INCLUSION WITHOUT LIMITS:
PARENT, TEACHER, AND STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

Erin and Stephanie Faso
OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION

• Introduction of Erin and Stephanie
• Overview of Inclusion
• Stephanie’s “life story”
• Stephanie’s inclusion history
• Stephanie’s education
• Stephanie’s perception on inclusion/integration
• Questions
ERIN

- Teacher for Cambrian School District for 29 years
  - General Education of various grade levels with students mainstreamed and included
  - Special Education for Extended School Year
- Single mother of Stephanie and Summer
  - Summer
    - Learning disabilities, ADHD, and Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome
    - Special Education Teacher for Moreland School District
  - Stephanie
    - Severe cerebral palsy
    - I chose to include Stephanie as much as possible in order to prepare her for her future
STEPHANIE

• Traumatic birth caused brain damage
• Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome
• Began early intervention at 3 months
• Diagnosed with cerebral palsy at 22 months
• Other related health problems
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

• “Disability” is the largest minority worldwide.
• Approximately 10% of children between three and thirteen years of age receive special education services in school.
• Having a disability can be a greater obstacle to education than being poor.
• Children with disabilities, specifically Latino/a and other ethnic minorities are among the most marginalized populations.
INCLUSION IS THE LAW

• Individuals with Disabilities in Education ACT (IDEA) says that children who receive special education services should learn in the “least restrictive environment”.

• Article 24 of the United Nations Conversion on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities declares that: “States Parties recognize the rights for persons with disabilities to education... State Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels... and ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory... education on the basis of disability.”
OVERVIEW OF INCLUSION

• Inclusion should be tailored for each child, but the needs of the child can change over time.

• According to *Inclusion Works* by the California Department of Education (2009), “The biggest barrier to including a child with disabilities or other special needs seems to be fear— not of children with special needs but *for* the children.” (hurting them, not knowing how to meet their needs, perception of the parents...)
BENEFITS OF INCLUSION

• As Norman Kunc, a disability rights advocate, has said so eloquently, “When inclusive education is fully embraced, we abandon the idea that children have to become ‘normal’ in order to contribute to the world. Instead, we search for and nourish the gifts that are inherent in all people. We begin to look beyond typical ways of becoming valued members of the community and, in doing so, begin to realize the achievable goal of providing all children with an authentic sense of belonging.” (N. Kunc, “The Need to Belong,” 25-39.)

• Students with disabilities do better when in a setting where more is expected of them. We know from the “Pygmalion in the Classroom” experiments that when teachers expect more from students their achievement goes up, and the reverse is true as well.
  • High expectations from teachers allows children to learn important academic and social skills....
BENEFITS OF INCLUSION

• Children with disabilities’ brains develop stronger neural connections in a richer learning environment.

• All children develop a positive understanding of themselves and others
  • Commonalities
  • Appreciate diversity
  • Team leaders
  • Friendships form

• Students with differing abilities add diversity and strengths to the general education classroom.
BENEFITS OF INCLUSION

• Reduces stigma
• Prepares child for the diversity of the “real world”
• Helps the child learn to navigate with peer interactions, in society, and in the community
INCLUSION IN THE CLASSROOM

• Inclusion can have different looks
  • Pull-in or push-out
  • Specific classrooms or all classroom (rotate)
  • On included child or a group of children
  • Buddy system
    • Classes
    • Specific students
  • Special education teacher and/or support staff can help general education students (small groups)
  • Should be flexible, fluid, and based on each child’s individual needs
TIPS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS-INCLUSION IS JUST “GOOD” TEACHING

- Must see all students as an asset, not a ”burden”
- Identify strengths
  - The book *Neurodiversity in the Classroom* by Thomas Armstrong provides a 165-item checklist of positive abilities can be used to assess the child’s capabilities
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction benefit all students
- Be flexible with teaching/learning strategies
- Keep eyes and ears open in order to handle any problem in a timely manner
- Don’t hesitate to ask for needed information, help, and/or support
WORKING AS A TEAM

• Parents, teachers, other professionals, and child must work together to support the success of the child
• Set-up with child’s success in mind
• Flexibility
• Communication
• Positive attitude
INCLUSION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

• Inclusion Works: Creating Child Care Programs That Promote Belonging for Children with Special Needs (California Department of Education, 2009)
STEPHANIE’S DIAGNOSES

• Severe athetoid cerebral palsy
  • Brain damage caused at birth
  • Health problems
  • Grim prognosis
  • Diagnosed at 22 months
• Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome
STEPHANIE’S EARLY INTERVENTION

• Began Early Intervention at 3 months
  • Physical and Occupational Therapies at California Children’s Services (CCS)
  • Early Intervention at Community Association for the Retarded (CAR)
  • Santa Clara County Office of Education Early Intervention
    • Orthopedic Impairments
    • Chandler Tripp School
    • 18 months
    • Head Start
STEPHANIE’S COMMUNICATION DEVICE

- Special Technology Center at 6 months
- Total communication
- First speech device at 18 months
- Various speech devices
- Began to be “fluent” in 4th grade
- Currently uses Accent 1400 by Prentke Romich Company
INCLUSION IN THE COMMUNITY

- Inclusion in community
  - Went wherever I went in the community
  - Church and religious education
  - Girl Scouts
  - Children’s Musical Theater, San Jose
  - San Jose Parks and Recreation (adaptive)
    - Ice skating and hockey
    - Bowling
    - Sports camp
    - Swimming
STEFHANIE’S EDUCATION

• Attended county special day class for orthopedically impaired at Blackford Elementary School
  • Included in general education classroom
  • Taught her from home
  • 4th grade-Teacher and speech therapist believed in Stephanie’s potential
• Middle School full inclusion
• High School- graduated with diploma
• Accommodations but no modifications
COLLEGE

• Community Colleges
  • West Valley
  • De Anza

• San Jose State University
  • Majored in Communication Studies and minored in Sociology
  • Graduated Cum Laude and with department honors
  • Phi Kappa Phi
  • Pulse club
  • Spartan football games
  • Master’s Degree
  • Communication of Dis/Abilities course
    • Assisted teaching
    • Co-authored textbook
OTHER ACTIVITIES

• Volunteers for Santa Clara County Office of Education classes for orthopedically impaired
• Ambassador for Prentke Romich Company (PRC)
• Professional speeches
• Leads social groups
• Mentor
• Meets with friends
• Active in community- Everyone knows Stephanie
STEPHANIE’S AWARDS

• 2016- San Jose Role Model Hero
• 2017- Marie Carr Award and Scholarship- San Jose State University, Communication Studies Department
• 2017- Volunteer of the Year- Santa Clara County Office of Education
• 2019- ASHA- The Edwin and Esther Prentke AAC Distinguished Lecturer and Award- Orlando
STEPHANIE’S PRESENTATION
QUESTIONS