

State of Inclusion in the Russian Federation

At the end of December 2012 the State Duma of the Russian Federation (RF) approved a law on education in the RF during the third reading. The work on the project was started in 2009. The first draft version was published on the site of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation in May 2010 and caused to a big public reaction among professionals and citizens of Russia. The new law “On Education in RF” seeks to substitute the two basic laws – “On Education” (1992) and “On High and Postgraduate Professional Education” (1996).

According to the new law the State shall guarantee free basic education for everybody in the framework of the federal education standards.

This document expands the State guarantees for free education and strengthens the link between education programs and the modern labor market. Moreover, the law is aimed at enabling children with disabilities to learn at common schools. The new law gives priority to inclusive education, which imagines education for children with disabilities as not in a specialized but common institution. Nevertheless, these children can choose to attend specialized institutions as before.

The federal law of the Russian Federation from the 29th of December of 2012, N 273-Φ3 “On Education in Russian Federation”

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education across the RF is at present regulated by the Constitution, by the federal laws “On education”, “On social protection of people with disabilities in RF”, as well as by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and by the Protocol N1 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

In 2008 Russia signed the Convention of the United Nations “On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”. Article 24 of this Convention states that State-participants shall provide inclusive education at all levels and lifelong education, for the realization of the Right to Education. The possibility of all children getting an education by, regardless of their disabilities, is allocated in the law “On Education in the RF” (29th December of 2012, N 273-Φ3, page 2).

According to the law, inclusive education is a guarantee of equal access to education for all pupils and students considering their different educational demands and individual capabilities.

A child with disabilities is of course a special child. It is also made special due to the fact that such a child is sent to a special institution for children with disabilities, isolating him or her from real society and constraining the child in his or her developmental possibilities. Is this what he or she wants? Doesn't this child need education, mentoring and communication with his or her peers? Inclusive education provides an opportunity to children with special development to attend common schools and learn together with other children.

The main question is how to give this child with special development not only a rich social experience, but also develop his or her educational demands to the full extent in a way that that the participation of such a child would not decrease the general level of education of other children. In this way, the question shifts from the ideological dimension to an organizational, scientific-methodical and investigational one.

There are many objective and subjective difficulties in inclusive education, but the following has to be marked above all:

1. A program of the social integration of children with special development across the whole territory of Russia has not been developed yet as the level of tolerance, self-consciousness as well as the helping attitude of healthy people has to be raised.
2. The legislation concerning the rights of children with disabilities is very weak at all levels. The duties of the State and of society towards them are not judicially determined.
3. More attention should be paid at adaptation of the place of education and creation of an accessible environment for all children with disabilities.
4. There is a serious problem of combination of the speed of teaching and the volume of knowledge in regard to children with disabilities and healthy children. A child with special development shall be put into an environment which corresponds at that moment with the capabilities of child's education. Moreover, in case of need, a tutor will be assigned to such a child.
5. There is no special medical support in educational institutions.
6. The contacts between children with disabilities and healthy children are difficult and are developing very slowly.

7. There is no special transportation for pupils with disabilities, which would enable them to reach educational institution and to come back home.
8. Microcampuses for foreign students with disabilities which would consider (first of all the everyday) demands, are not been built.
9. The programs of employment assistance of the graduated students with disabilities are exceptionally ineffective.
10. Those teachers and professors, who enable the inclusive education, shall be accordingly prepared and shall get further training.

According to statistics, there are over 2 Million of children in Russia with disabilities (8% of the children population) at present. About 700.000 children among them are children with physical disabilities. Every year the number of this category of children is growing. In particular, in 1995 in Russia there were 453.600 children with disabilities, in 2011 their number reached to almost 590.000. About 90.000 children among them have physical disorders which obstruct their movement and make access to social and educational resources difficult.

A systematic implementation of the best practices of inclusive education takes place in Russia exceptionally slowly and considerably unevenly. In some regions (Moscow, Samara, Arkhangelsk) good results were achieved while in other regions this practice is only starting now.

According to the Ministry of Education and Sciences of the RF, from 2008 to 2010 the model of inclusive education has been implemented (on an trial basis) in educational institutions in different regions of the RF, such as Moscow, Arkhangelsk, the region of Samara, in the capital of Republic of Buryatia Ulan-Ude, Ukhta (the Komi Republic), the Republic of Karelia (Petrozavodsk, Sortavala), Tomsk, Voronezh, Saint Petersburg, Khabarovsk, Republics of the North Caucasus.

The development of inclusive education in Russia is often carried out with the support of State structures and nongovernmental organizations.

The legislation of the RF foresees, according to the international rules, guarantees of equal rights to education for people with disabilities and people with physical disabilities.

In Russia three different approaches to education of children with special educational demands are being implemented at the present moment:

1. Differentiated education of children with speech disorders, hearing or visual impairments, disorder of the locomotor system, intellectual disabilities or mental disorders in special institutions of I-VIII types.
2. Integrative education for children in special classes (groups) in institutions of general education.
3. Inclusive education, when children with special educational needs are learning in a classroom with other common children.

According to the statistics provided by the government, the number of schools in which barrier-free environment for pupils with disabilities will be created, will grow more than eight-fold in the next five years– from 1.200 to 10.000.