

THE ESSENCE AND IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract. This article explores the content, essence, significance, and practical aspects of inclusive education. Inclusive education is a humanistic education system that ensures learning opportunities for children in need of special support alongside their typically developing peers. The article discusses various stages of educational integration (physical, functional, social) and their role in paving the way toward inclusive education. It also addresses the practical experience and efforts of defectologists in Uzbekistan aimed at developing inclusive education. The main idea presented in the article is to create equal opportunities for every child and to transform society into an integrated and humanistic system.

Keywords: inclusive education, educational integration, physical integration, functional integration, social integration, children with special needs, defectological services, equal opportunity, resource teacher, adapted curriculum, humanistic society.

Inclusive education is a type of educational system designed for children and youth with special needs. It is individualized, adaptable based on specific conditions, and grounded in a compassionate approach. This educational process is carried out within institutions where typically developing children study. The term "inclusive" means "to involve," which reflects the concept of integrating children with physical or mental developmental disabilities into the same educational environment as their typically developing peers.

To implement inclusive education effectively, an individual approach is required for each child. Conditions must be adapted based on their specific needs. If necessary, educational programs and lesson plans are partially modified. A child in need of support attends a preschool or school located close to home and in a comfortable setting. At these institutions, the primary work is carried out by the educator or class teacher.

Each preschool or school includes a specially trained resource teacher, who assists and provides guidance to the group educator. Their responsibilities include:

- Providing special teaching aids and equipment;
- Conducting awareness sessions with parents and teachers;
- Making justified modifications to lesson plans and educational programs, if needed;
- Enhancing the qualifications and professional skills of educators;
- Organizing healthcare services and fostering a positive psychological environment.

Inclusive education promotes equality of opportunity. It not only ensures an individualized approach for children with special needs but also fosters social inclusion — enabling everyone in society to find their place while reinforcing social equality, tolerance, and mutual respect. This system:

- Cultivates compassion, empathy, and helpfulness among typically developing children;
- Encourages the acceptance of diverse abilities and needs as a normal part of life;

• Lays the foundation for building an inclusive society where every individual can actively participate in community life.

In practice, inclusive education involves:

- Teachers undergoing special training to tailor instruction to each child's developmental trajectory;
- Introduction of adapted assessment criteria, ensuring fair evaluation of academic outcomes;
- Collaborative work among multidisciplinary teams (psychologists, special educators, speech therapists, resource teachers);
- Adjustment of educational materials in terms of format, volume, and complexity (e.g., audiobooks, large print texts, tactile learning tools).

Placing a child with physical or mental developmental disabilities into a mainstream preschool or school is the first step toward educational integration. There are various forms and levels of educational integration.

In physical integration, the goal is to minimize the physical differences between children with disabilities and their typically developing peers. This may involve establishing special classrooms or departments.

In functional integration, the aim is to reduce functional differences as much as possible. One effective method is to involve children with special needs in music, arts, drama clubs, and sports activities.

Social integration seeks to reduce social barriers by fostering friendships and mutual respect between children with and without disabilities. It also encourages typically developing children to become more empathetic and compassionate.

Society must maintain a respectful attitude toward individuals with disabilities. All provisions of our Constitution apply equally to them. Any form of educational integration contributes to improving the quality of inclusive education. At the heart of inclusive education is the child with a disability, who is provided with comprehensive care and support.

The term "integrated" means something that is unified and inseparable. Every child must be included in the education system. In an integrated society, all individuals have equal rights, and the community becomes more cohesive and humane. Thanks to inclusive education, society itself moves toward becoming an integrated, equal-opportunity society.

In Uzbekistan, the work of defectologists (special education professionals) is also noteworthy. For many years, special classes and groups have been established in general education preschools and schools, and they continue to function successfully. In every district, specialized schools collaborate with students who struggle in mainstream environments, offering targeted support throughout the academic year.

Educational integration is a step-by-step process. It involves teaching children with physical or mental developmental differences alongside their typically developing peers in general education settings. It is carried out through three primary forms:

- Physical integration
- Functional integration
- Social integration

Inclusive education is a humanistic educational system that ensures every child — regardless of their physical or mental development level — has the right to learn under equal conditions. The child is placed at the center of this system, where care is tailored individually, learning environments are adapted, and educational programs are modified when necessary.



The physical, functional, and social forms of educational integration serve as critical stages toward achieving full inclusion. Each form helps the child get closer to their peers, demonstrate their abilities, and participate fully in society.

In Uzbekistan, defectologists, resource teachers, and educators are playing a significant role in developing this direction. Through specialized schools, adapted lessons, and inclusive environments, children with special needs are being given the opportunity to take a rightful place in society.

Thus, inclusive education is not merely an educational model — it is a solid foundation for building a society based on human dignity, equality, and mutual respect.

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