

- ☼ **Name of the study:** Examining the inclusion of students with Intellectual Developmental Disability in Israel, main characteristics and degree of satisfaction among teaching staff, students and their parents
- ☼ **Year:** 2020
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- ☼ **Authors:** Prof. Tali Heiman & Dr. Gilada Avissar
- ☼ **Research Authority:** The Open University of Israel & Beit Berl Academic College

## Abstract

In the past few years there has been growing interest in Israel in examining the implementation of inclusive education and the processes involved. In the 2015-2016 school year, 58% of the students entitled to special education services were mainstreamed in regular schools and regular classes. A little less than 2% of them were diagnosed with Intellectual Developmental Disability (IDD) ranging in degree of support needed from total dependence to little dependence.

This research sought to examine models of mainstreaming and processes of inclusion for students with IDD through the identification of the characteristics of each model and each process. This examination took place among four groups of stakeholders namely, members of the educational staff (i.e., teachers, principals and vice-principals), students with and without IDD and parents (of children with IDD). In addition, this research examined academic, social and behavioral aspects relating to students with IDD; how the different stakeholders perceive the environment in terms of levels of support and degree of responsiveness to needs; the degree of satisfaction with the implementation of inclusive education and the perceptions of the students with typical development towards their classmates with IDD. A questionnaire and an individual interview were used to gather data. The questionnaire contained a few open questions and Likert type scales adapted from six different reliable instruments. The data gathered via interviews enriched the database.

The participating population included all the students known to both the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Education as having IDD and as studying in inclusive settings namely, regular schools and regular classes in the Jewish sector in Israel (N=292 students in 207 inclusive schools); parents of students with IDD; educational staff from these schools and students with typical development who study in inclusive classes. Much effort was put into recruiting

participants for this research, and the actual participants represent all four groups of stakeholders.

Main findings were: students with IDD are fully and/or partially mainstreamed on an individual basis or they attend fully inclusive schools; more factors promoting mainstreaming were found than factors hindering it; two factors were named by the educational staff to be most important: the relationship with the family of the students with IDD and the style and degree of the schools' teamwork; parents and school staff agree on the importance of the schools' professional development activities.

In addition, the data gathered point very clearly to the importance attributed to social aspects of inclusive education. A positive correlation was found between teachers' perceptions of the benefits of inclusion for the students with IDD and their perception of the students' level of loneliness and social ability; similar correlations were found among the parents of students with IDD; being part of a regular class is perceived by the participating parents as an opportunity for social integration; students with IDD are perceived by their peers, especially in the lower grades, to be an integral part of the class and, at the same time, it is understood they might need extra help.

This research has both theoretical and practical importance. The findings shed light on the implementation of inclusive measures for students with IDD and thus enrich the existing theoretical knowledge base. In addition, these findings may assist in understanding the links between academic inclusion and social and behavioral inclusion for students with and without disabilities and the links between school staff and parents of students with disabilities. It is assumed that these findings may have a bearing on inclusive education for children with other special needs that affect their schooling.

**Key words:** Mainstreaming, inclusion, students with and without Intellectual Developmental Disability, socio-emotional aspect, parents, educational staff.



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