



MYTH #3:

Students with significant cognitive disabilities must show they are ready for the general education setting.

FACT:

Every student is a general education student. All students have the right to be educated in general education settings.

The Truth Is...

- Students should not be required to reach specified benchmarks (e.g., a 2nd grader at Kindergarten proficiency) before receiving instruction in general education.
- A student's needs, rather than disability, should determine placement. For example, a student with an intellectual disability should not automatically be placed into a segregated setting.
- Mission and vision statements that read "all means all" should include the experiences of students with significant support needs.
- Students with IEPs, including students with significant support needs, should not have to "earn their time" in general education or "prove" they will not engage in challenging behaviors before gaining access to general education environments.

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE FACTS:

- OSPI's [Inclusionary Practices Project \(IPP\)](#) defines inclusion as all means all: Inclusive instruction rebukes the problematic perspective that students receiving special education services need to 'fit in' or 'earn their way' into general education classes. The belief that general education instruction is not malleable and that students should be making adaptations to be included in the general education setting has contributed to the continuation of two parallel systems of education in which students receiving special education services are marginalized and devalued as a result of their environmental segregation.
- TIES Center Resource: [Taking the Alternative Assessment Does NOT Mean Education in a Separate Setting!](#)
- [Outcomes of Inclusive Versus Separate Placement: A Matched Pairs Comparison. Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities](#) - Gee, K. Gonzales, M., & Cooper, C. (2020)

STRATEGIES FOR DISPELLING THE MYTH:

- Provide [examples/frameworks that show how students with significant cognitive disabilities can engage in lessons/units](#) (e.g., lesson examples, share inclusive IEP process, and Inclusive Education at a Glance).
- Include core content data and stories about students with and without disabilities. [Identify environmental, attitudinal, and other barriers to general education curriculum and access](#). Presume competence for all and meaningfully consider supports needed for instruction in general education settings.
- Implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into all lesson planning and ensure students with significant cognitive disabilities are included in all aspects of classroom- and school-wide [Multi-tiered Systems of Support \(MTSS\)](#) including academic, behavior and social-emotional.
- Assign every student to the roster of a general education teacher with a seat in a general education classroom. This means that there is no negotiation about whether a student belongs in general education. It also clearly conveys that special education services are supplementary to general education.