



PROJECT ACCESS FACT SHEET #3



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INTEGRATING THROUGH REVERSE CHAINING

How to Teach Tolerance of an Integrated Setting

Sudden and untaught integration is seldom a successful experience for the disabled student or for peers and staff. Once the student fails in an integrated activity, it is extremely difficult to convince administration and fellow teachers to try again. However, integration behaviors can be taught systematically and successfully through a reverse chaining procedure.

STEP 1: Select an activity, which is appropriate for the child. Most often, the activity is chosen because it is perceived to be fun for us or for same age peers, whether or not its characteristics are positive or negative for the disabled child. Consider the activity's characteristics: unusual location, large echoing room, crowded, noisy, hot or cold, unstructured or structured, meaningfulness for student, duration, frequency of occurrence, etc.

STEP 2: Plan placement of the child during the activity. Use proximity and natural environmental props. Examples: Bring a chair to the gym, sit at the back near the door, sit at the end of the table, sit near the wall (which deadens the noise), bring along a favorite object, bring a blanket for proprioceptive feedback, etc.

STEP 3: Plan to decrease noise input. Allow the child to wear the earphones from a Walkman radio, earplugs, etc.

STEP 4: Introduce the child to the environment in advance of the big day. If possible, take the child and another peer or two to the environment one or two times prior to the event. Role play the acceptable behaviors several times.

STEP 5: Add the event to the child's visual schedule so that the event is predicted for the child.

STEP 6: Practice reverse chaining. Take the child into the integrated setting for a time interval at the end of the activity and allow him to leave successfully with his peers. Select the time interval using your knowledge of the child's tolerance for the type of activity he will be attending. Both the child and his peers will believe that the child behaved acceptably when they all exit the activity at the same time. A "bad kid" must be taken out early, but a "good kid" stays till the end. Example of old-style integration: The child can manage 15 minutes in the lunchroom, so he is taken in with his peers and removed when he begins to tantrum. Example of reverse chaining: The child can manage 15 minutes in the lunchroom, so take him in 12 minutes before the end of lunch and he eats his dessert there. The 12-minute period was initially chosen so that the child never fails. Over time, increase the time duration as the child indicates he can handle more.