Inclusion Environments vs. Self-Contained Environments

What they look like and why you need both.
Inclusion Environments

**Pros**
- Promotes the idea of giving people with special needs a place to belong
- Does not require a specialized area to get a special needs ministry started
- Allows ministry leaders the ability to focus on training people rather than preaching/teaching/adapting curriculum on Sunday
- Provides a model of behavior and learning

**Cons**
- Not appropriate for all students
- Difficult to manage volunteers if you have multiple meeting areas within your church building
- More difficult to address inappropriate behaviors and teach acceptable behaviors
Inclusion Environments

**Pros**
- It’s free! No budget required
- Creates a place where differences are celebrated, not separated
- People with disabilities receive the same gospel as everyone else
- Creates room for growth of the ministry

**Cons**
- Requires environment accommodations for each person
- Requires intentional education among the typical population (congregation, staff, and volunteers)
- You must prepare for inclusion in every area to be the standard
- Usually requires one-on-one buddies for each child, so recruiting is never ending
Creating a Culture of Inclusion

Worship Services
The goal of inclusion is to walk into a worship service and not be able to pick out the person with disabilities.

Camps & Retreats
We provide one-on-one buddies for all weekend retreats and overnight camps.

Special Events
Our children and youth are involved in inclusive events such as productions, youth choir, Eggfest, and Festival on the Mount.
Self-Contained Environments

**Pros**
- Provides a place to get to know new children
- Unifies the people involved in the ministry
- Allows the ministry leader/pastor to establish and grow relationships
- Provides a less stimulating environment

**Cons**
- Lowers the expectation for some people
- Gives a sense of seclusion/"hiding"
- Prevents socialization with people without disabilities
- Typically does not have a credentialed pastor teaching the gospel
Self-Contained Environments

Pros
• Provides a calming place for overstimulation or “meltdowns”
• Design can be catered to the people’s needs in the ministry
• Needed resources can be stored in designated area
• Can be expensive to build

Cons
• Bible lessons and worship require modifications
• Limits physical space for growth
• “Out of sight, out of mind”
### Types of Self-Contained Rooms

#### Activity Rooms
- Need to be age appropriate
- Include energy-releasing activities
- Include sensory activities
- Include items for anxiety

#### Classroom
- Distraction Free
- Alternative Seating
- Combination of table and floor time
- Include designated areas for worship and lessons

#### Sensory Room
- Calming, low-light environment
- Secure area
- Durable Items
Activity Rooms

Age Appropriate Activities such as games, books, and movies

Various Seating Options

Calming Features

Include energy expending activities such as trampolines or scooter boards

Feature sensory activities such as a sensory wall or textured items

Make it personal! Include something for every child

Keep inclusion supplies handy

Consider the design of the space
Youth Activity Rooms

- Age appropriate furniture and vibe
- Various seating options
- Be aware of textures

Include energy expending activities such as trampolines

Have sensory activities readily available such as therapy brushes, thera-putty, and fidget toys that are discreet

Make it personal! Include something for every child

Keep inclusion supplies handy

Consider the design of the space
Modified Classroom

Adaptable to any age

Few design distractions - minimalist design

Varied seating/standing options for working

Displays for scripture memory, crafts, and behavior expectations

Storage for supplies

Options for digital teaching aids
Sensory Room

Primarily for calming purposes

Lots of sensory related items/activities

Include items for specific disabilities such as vibro-acoustic seating

Bubble tubes

Sensory wall panels

Swaddling objects such as body sox or cocoon swings

Specialized lighting

Bean Bag seating

Calming music

Crash pads

Calming projector scenes