



# SPECS for “Include Me” (IM)

Evidence-based Research for the Impact of Mentoring  
on Inclusive Instructional Practices

2010-2015

**Stephen J. Bagnato, Ed.D.**

Professor of Psychology & Pediatrics  
Faculty Mentor, Office of Child Development  
Early Childhood Partnerships (ECP)  
University of Pittsburgh  
LEND Center at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC

[bagnatos@pitt.edu](mailto:bagnatos@pitt.edu)

[www.earlychildhoodpartnerships.org](http://www.earlychildhoodpartnerships.org)

**Jennifer Salaway, Ph.D.**

Senior Research Psychologist  
University of Pittsburgh/Office of Child Development

[www.oed.pitt.edu](http://www.oed.pitt.edu)

*In Collaboration with State-Wide Partners*

**Pat Hozella**

Director  
Bureau of Special Education  
Pennsylvania Department of Education

**Rita Cheskiewicz**

Director, Include Me  
Arc of Pennsylvania

**Pam Klipa**

Director of Government Relations & Advocacy  
Arc of Pennsylvania

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

January 31, 2016



University of Pittsburgh





University of Pittsburgh

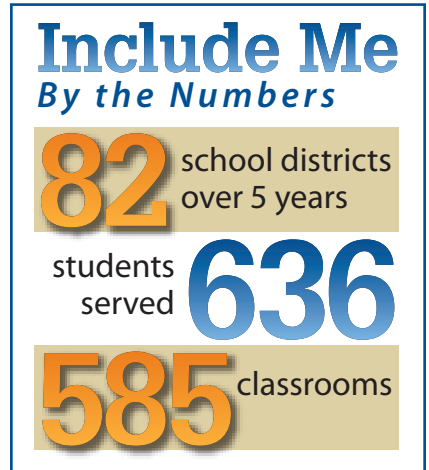
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

OFFICE OF  
CHILD DEVELOPMENT



# SPECS for “Include Me” (IM):

Evidence-based Research for the Impact of Mentoring on Inclusive Instructional Practices (2010-2015)



## Executive Summary

IN 2010, AS A RESULT OF THE GASKIN SETTLEMENT, the **Arc of Pennsylvania** was designated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education to implement a new statewide training and technical assistance initiative in PA. The “Include Me from the Start” (IMFS) initiative aimed to assist and include children with significant disabilities (with parent partnerships) into regular education classrooms in their neighborhood schools.

IMFS was piloted from 2010-2013 for students in kindergarten and first grade, and then expanded in 2013 to include students across elementary, middle and high school classrooms. The current iteration of IMFS, known as “**Include Me**” (IM) emphasizes facilitating the successful inclusion of children with significant disabilities in their neighborhood schools through teacher mentoring. Arc consultants assist district schools to implement evidence-based inclusive practices by collaborating with, supporting, and mentoring teachers and parents and fostering transformations in the school climate regarding the education of children with disabilities.

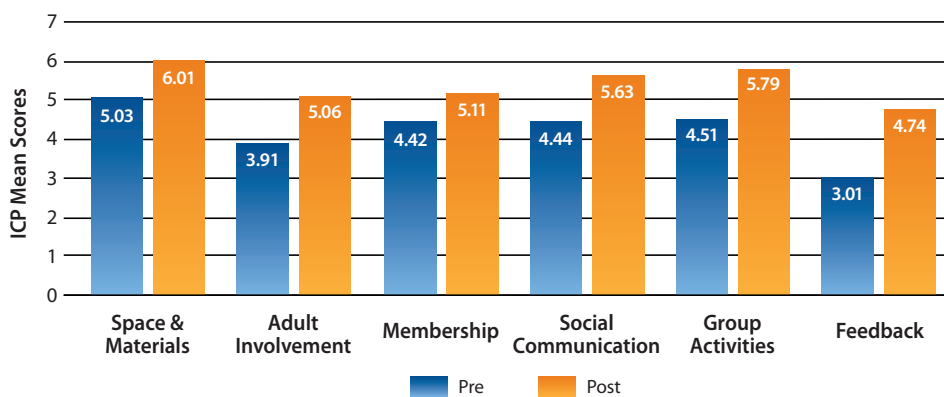
### *How many districts, students, and classrooms have been served by Include Me?*

- 82 districts have participated in the Include Me Initiative over 5 years
- Include Me has served 636 students in 585 classrooms

## How have teachers benefited from Include Me (IMF) mentoring?

- Inclusive practices improved significantly during IM mentoring.
- Diverse teachers in rural and urban school districts (across K-12 grades) showed similar patterns of skill acquisition in inclusion strategies through mentoring.
- Significant teacher skill gains are apparent in all instructional domains with particular impacts on: adaptations, instructional supports, relationships, and membership/participation.
- Effectiveness was marked by prominent gains in the use of diverse inclusion supports: physical, social-behavioral, and instructional adaptations.
- Teachers receiving IM mentoring demonstrated the use of quality inclusion practices that matched or exceeded that of teachers in national studies, particularly instructional practices.
- IM mentoring fostered teacher's increased expectations for their children's progress which was associated with significant child progress (e.g., reading, math, and social and task engagement skills).

**Exhibit 1: Observations of teacher progress in using inclusion practices (K-1st Grade)**



**Exhibit 2: Observations of teacher progress in using inclusive practices (Grades 1-12)**

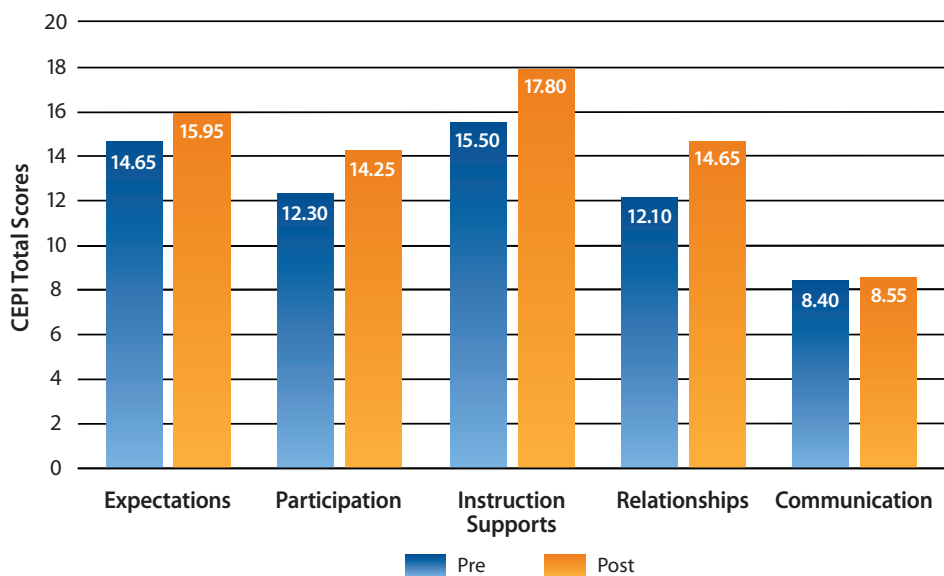


Exhibit 1 displays aggregated pilot data over three years to show the significant change in teachers' inclusion practices (for K-1st Grade classrooms), as measured by independent observations using the **Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)**. Exhibit 2 displays aggregated expansion data over two years to show the significant change in inclusive classroom practices (Grades 1-12) using the **Classroom Effective Practices Inventory (CEPI)**. Independent observations, using the **Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)** were conducted to document teacher practices in 3 major domains, including Instructional Support. Exhibit 3 compares the average teacher quality competencies across the CLASS domains for the Include Me Sample over two years with that of the 2014 national sample.

**Exhibit 3: Independent observations and comparisons of teacher's instructional practices**

CLASS DOMAINS	Local Mean	National Mean	Mean Point Difference
Emotional Support	5.71	6.10	-0.39
Classroom Organization	5.4	5.83	-0.43
Instructional Support	<b>3.93</b>	2.90	1.03
Overall Average	4.83	4.94	-0.11

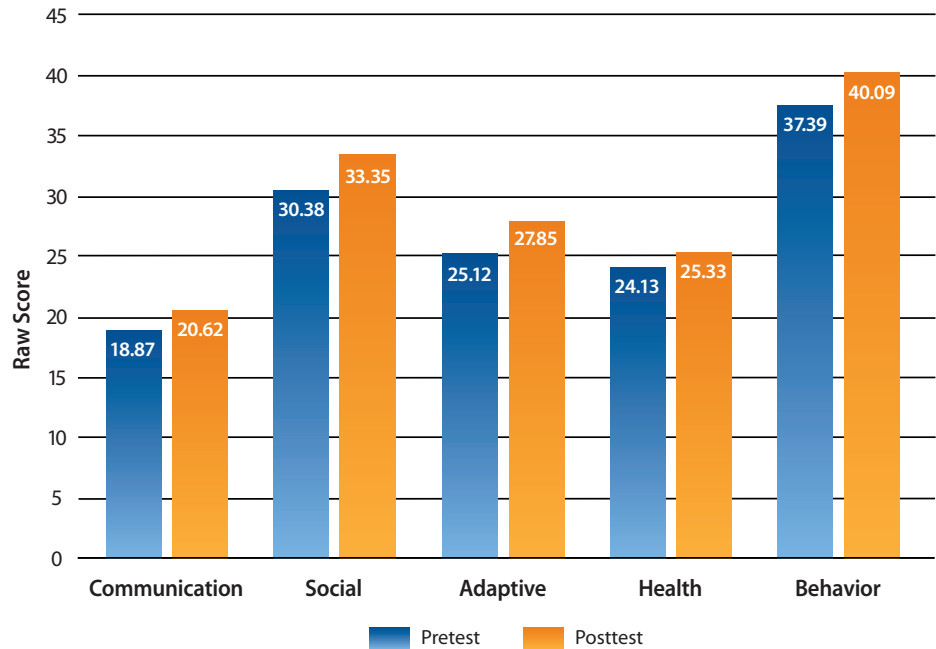


**Did children benefit when their teachers received IM mentoring?**

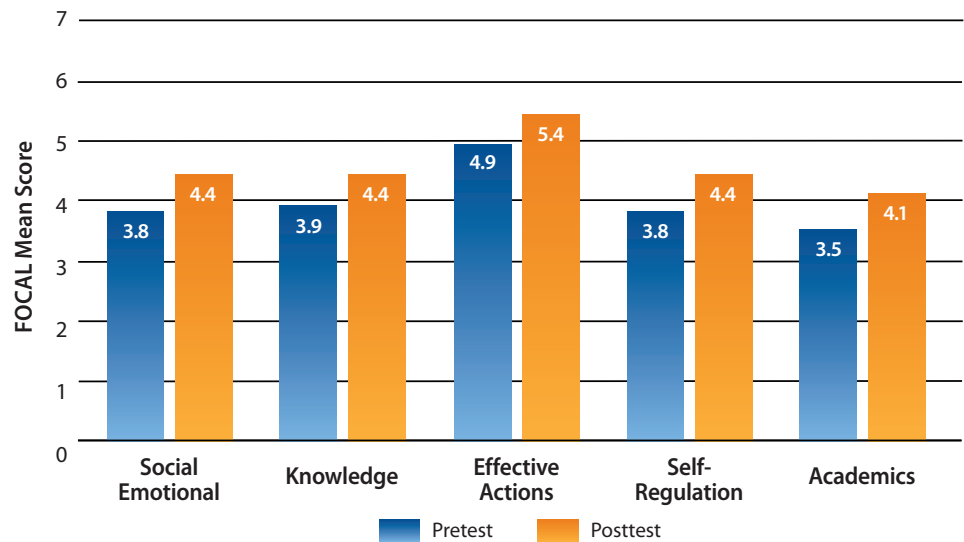
Exhibit 4 displays aggregated pilot data over two years to document the significant gains in children's learning skills (K-1st grade), as measured by the **Children's Learning and Progress Scale (CLPS)**. Exhibit 5 shows the aggregated data collected beyond the pilot phase using the **Functional Outcomes Classification of Assets for Learners (FOCAL)** to document the status and progress of student's functional and academic skills (Grades 1-12).

- Children with severe disabilities in Grades K and 1 showed significant progress in social and behavioral competencies.
- Children with severe disabilities in Grades 1-12 showed significant progress in such areas as Knowledge, Self-Regulation and Academic competencies.
- Child progress was socially noticeable & generalizable across both classroom and home/community settings.
- Increased teacher expectations fostered children's increased engagement in overall learning activities through the following specific engagement skills: group activities; social learning; completion of learning tasks & selective and sustained attention.

**Exhibit 4: Average progress for children in Grades K-1 on the Children’s School Learning and Progress Scale (CLPS)**



**Exhibit 5: Average progress for children in grades 1-12 on the Functional Outcomes Classification of Assets for Learners (FOCAL)**



***Did the perceptions about inclusive education change for teachers and parents during IM mentoring?***

- Both teachers’ and parents’ attitudes toward inclusion improved as a result of participating in IM.
- Teachers felt that they had a positive attitude toward inclusion.
- Parents felt their child would be more likely to build friendships if he/she spent most of the day in a regular education classroom.



## Exhibit 6: Mean scores on perception surveys from pre to post-test

	Before		After	
	Mean	<i>sd</i>	Mean	<i>sd</i>
Teacher	31.73	5.81	31.21	7.03
Parent	31.56	7.81	27.60	4.80

N=67 teachers; n=56 parents.

Note. Lower scores represent more positive responses toward inclusion.

### How did parents benefit?

- Parents reported the efficacy of consultant support to the teacher in the form of knowledge about how to include their child in the classroom.
- Parents also appreciated the objective, third party perspective of the consultant about their child in the classroom setting.
- Parents reported the positive impact consultants had in supporting them in the inclusion process.

### Who provided consultation?

- On average, fifteen consultants provided mentoring each year.
- Consultants ranged in age from 27 to 58 years, averaging 45 years.
- The mean years of experience was 16 years.
- 52% of the consultants had teaching experience.
- 65% of the consultants were the parent of a child with a disability.



### Real World Results

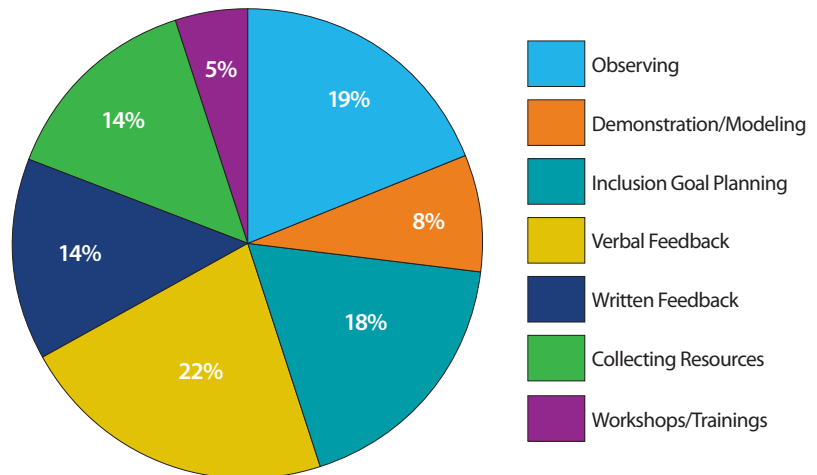
## Isabelle

“Isabelle is now in 3rd grade. She has been included ever since participating with the Include Me program.

I want her teachers to be truly prepared and effective in accommodating and modifying the curriculum so that Isabelle learns what she needs in order to be successful, independent, and happy.

I gather a group of the original Include Me parents to meet with North Penn Leadership to discuss inclusion in the district and how the district is implementing an inclusive approach throughout the district.”

**Exhibit 7: Average mentoring activities used by consultants across 5 years of IM**



### ***What were the most frequent mentoring activities & strategies to promote inclusion?***

- Weekly & intensive (7-9 hours/week) classroom-based consultation/mentoring on inclusive instructional practices is most effective.
- Multiple modes of face-face & virtual consultation is essential for effectiveness.
- Targeting specific inclusion strategies in the SaS ToolKit (Supplementary Aides and Supports) promotes effectiveness.
- Higher use of inclusion strategies results in higher student progress in academic and social-behavioral learning.
- The trusting relationship between a teacher and a mentor is the foundation for effectiveness.

### ***What are the most effective elements of the Include Me (IM) mentoring model?***

The following 7 elements of the IM model have demonstrated their effectiveness in combination to promote inclusive teaching practices, student learning, and parent engagement with teachers:

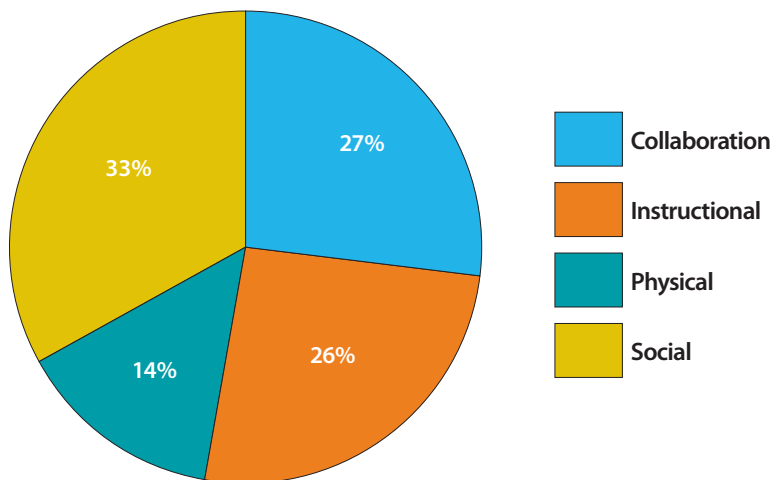
1. Trusting, confident, and ongoing relationships between mentors and mentees
2. Weekly, face-face teacher mentoring supplemented by virtual modes and resources
3. In-vivo teacher mentoring and modeling within natural classroom activities
4. Individualized and collaboratively designed teaching goals linked to tangible strategies (SaS) which foster inclusive instruction
5. Ongoing observational assessment of students within classroom learning tasks linked to functional and academic goals for student learning and progress
6. High teacher expectations for all students to succeed
7. Mentoring to nurture the trust and engagement between parents and teachers



## Judith

“Include Me educated me about the importance of inclusion as my child strives to reach her potential and to live, work and succeed. It gave me hope and enthusiasm about my child’s potential and inspired me to advocate for my daughter and others to obtain needed resources from the district to learn and achieve goals.”

Exhibit 8: Percent allocation of inclusion strategies across SAS Categories over the 5 years of IM



### *What is the future SPECS research plan to validate IM?*

SPECS plans to intensify its focus on the more indepth validation of the IM model by focusing upon impact validity and social validity:

#### **Impact Validity**

- Document the **impact validity** of the IM mentoring model
- Independent observations of teacher-student relationships using CLASS
- CLASS comparisons to US national research norms on teaching and classroom quality and effectiveness

## Real World Results

# Sofia

“We have been very happy with Sofia’s success so far. It is like night and day. I truly feel that the “Include me from the Start” program was the key for this drastic change at school.

Her IEP is followed and assignments and tests are modified to accommodate her abilities. The staff at school works together with parents, meeting on a monthly basis to discuss her progress and potential needs.

Being a part of this program allowed parents like us to understand special education, what is the IEP and what are the laws.”

## Social Validity

- Determine the **acceptability and social impact** of the IM inclusion model on school climate and community engagement through broad stakeholder surveys:
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Parents
  - Building principals
  - Superintendents
  - Community leaders







University of Pittsburgh

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

[education.pitt.edu](http://education.pitt.edu)