

# The transformative changes of inclusive education in Ukraine

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## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the article is to show the changes that are taking place in Ukraine regarding the problem of children with special educational needs integration in general educational establishments. The need for inclusive education introduction is emphasized, and the analysis of legislative and regulatory documents is carried out. It is argued that inclusive education is based on the principle of children's basic right to education ensuring and the right to study at the place of residence. The system of special education, which has a vertical-horizontal structure in Ukraine, is analyzed. The questions were aimed at the positive and negative consequences identifying of inclusive education introduction.

The dynamics of growth in the number of children studied in inclusive classes in the Ivano-Frankivsk region during 2016-2020 yrs. is analyzed. The conducted study gives grounds to conclude that inclusive education on the way of formation in our country is experiencing many difficulties, which include the lack of teachers' training to work with special educational needs children in secondary school, insufficient development of the legal framework, inadequate additional funding of inclusive institutions and low level of educational and methodological support.

The importance of the inclusive education introduction is emphasized, which should be gradual with the professional development of all its components.

**Keywords:** Children with special educational needs, Inclusive education, Inclusive educating, Correctional work, Primary school teachers, Preschool workers

## Introduction

At the present stage of Ukrainian society, the development of the educational reform is becoming more humanistic orientation. A special place in the educational system modernization takes the persons' education with special needs of psychophysical development, because in our country legally recognized the right of every child to receive education in

general education institutions at the place of residence, which is manifested in the development of a new inclusive educational form in the Ukrainian educational space, which is considered the main educational innovation of the late XX cent. – early XXI cent. and inclusive form of education has not only a large number of supporters but also opponents around the world [1, 2].

In recent decades, the scientists' interest in the social, cultural, and educational integration problems of children with special needs has significantly revived. Despite the wide representation of the problem of readiness in the scientific literature and different approaches to the inclusive education definition (O. Asmolov, S. Maksymenko, V. Moliako, P. Perepelytsia, S. Rubinshtein, F. Honoblin, V. Krutetskyi, H. Ball, A. Derkach), scientists regard it as an integral multidimensional psychological creation, which combines many components. Individual training is theoretically proved and is classified as one of the pupils' educational activity forms and in the works of

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Over the past ten years, the recent history of special pedagogy and psychology in Ukraine is determined by the priority trends in the rehabilitation content of early correctional and pedagogical work and rehabilitation of children «at-risk» from birth to three years of life development, preventive correction to prevent main nosological disorders complications, providing diagnostic and prognostic content in the work of special institutions, differentiation, and individualization of the correctional work with developing educational, didactic and correctional approach content. The new view formation on education and the place of the man in society are the main world signs of any society innovative development. Nowadays, education acquires the characteristics of community, accessibility, equality in countries with a high degree of development. Thus, the international movement «Education for All» (EFA), initiated by UNESCO, gives priority to everyone the right to meet educational needs and receive quality education ensuring [3].

Modern state policy, regulatory and legal changes contribute to the new social philosophy for children and adults with Special Educational Needs (SEN) formation. Now there is a fundamental change in the educational policy for children with special needs. Active work is carried out on finalizing of the basic educational laws, in particular in the Law «On Education» is introduced the concept of inclusive educational institution, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine confirmed the «Procedure of Inclusive Education in Secondary Schools Organization on Inclusive Education» (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine from 15.08.2011 № 872) [4].

Analysis of legislative and regulatory documents showed that the policy of modern Ukraine concerning children with mental and physical development as the minority group, that needs rehabilitation and integration, is characterized by the state's maximum involvement in the systemic problems' solution, but the mechanisms of this process are currently being actively worked out.

The Law of Ukraine «On Education» dated 05.09.2017 № 2145-VIII defines the concept of inclusive education as a system of educational services guaranteed by the state, based on the principles of non-discrimination, taking into account human diversity, effective involvement, and inclusion in the educational process of all its participants [5].

Today in Ukraine there is a political will to implement inclusive education, there is a fairly well-formed legislative framework, which is constantly being improved. The organization of inclusive education should be guided by the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 15.08.2011 №872 «On Approval of the Inclusive Education in Secondary Schools Order Organization (as amended following the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 588 dated 09.08.2017), which defines the requirements for the inclusive education in general secondary education institutions organization to realize the right to education of children with atypical development at

the place of residence, their socialization and integration into society, the maximum involvement of parents in the educational process [6].

Thus, the analysis of legislative and regulatory documents showed that the policy of modern Ukraine concerning children with mental and physical development as the minority group, needs rehabilitation and integration, is characterized by the state maximum involvement in the systemic problems' solution, but the mechanisms of this process are currently being actively worked out.

## Materials and Methods

To study the employees of educational institution's attitude to the inclusive education implementation problem, we conducted a survey procedure on the author's methodology. The survey was conducted among primary school teachers and preschool teachers in Ivano-Frankivsk with a total of 120 respondents. The survey was conducted in writing form, on the questionnaire developed by us, consisting of direct closed and open questions, which were then subjected to statistical processing. The questions were aimed at the positive and negative consequences of the inclusive education introduction identifying. Employees of educational institutions were also invited to note the difficulties of inclusive education implementation and the basic forms of teachers' training to work with children in inclusive classes. The statistical analysis was based on data from surveys.

## Results and Discussion

The survey results revealed the attitude of education workers to the inclusive education introduction and identified the ways of workers' education preparing to work with children in inclusive classes.

**Table 1** presents the primary school teachers' responses and preschool workers' responses on the benefits of inclusive education. The results were arranged in descending order.

**Table 1. The results of the Primary School Teachers' Responses and Preschool Workers' Responses**

Value	Preference indicator (%)	
	Teachers of elementary school	Preschoolers
1. Children with SEN ( <i>special educational needs</i> ) integration into society	28,2%	33%
2. Individual education in the collective	35,5%	38%
3. Equal access to education	20%	15%
4. A sense of self-worth	16,3%	14%

To the main advantages of inclusive form education, the teachers and educators included, first of all, the children with special educational needs integration into society and the creation of the conditions for their further successful socialization (28.2% of primary school teachers and 33% of preschool workers), ensuring the principles of personal

education in the collective (35.5% of primary school teachers and 38% of preschool workers), equal access to education (20% of primary school teachers and 15% of preschool workers), the child with special educational needs development, a sense of self-worth, as well as education of mercy, tolerance among ordinary children (16.3% of primary school teachers and 14% of preschool workers).

**Table 2** presents the primary school teachers' responses and preschool workers' responses regarding the difficulties of inclusive education implementation. The results were arranged in descending order.

**Table 2. The results of the Primary School Teachers' Responses and Preschool Workers' Responses regarding the Inclusive Education Implementing Difficulties**

Value	Preference indicator (%)	
	Teachers of elementary school	Preschoolers
1. Lack of adequate funding	30,8%	28,2%
2. The community unpreparedness to children with special educational needs integration	26,5%	26%
3. Various bureaucratic obstacles	17,6%	18%
4. Lack of teachers' training	11,1%	14,8%
5. Insufficient information support	8%	10%
6. Insufficient of educational programs adaptation	6%	3%

The main difficulties that are possible in the process of inclusion implementation, the teachers and educators attributed, first of all, the lack of appropriate material and technical base in educational institutions and adequate funding (30.8% of primary school teachers and 28.2% of preschool workers), the lack of teachers' training to work with children with special educational needs and the lack of specialists in special pedagogy (26.5% of primary school teachers and 26% of preschool workers), a variety of bureaucratic obstacles (17.6% of primary school teachers and 18% of preschool workers), lack of public preparedness for the children with special educational needs integration (11.1% of primary school teachers and 14.8% of preschool workers), insufficient information support for teachers and educators (8% of primary school teachers and 10% of preschool workers) and insufficient adaptation of curricula (6% of primary school teachers and 3% of preschool workers).

**Table 3** presents the results of the primary school teachers' responses and preschool workers' responses regarding the negative impact of inclusion. The results were arranged in descending order.

**Table 3. The results of the Primary School Teachers' Responses and Preschool Workers' Responses regarding the Inclusion Introduction Negative Consequences**

Value	Preference Indicator (%)	
	Teachers of elementary school	Preschoolers
1. Rejection in the group (class) of the child with special educational needs by peers	36,4%	31,2%

2. The child with special educational needs may harm peers	24,7%	20,8%
3. Inability to provide the educational process fully for other children	18,2%	19,6%
4. The child with special educational needs could become the object of bullying	12,7%	18,4%
5. A child may feel himself/herself as inferior next to healthy children.	8%	10%

As can be seen from the Table, individual respondents focused on the likely negative effects of inclusion. In particular, the possible Rejection in the group (class) of the child with special educational needs by peers (36.4% of primary school teachers and 31.2% of preschool workers). Some respondents consider that a child with special educational needs may harm peers, especially in cases where there are intellectual or emotional-volitional spheres violations (24.7% of primary school teachers and 20.8% of pre-school workers). In addition, respondents suggest that in overloaded inclusive groups (classes), the preschool teacher (teacher), trying to pay due attention to the child (pupil) with special educational needs, will not be able to provide the educational process for other children fully (18.2% of primary school teachers and 19.6% of preschool workers), a child with special educational needs can become an object of bullying (12.7% of primary school teachers and 18.4% of preschool workers). A child may feel himself/herself inferior next to healthy children (8% of primary school teachers and 10% of preschool workers).

**Table 4** presents the primary school teachers' responses and preschool workers' responses regarding identifying the main forms of training teachers for work in inclusive classes. The results were arranged in descending order.

**Table 4. The results of the Primary School Teachers' Responses and Preschool Workers' Responses regarding the Identifying the Main Forms of Training Teachers for Work in Inclusive Classes**

Value	Preference indicator (%)	
	Teachers of elementary school	Preschoolers
1. The individual consultations provision	24%	22%
2. Organization of internship	19,4%	17,8%
3. Creation of creative groups	18%	14%
4. Conducting workshops	12%	13,8%
5. Participation in trainings, seminars	11%	12,2%
6. Training in advanced training courses	10%	10,4%
7. Training in on-line courses	5,6%	9,8%

Accordingly, the main forms of preparation for the inclusion in educational institutions introduction, our respondents identified the following: individual counseling (24% of primary school teachers and 22% of preschool workers), organization of internship (19.4% of primary school teachers and 17.8% of preschool workers), creation of creative groups (18% of primary school teachers and 14% of pre-school workers), workshops (12% of primary school teachers and 13.8% of preschool workers). Respondents also focused on participation

in training, seminars (11% of primary school teachers and 12.2% of preschool workers), training in advanced training courses (10% of primary school teachers and 10.4% of preschool workers), and training in online courses. (5.6% of primary school teachers and 9.8% of preschool workers).

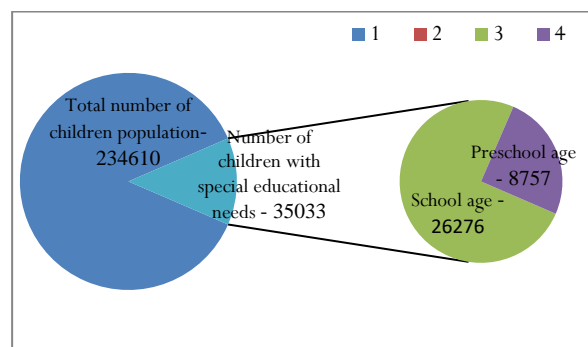
The peculiarity of the educational process in the conditions of inclusion is its correctional orientation, which provides medical, pedagogical, psychological, and social assistance. However, today the secondary school is not yet ready to provide the full range of medical, correctional, psychological, and pedagogical services that children with special needs need. Inclusive education is based on the principle of ensuring the basic right of children to education and the right to study in the community.

The purpose of inclusion is to ensure that each school is prepared in advance to accept children with different (excellent) abilities [7, 8].

Inclusive education as a system of educational services should provide an inclusive school – and institution that adapts curricula and plans, physical environment, methods and forms of education, uses existing resources in society, attracts parents, specialists to provide special services following the needs of each child, provides a favorable climate in the educational environment [9]. The priority in the area of children with special needs education has now become the positive school climate creation in which all children study together in the mass educational system, with appropriate curricula adapted to their needs. The transition to inclusion implies changes in all aspects of educational practice [10].

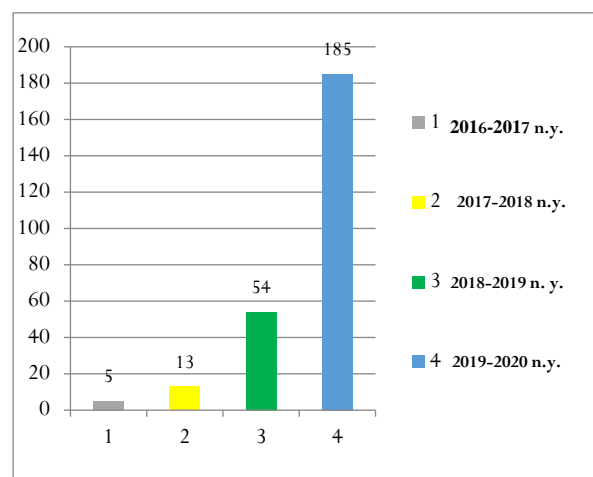
The system of special education in Ukraine has a vertical-horizontal structure. The vertical structure is based on the students' age characteristics and levels of general education programs. The vertical structure is determined by the age periods of early childhood (from 0 to 3 yrs.); preschool period (from 3 to 6-7 yrs.); period of school and vocational training (from 6-7 to 16-21 yrs.). The horizontal structure takes into account the psychophysical development of the child, especially his cognitive activity and the violation nature. The Ukrainian special education horizontal structure is represented by special institutions of 8 types for children with hearing impairment, hard of hearing children, visual impairment, visually impaired, with severe speech impairment, with disorders of the musculoskeletal system, for the mentally retarded, with mental retardation [11].

The ratio of children number with special educational needs to the total number of children in the 2018-2019 academic yrs. is presented in **Figure 1**. As can be seen from the diagram, the total number of children is 234610, of which the number of children with special educational needs is 35033, which is 15%, this number includes children of school age – 26276 (11%) and preschool children – 8757 (4%).



**Figure 1.** The Ratio of the Number of Children with Special Educational Needs to the Total Number of Children in 2018-2019

We were also interested in the number of children, studied in inclusive classes in Ivano-Frankivsk region during 2016-2020 yrs. These data are presented in **Figure 2**.



**Figure 2.** The Number of Children Receiving Education in Inclusive Classes in Ivano-Frankivsk Region

As can be seen from **Figure 2** in 2016-2017 yrs. in the region there were only 5 children covered by inclusive education. From 2017 to 2018 yrs., the number of such children increased to 13 people, and in 2018-2019 yrs. their number was 54 people. The largest number of children in the last year 2019-2020 yrs. is 185. Consequently, there has been a steady trend towards an increase in the number of children receiving education in inclusive classes in Ivano-Frankivsk region in recent years.

The priority in the area of children with special needs education has now become the creation of a positive school climate in which all children study together in the mass educational system, with appropriate curricula adapted to their needs [12].

## Conclusion

The modern world tendency is the society aspiration to the integration of persons with features of psychophysical development in society. The transition to inclusion implies changes in all aspects of educational practice. For many teachers, this process is difficult; it is not an easy task, both

personal and professional, which requires a lot of time for training and practical implementation.

The study gives grounds to conclude that relevant in the 2020-2021 academic yr. in the Ivano-Frankivsk region is: the inclusive groups' acquisition in preschool institutions; close cooperation with parents to form a new philosophy of society; a positive attitude to children with special educational needs; providing children with impaired psychophysical development in the educational area at the appropriate level among healthy peers with the necessary adaptation and modification of educational programs; introduction of a personality-oriented model of training (including through the strengthening of psychological and pedagogical support).

Optimal conditions creation (legal, scientific and methodological, personnel, material, sanitary, social, psychological, motivational, etc.) is necessary for the full functioning and effective inclusive education in secondary schools process development in Ivano-Frankivsk region.

Therefore, the inclusive education introduction should be gradual with the professional development of all its components. This requires a change in the attitudes, beliefs, and values of educators. The changes not only in the schools' organization (preschool institutions), but also rethinking and changing the teachers' attitude of special and mass educational institutions, many of which still see their role in teaching a certain «category» children are necessary: teachers of mass schools teach «normal» pupils, special institutions' teachers teach pupils «with developmental disabilities». The factors' analysis of successful inclusive educational form implementation showed the need for future research to study and clarify the organization's features of children with special needs education in the Ukrainian educational space.

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