

**Inclusive Preschool Classroom:  
A collaboration between  
Marin County SELPA, Marin County Office of Education  
Lifeshouse Agency, and Dominican University of California**



Marin County SELPA and Marin County Office of Education are collaborating with Lifeshouse Agency and Dominican University of California to pilot one inclusive preschool classroom beginning Fall 2018. This joint venture is designed to meet the needs of our community members, specifically young children—with and without special needs—and their parents.

**Early Childhood Education**

**Benefits for children** (Belfield, 2005; California Task Force on Special Education, 2015; Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2016; Temple & Reynolds, 2007):

- Increased cognitive and social development
- Increased language and literacy development
- Narrows the achievement gap (especially for children with disabilities, those from low-income families, or those where English is not the language of the home)
- Reduction in the need for special education services in elementary school
- Increase in high school and college graduation rates
- More lucrative employment options

**Benefits for parents** (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2010):

- Increased engagement through more reading with their children
- Increased responsiveness in their parenting style
- Lessened their use of time-out as a disciplinary method

**Inclusive Early Childhood Education**

Both state and federal education offices are in support of inclusive early childhood settings, where typically developing children and those with special needs play and learn together (California Task Force on Special Education, 2015; US Department of Health and Human Services & US Department of Education, 2015).

**Benefits for children with special needs** (Division for Early Childhood & National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009; Henninger & Gupta, 2014;

Odom, et. al, 2004; and US Department of Health and Human Services & US Department of Education, 2015):

- Higher rates of achievement
- Greater cognitive development
- Greater communication development
- Increased levels of engagement
- More opportunities to practice new skills
- Stronger social-emotional skills

**Benefits for typically developing children** (Henninger & Gupta, 2014; Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011; Odom, et. al, 2004):

- Greater development of leadership skills
- Increased development of empathy
- Higher levels of acceptance towards various kinds of diversity

### **Contributions of the Collaborators**

The collaborating organizations have clearly delineated roles and responsibilities around finances, administration, instruction, and research.

Marin County SELPA

*Special Education Services*

- Assume the financial responsibilities for providing all services identified in IFSPs/IEPs during the four-hour preschool day, including the special education teacher
- Provide the location for the inclusive preschool classroom, which will be at the Marindale campus in San Rafael

Lifehouse Agency

*General Education Services*

- Assume the financial and administrative responsibilities for general education services, including teachers and paraprofessionals
- Assume responsibility for preschool licensure

Dominican University of California

*Pedagogical Support/Consultation*

- Provide guidance in curriculum and instruction relying upon research-based practices and standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Division for Early Childhood (DEC), and the California Preschool Learning Foundations (California Department of Education, 2008)
- Provide guidance with collaboration between general and special education teachers, as well as all members of the teaching team, including paraprofessionals
- Provide student interns in education, occupational therapy, counseling, and nursing to assist at the preschool
- Research the effectiveness on all students of the inclusive preschool

The inclusive preschool collaborators recognize the evidence in support of inclusive education, specifically with benefits to language, socialization, and academic development. This preschool will be at the forefront of state and national mandates for inclusive education and will serve as a model for future classrooms both in Marin County and nationwide.

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