

Inclusion for all An Illusion or a Reality?

Anette Ingsholt

Psychologist, ph.d

E-mail: anette@ingsholt.dk

Inclusion for all

Before 1980

Segregated education at the National centre for blind and partially sighted children

- **Dispensations: From 1960**

1980 : Integration introduced by law in Denmark

Integration: Physical, educational and social

- **A right to be educated in the normal system**
- **Focus on the child**

Inclusion: Educational and social

- **Focus on the “the system”**

Main questions: then – and now

Are all blind children successfully included?

The answer – then and now:

- **Educational inclusion is partly a success**
 - **Focus on books, aids, professional guidance and help**
- **Social inclusion is often a problem**
 - **Failure or partly success in social inclusion**

Analysis of the roots of blindness and severely visual impairment

Social inclusion so difficult to achieve – Why?

- **Necessary to have a close look on the social part of inclusion**
- **Have to look at and analyse situations with social togetherness and at social skills from three different views**

The method:

- **A project: 3 blind children - 4-6 years old - in normal kindergartens**
- **Use of known knowledge**
- **Use of own experience**

Analysis of the roots of blindness and severely visual impairment

The goal:

- 1. To make important barriers visible**
- 2. To discuss the ghostlike aspects of inclusion**
 - To talk about things we seldom talk about**
- 3. To find appropriate interventions**

It turns out to be appropriate to look at:

- 1. Factors in the individual child**
 - at an “I”-level**
- 2. Factors in social interaction and group-processes**
 - at an “I-and-you”-level**
- 3. Factors in the environment**

Four important elements in social inclusion

- 1. The prerequisites for social skill**
- 2. Participation in togetherness with horizontal relations**
- 3. Use of social strategies in order to master group processes in social interaction**
- 4. Development of friendships**

All four elements are difficult to achieve for blind children, in an extent normally expected for children

The prerequisites for social skills

Have to look at the prerequisites for social skills

- **Social skills are based on a fundament of skills from all developmental areas**
 - **Language, emotional, cognitive, social-cognitive, motor, adaptive skills**
- **The consequences of visual Impairment are the reasons why social skills sometimes are so difficult to achieve and in many cases are delayed**
- **The fundament is so difficult to make**

The need of participation in togetherness with horizontal relations

Social skills have to be learnt by experiences of being together

Social skill are learnt in togetherness with horizontal relations

Togetherness with horizontal relations

Togetherness with horizontal relations is characterized by inconstancy, equal terms, symmetry, reciprocity

It means:

All proposals from the children are treated equal

All participants are active

All participants are motivated to participate

Use of social strategies in order to master group processes in social interaction

Need development of strategies in order to enter, establish, maintain social togetherness

- Difficult to decode other's behaviour, to decode intentions, to establish joint attention**
- Learn to use appropriate self-marking behaviour**

Development of friendships

Friendships are developed through social interaction

- **Friendship are based on symmetry in position, respect, reciprocity and trust**
- **Friendships are voluntary**

Best play is seen in equal children

- **Children with the same skills, language, understanding of emotions, common interests**
- **Use of win/win solutions in conflict**

Personal skills

“I”– level

Early intervention

- All developmental areas have to be observed and eventually strengthen
- Ensure confident early vertical relations
- Teach the child to use social strategies
 - Basic rituas as well as e.g. more complicated social strategies
- Work with the self-marking behaviour
 - To know, when it is good to insist, to argue, negotiate, seek compromises etc.

Social skills

“I-and-you”– level

Arrange possibilities to develop, use and exercise social strategies in togetherness with other children

Work with other children in the group

- **Attitudes toward the blind child**
- **Not to feel pity, to comprehend the situation of the blind child, his different way of experience the world, the consequences of the visually impairment**
- **With their ways to help to provide information**
- **With their ways to help, when needed**

Educate the staff in nurseries, kindergartens

- **To observe and analyse group-processes in the group of children**
- **To support the social interaction**

The environment

Accessibility

- Adapt the spaces of activities
 - Fixed places for objects, routes to follow etc.
 - Attention to sounds and noise
 - Materials –play-objects, games in nurseries and kindergarten, should be adapted to the child

Inclusion for all

Always a possibility?

The blind child

- **Talk about the consequences of the visual impairment**
- **Find solutions to activities, where social inclusion is not possible**

The sighted children

- **Work with the children's attitudes toward each other**
 - **Allow them to say, when they want to “exclude” the blind child**
- **Work with attitudes in the adults**

Possibilities to be voluntarily excluded

- **Possibilities to join a segregated culture with children on equal terms**

Inclusion for all

Always a possibility?

Social inclusion starts in nurseries and kindergartens

- **Intervention is a necessity**
- **Professional support**
- **Education of the whole staff around the child**
 - **Have to understand the consequences of the visual impairment**
 - **Need time to work directly with the child, with the other children and with accessibility**

Social inclusion has to be taken seriously of all partners around the child to be a success

Educators, authorities, politicians etc.

Thank you for your attention