

EDITORIAL

Integration vs Inclusion for children with special needs:

Integration-”Bring the child into the existing system”

- Child with special needs is placed in a mainstream classroom/school
- The child has to adapt to the existing structure, curriculum, pace
- Support is added but the system itself doesn't change much
- Focus: Location - where the child learns
- Example: A child with autism sits in a regular class but follows the same teaching style, with a helper. If they can't keep up, it's seen as their limitation

Inclusion - “Change the system to fit the child”

- The whole classroom/school adapts so every child can participate meaningfully
- Curriculum, teaching methods, assessment, and environment are flexible
- Differences are valued, not just accommodated
- Focus: Participation + Belonging - how the child learns and feels part of it
- Example: Same child with autism gets visual schedules, sensory breaks, peer buddies, and teachers modify lessons so everyone benefits

Integration asks: “Can the child fit in here?”

Inclusion asks: “How do we make this work for the child?”

Inclusion is considered the gold standard now because it shifts responsibility from the child to the system.

We as Developmental paediatrician has a dual responsibility of empowering the child for integration by early detection and early intervention and also as advocates for inclusion.

Best Regards

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