



## MYTH #5:

All parents of children with significant cognitive disabilities want their children educated in separate programs or classrooms.

## FACT:

Inclusive education helps students with significant cognitive disabilities and their families feel a sense of belonging as part of the entire school community.

### The Truth Is...

- Students with significant cognitive disabilities in inclusive settings build relationships with peers. Creating communities of belonging for students with significant cognitive disabilities and their families is central to meaningful inclusion.
- Higher education and/or integrated employment are options for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Planning with this end in mind supports the need for inclusive education throughout PreK-12.
- Post-school transition conversations and planning should start early for students with significant cognitive disabilities and their families, including strong agency linkages with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and/or the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA).

### EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE FACTS:

- [Achieving Inclusion: What every parent should know](#) - Causton-Theoharis, J. & Kasa, C. (2012)
- [Taking Sides: Parent Views on Inclusion for Their Children with Severe Disabilities](#) - Palmer, D. S., Fuller, K., Arora, T., & Nelson, M.
- [Supporting Students with Severe Disabilities in Inclusive Schools: A Descriptive Account from Schools Implementing Inclusive Practices](#) - Kurth, J., Lyon, K., & Shogren, K. (2021)
- [Caregiver Engagement: Advancing Academic and Behavioral Outcomes for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in Special Education](#) - Whitford, D., & Addis, A. (2017)
- TIES Center Impact Article: [From Isolation to Inclusion: Anne's Journey](#)
- UW Haring Center: [IPP Demonstration Sites Project: Ruby Bridges Elementary](#) (webinar recording)

### STRATEGIES FOR DISPELLING THE MYTH:

- Engage in meaningful discussions with educators and parents that challenge beliefs about outcomes for students with significant cognitive disabilities when they are educated in inclusive versus segregated settings.
- Emphasize evidence-based best practices for inclusive education and students' human & civil rights to non-segregated education. Begin with a meaningful, life long vision statement for the student. Write IEP goals tied to general education curriculum, grade-level standards, and environment.
- Communicate to families the vertical and horizontal alignment of an inclusion mission, vision, beliefs, and systems that demonstrate commitment to inclusion. Maintain a transparent school culture that includes collaboration, co-design, and strong communication with families.
- Show evidence of collaborative structures and systems in place that ensure special education, general education, and families are collaborating consistently on a comprehensive education program.