

Top Tips for a Socially Inclusive School

At the Social Inclusion Forum that Cerebral Palsy Alliance ran in March 2013 at Commonwealth Bank, one of the questions to students and teachers was: **‘What can Teachers and Schools do to make school more inclusive?’** These are some of the things that they said:

- Provide ‘recognition for doing something good’ (in the area of inclusion) e.g. a ‘Spirit lifting’ Roll Call.
- Make sure that "all school policies/activities are inclusive – people with disability are invited to EVERYTHING e.g participate in House Groups, camps, dances etc. Take our survey to see if this is an issue at your school at www.socialinc.org.au
- Provide "more sports with disability access e.g wheelchair basketball "
- Having people with disability on the SRC and in other key decision making roles promotes acceptance of disabilities and makes support students visible in school.
- "Build a bridge – (if you have a support unit) invite mainstream kids to lunch/café; or to play board games – it allows them to connect and have confidence."
- "Connection with other school programs like Social Justice, Peer Support, Multicultural and tie in to House Points - community spirit."
- "Tie in with external volunteer programs eg Duke of Ed, Premiers Volunteer Award"
- "Promote Inclusion as valuable/important through the school. Needs to be a whole school program for it to work effectively."
- Reverse Integration - mainstream students sit in class with students with disability & see students with disability take the lead.

Other tips:

- Implement a culture of friendship diversity – promote disability in the school as a form of diversity. Put up posters around the school of successful adults with disabilities. Invite speakers to the school with disability.
- Teach students how to work with the mobility and communication devices a student may require. Simple things like; offering to push someone's wheel chair; learn how to use a communication book.
- Give students strategies to include everyone in playground activities. Explain how someone's disability might need to be catered for in e.g. a game of handball.
- Ensure students with a disability assume valued roles in the school eg. House captain, school leader.
- Make sure it is possible for students with a disability to access areas of the school where they can meet up with others during break times to socialise.
- Use person first language – ie. Do not define someone by their disability eg. John has a disability NOT John is disabled.