

ADVOCACY UPDATE

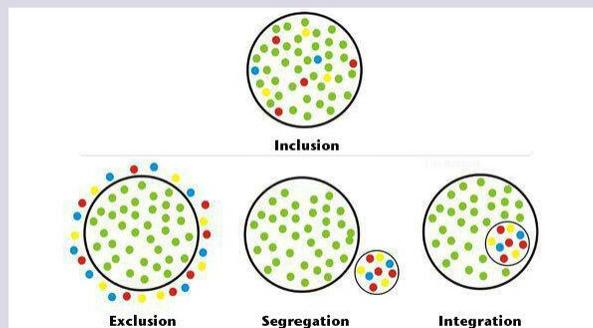
January 2013

2013 Inclusion Resolution:

Include People with Special Needs

This is the time of year when most of us develop resolutions for the New Year. These resolutions usually focus on achieving personal growth and accomplishments. People with disabilities, their family members and advocates often have resolutions on their lists that are related to increasing the inclusion of people with special needs into the mainstream of the community at large.

Inclusion means active engagement of people of all abilities as members in their own community. The picture below from The Friendship Circle (www.friendshipcircle.org) illustrates inclusion and how inclusion differs from segregation, exclusion and integration.



All people benefit when persons with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities are included in community life. People with disabilities should be welcomed and included in all aspects of our society. This includes public activities, programs and settings, and private establishments which are open and accessible to members of the general public. People with disabilities should receive the supports they need to participate actively in community life without having to wait.

Adults should have the opportunity to:

- Have relationships of their own choosing with individuals in the community, in addition to paid staff and/or immediate family;
- Exercise choice regarding living environment;
- Have access to the supports that they need;
- Engage in meaningful work in an inclusive setting;
- Enjoy the same recreation and other leisure activities that are available to the general public; and
- Participate fully in the religious observances, practices, events, and ceremonies of the individual's choice.

(drawn from The Arc of the United States' position statement on inclusion)

What is a Mobile Device?

A Mobile Device is a small hand-held computing device typically having a touch screen interface. They are mass produced and benefit from using the very latest hardware and software technology. Unlike durable medical equipment, they are relatively inexpensive and have a large pool of developers creating apps (software applications) that are designed for people with special needs or can be repurposed for special needs. Some common examples of mobile devices are smart phones, such as an iPhone or Droid, iPod Touch, Kindle, Nook and the iPad.

A mobile device should not be confused with netbooks and touch-screen computers; mobile devices are designed for quick and casual interaction. In contrast, computers have a long boot time, complex operating system, shorter battery life and are less mobile. In short, computers do not provide for instant in-your-pocket, right there, kind of interaction. If you are using a device to help you communicate, do you really want to carry around a huge computer that needs to be plugged in or re-charged all of the time? Or do you want to have something in your pocket, click a few buttons, generate speech and/or pictures, and put it back in your pocket?

Why are Mobile Devices and Apps Important for People with Disabilities?

Many users of mobile devices have found that certain apps paired with such a device can be effective for improving skills and accelerating learning in people with disabilities. Because the mobile devices such as the iPad have a direct interface — no mouse, track pad, joystick or external mechanism required to operate the device - users can access mobile devices more easily than a traditional computer.

The interactivity is engaging, highly motivating and aids in independent learning. Users have also found the iPad to be an excellent device for people of all ages with disabilities because of the screen size, accessibility features built into the operating system and ease of use. Many tablets and e-readers on the market are more cost effective options than the iPad, but there are fewer apps suited for people with disabilities available for these devices, and many users will be disappointed by limited apps available. However, overall we are seeing more development for special needs.

The Special Needs iPad & App Series

Hundreds of special apps are available for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including those diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. The use of the iPad and other mobile devices for teaching / education and social skills, as communication devices and for calendar and scheduling activities has exploded over the past few years. One excellent and reliable source to help make sense of all of this information can be found at www.friendshipcircle.org/. Click on Resources and then select "The Special Needs iPad & App Series" located in the menu on the right. Although some of this information is focused on children with special needs, much of it is also appropriate for adults with special needs. The Series contains:

- ⇒ [The Special Needs iPad & App Series: Welcome](#)
- ⇒ [7 Assistive communication \(AAC\) apps for the iPad, iPhone and iPod touch](#)
- ⇒ [7 Scheduling and Behavioral Apps to help with transitions and more](#)
- ⇒ [11 Social Skills & Life Skills Apps in iPad App Store](#)
- ⇒ [10 Websites to Find Special Needs Apps for the iPad & iPhone](#)
- ⇒ [7 Special Needs Apps in the Google Android Market](#)
- ⇒ [On a tight budget? 7 ways to get an iPad for those with special needs](#)
- ⇒ [6 steps to get the iPad into the special needs environment](#)
- ⇒ [4 Special Needs iPad/iPhone Apps for the Fut2ure](#)

