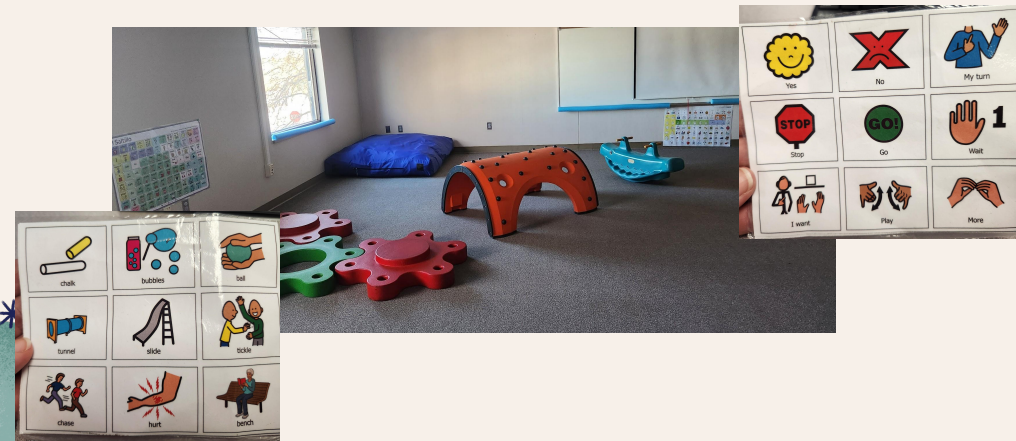
Integrated experiences - Play



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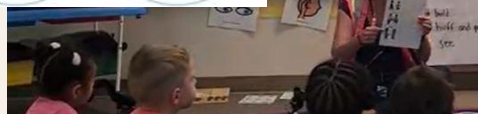
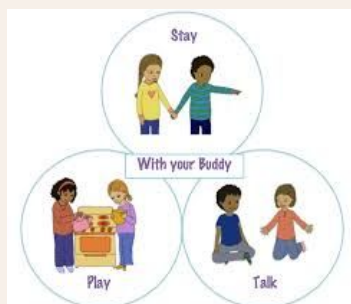
Integrated experiences - Whole group instruction



Integration - Embedded strategies for all



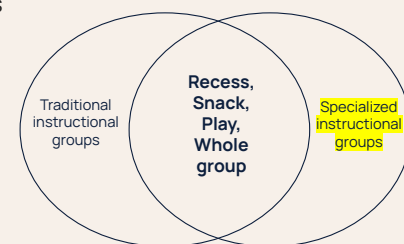
Inclusion - Direct instruction of peers



Increasing Engagement & Explicit Skill Development

Whole & small group instruction

- Students separated into two classrooms - neurotypical peers in one classroom, students with disabilities in another
- Working from the same curricula, but with different focuses
- Focus on pre-academic instruction, as well as explicit social-communication instruction
- Use of discrete trial training and workbasket systems for explicit skill development and generalizing independence
- Embedded scaffolded instruction and supportive strategies to increase participation/engagement in teacher-directed activities



IF and UPK partner classrooms



- Students move between the 2 classroom for instruction, play, and snack
- UPK classroom designed to meet the needs of both UPK and IF students
- Communication, sensory, and seating options are available in both classrooms



Specialized instruction in a small group setting



1. Separate instructional areas
2. Decreased clutter
3. Seating options
4. Sensory options
5. Smaller spaces

