AKTYAJIЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ ДОШКІЛЬНОЇ ОСВІТИ: ТЕ<mark>ОРІЯ ТА</mark> ПРАКТИКА

ПЕДАГОГІЧНИЙ АЛЬМАНАХ «АКТУАЛЬНІ ПІРОБЛІЕМІИ ДОШКІЛЬНОЇ ОСВІТИ: ТЕОРІЯ ТА ПІРАКТИКА»

МАТЕРІАЛИ

IV Всеукраїнської конференції здобувачів вищої освіти і молодих учених

(5 листопада 2024 року)



МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ Державний заклад «ПІВДЕННОУКРАЇНСЬКИЙ НАЦІОНАЛЬНИЙ ПЕДАГОГІЧНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ імені К. Д. УШИНСЬКОГО»

ФАКУЛЬТЕТ ДОШКІЛЬНОЇ ПЕДАГОГІКИ ТА ПСИХОЛОГІЇ КАФЕДРА СІМЕЙНОЇ ТА СПЕЦІАЛЬНОЇ ПЕДАГОГІКИ І ПСИХОЛОГІЇ

Збірник матеріалів IV Всеукраїнської конференції здобувачів вищої освіти і молодих учених

АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ ДОШКІЛЬНОЇ ОСВІТИ: ТЕОРІЯ ТА ПРАКТИКА

Випуск 4 5 листопада 2024 року

Одеса Видавництво ТОВ «Лерадрук» 2024 рік Рекомендовано до друку Вченою радою університету Державного закладу «Південноукраїнський національний педагогічний університет імені К.Д. Ушинського».

Педагогічний альманах «Актуальні проблеми дошкільної освіти: теорія та практика»: збірник матеріалів IV Всеукраїнської конференції здобувачів вищої освіти і молодих учених (5 листопада 2024 року). Одеса: Видавництво ТОВ «Лерадрук», 2024. Вип. IV. 301 с.

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Відповідальність за зміст, точність цитат, прізвищ і представлених даних несе автор.

Технічне редагування матеріалів збірника – О.І. Кисельова.

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FEATURES OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

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Regardless of a child's capability, cognitive level, or background, they have the right to a fair education. This means having access to a learning environment which is inclusive and appreciates a child's individual characteristics, rather than discriminating against them. Individuality is something to be celebrated, especially in nursery and school when children are finding their own identity. No two children are the same, and this should never be an issue. Every child should be supported and valued in their own right to ensure they have confidence in their own ability. This puts them in good stead for future life, as they harness self acceptance and good self esteem. It is the responsibility of a nursery practitioner to ensure each child is treated equally and there are certain methods they can put in place to do this [2].

In this blog post we'll identify what inclusive practice means and how teachers can incorporate this into the classroom.

Inclusive practice ensures each child is treated fairly and with respect. By having access to educational content, each child is able to fully participate in their own learning which provides them with the skills and resources for later life. The approach understands that every child is unique and this affects their readiness and ability to learn. As a result, teaching methods and activities should be structured to accommodate this. By putting children's needs at the forefront, it increases the likelihood that they will participate in activities as they will be motivated to learn. If

activities are tailored to their own capabilities, they will feel supported and inspired to get involved [1].

Inclusive practice has lots of benefits which extend beyond the learning of the child. Having knowledge of these principles also supports the professional development of teachers, and improves the experience for parents.

Benefits of an Inclusive Classroom

- Pupils learn the significance of diversity and equality.
- Students develop empathy and sensitivity to people who are different from them.
 - It improves a child's confidence.
- It provides teachers with lots of creative ways to include problem-solving and teamwork in their lessons.
- It provides parental confidence that their children will be accepted and learn in a safe space that acknowledges their individual needs [5].

By adopting these inclusive practices you can demonstrate to children and parents that you are striving for equality. This encourages them to follow the same principles as you work towards creating a better learning environment where no child feels embarrassed to be «different».

An inclusive classroom is one where differences are valued and celebrated. For both students and teachers it is important they feel comfortable as this enhances their overall experience at school. It also helps to create an environment which is safe and welcoming so students want to come to school everyday.

In turn, this helps with attachment issues which can be a problem at such an early and sensitive age. The principles below help nursery practitioners and nursery school owners to create an environment which celebrates student diversity.

- Leadership- A strong leadership team who believe in inclusive practice and value its importance. This is a great way to lay the base for an inclusive school.
- School climate and structure- Educators must ensure that all children feel included and as though they are valued members of the community. This extends to the school nurturing relation-

ships between students and their families.

• Family and Community involvement- This could include hosting events for family members or encouraging members of the wider community to come and volunteer.

When it comes to teaching, it is important lesson plans are structured to meet the needs of different children. For example, if a child has ADHD, you might shorten the length of tasks and use frequent breaks to sustain their attention. This shows how you're accommodating for their different learning styles and tailoring the task at hand to suit. Rather than changing the task altogether, you have used your skillset to adapt it instead. This helps children feel less «different» as they are still doing the same task as the rest of the children, they're just approaching it in a different way. As a nursery practitioner, it's important you understand the importance of creating an inclusive classroom environment and embrace each child as an individual. Throughout your career, you are constantly learning and developing new and improved ways to approach teaching practices [3].

We've put together an «inclusive practice checklist» to help you incorporate these principles into your everyday teaching. This ensures all children receive equal opportunities despite their level of learning and capabilities. Take time to reflect on your current teaching methods. From the way you plan lessons, to how you interact with children, to what resources you choose, there will always be a reason behind each choice.

Try to think of it from a student's point of view and make sure resources are equal and accessible for each student. You should also think about any opinions you hold for certain people or groups of people. Again this could be on a subconscious level so you might have to dig a little deeper. An example of this would be a child who reminds you of your own child. Subconsciously, this might lead you to having an affinity for them which is not fair teaching. Similarly, you might have a prejudice towards a different child if they remind you of a previous student you have taught.

Take time to consider these things and identify whether they are inclusive or disadvantageous to a child's learning. Inclusive

practice ensures that each child can flourish in their education regardless of their capabilities and daily struggles. To make this possible, its important teachers practice a range of teaching methods to cater for different ways of learning. It's not about treating everybody the same, but instead meeting individual needs and preferences.

By being flexible with your teaching methods, you are giving each child the opportunity to learn and to engage in an activity that plays to their strengths. You can incorporate inclusive practices into your classroom by providing a range of learning set ups. This includes children working in pairs, groups or individually, working on computers or out of books, creative writing, physical activities and musical activities [4].

Children will usually enjoy one particular way of working over another so it's important you embrace variety and provide as many opportunities as possible to support their learning. Similar to the point above, it's important the content you teach is flexible and adapted to different ways of learning. This might mean you need to be prepared for different situations and have the resources readily available should you need to alter your approach. For example, if a child is a visual learner, consider how you can adapt written content to suit this way of learning. Instead of strictly sticking to text heavy content, and running the risk of alienating their learning preference, is there a way you can present this information in an infographic for example?

This increases the likelihood that the child will succeed in this particular subject as you're adapting the content into a format they understand. You should also strengthen your point about diversity by using examples. For instance, you could include a disabled child in one of your exercises. It's important you teach students about disabilities, different cultures, race, and religion as these are the foundation blocks for existing in wider society [1].

From an early age, children should be aware of these different topics as it strengthens their understanding and makes them more accepting of others. If you have a child with additional needs in your class, then it is important you make any necessary adjustments to facilitate their learning. This includes removing or minimising barri-

ers that could hinder their learning experience or that make accessing the learning environment more challenging. For example, if you're planning a sports activity make sure you adapt it for a child who is in a wheelchair. This ensures that they feel included and part of the activity despite their condition. This will improve their confidence and allows them to join in and socialise with other children.

Another example would be supporting a child who is deaf. This could include providing a script for the child if you were watching a video that relied heavily on audio, or sitting the child at the front of the classroom. It's crucial you understand each child's level of learning and any challenges they are facing that could impact their educational development. You can then plan lessons and activities that are appropriate and provide additional support where necessary. This creates an inclusive, safe, and inspiring environment where children genuinely want to attend and learn.

Lots of childcare providers look after children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). A child might be diagnosed with an educational need before they have joined nursery or this might be identified during their learning journey. Early identification of SEND is important to ensure future learning is structured to suit the needs of the child. This makes sure they are supported throughout their development and that all activities are within their capabilities [3].

As a result, each child is assessed on their individual strengths and weaknesses instead of implementing a «blanket» approach that treats each child as though they learn the same way. To create an inclusive learning experience for children with SEND, teachers should ensure teaching is consistent. Whether that's in the classroom or at home, every adult should understand the child's needs and how they can be supported. Take time to share information with parents, and vice versa to ensure a child's learning requirements are being met.

Each child has the right to be heard. This means creating an inclusive classroom where children feel safe and inspired to learn regardless of their capabilities. Individual characteristics should never hinder a child's learning experience, but instead, should be

celebrated. It's important to value what each child can bring to the classroom environment as diversity is key for everyday life. No two students are the same, and these differences create a learning environment which is collaborative and cooperative. This deepens the learning experience for children as by understanding different perspectives it helps broaden their own.

Beyond education, children will come into contact with various cultures and groups of people. It's important they are aware of these differences and are accepting of them as this enables them to thrive outside of the classroom, both professionally and personally.

For teachers, inclusive practices must be implemented from early childhood. By observing children and communicating with parents, you can better understand a child's capabilities and their specific way of learning. You can incorporate this information into your lesson plan and create an inclusive classroom which is accessible for all students.

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