

Inclusive education conference plants seeds for supporting all students

by Tim Holdsworth - Tuesday, February 19, 2013

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Inclusion isn't really about disability; it's a matter of social justice and re-defining disability as a natural part of the human experience.

The upcoming "Planting the Seeds of Inclusion: Supporting the Growth of All Children" conference, which will be held at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Saturday, March 2, will explore ways teachers, administrators, related service professionals and families can support and expand learning opportunities for children with disabilities.

Hosted annually by the College of Education and Human Services' departments of curriculum and instruction, reading, special education and educational leadership, the conference brings together teachers, administrators, related service professionals and families.

"More than 30 years of research has demonstrated the benefits of inclusion for all students—those with and without disabilities," said conference keynote speaker Cheryl Jorgensen, an inclusive education consultant and former project director for the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire. "It's also the most efficient and effective use of scarce resources."

Jorgensen, who has worked with public school teachers, parents, and administrators to increase their commitment to and capacity for including students with disabilities in general education classes, will be speaking on "The Inclusion Imperative: Creating Schools Where All Children Belong and Learn."

Jorgensen said inclusion is so important because unless children feel a deep sense of belonging they can't learn. "All students need to be welcomed members of age-appropriate general education classes where they are full participants in instruction, have reciprocal social relationships and acquire the skills and knowledge to be college- and career-ready at graduation," she said.

With more than 25 breakout sessions, the conference will provide practical information and training on a variety of topics, including reading and math instruction, assistive technology, special education in virtual learning environments, behavioral interventions, collaborative teaching, college/career readiness and more. The conference attracts more than 300 people annually, including students learning to be teachers.

The conference will also again include a resource fair, intended as a one-stop resource for those who have or work with children who require special education services. Intended to connect people with resources and support services, the resource fair is open to the public without participating in the conference.

Cost of the conference is \$60 for professional educators and \$30 for students and family members of children with disabilities. The registration fee includes lunch and campus parking is free that day.

Students, educators, therapists, caregivers, teachers and parents are welcome; preregistration is suggested.

Learn more:

- [Planting the Seeds of Inclusion: Supporting the Growth of All Children](#)
- [College of Education and Human Services](#)