



*“Whoever receives  
one child such as  
this in my name  
receives me”*

(Matthew 18:5)

## Including Students with Developmental Disabilities in Catholic Schools

### Introduction to the Series

The purpose of this workshop is to acquaint administrators and teachers working in Catholic Schools with fundamental principles for including students with developmental disabilities. The Catholic Coalition for Special Education works to assure that students with developmental disabilities are able to attend and receive appropriate education in their local Catholic elementary and high schools.

Participants will receive information about the educational needs of students with developmental disabilities and a brief overview of the historical background of including students with disabilities in Catholic schools. Catholic social services and education practices for students with disabilities in the US have followed a historical trend somewhat consistent with secular practices.

Participants will then learn the rationale for inclusion. The rationale cited in Catholic education literature derives from Catholic teaching, including that of the USCCB, the Vatican, and Thomas Aquinas. In addition, numerous studies have demonstrated the positive academic and social/emotional results of including students with disabilities in general education.

Next, participants will examine the federal and local legal and funding requirements and issues of including students with disabilities in private schools. Federal laws provide guidelines and procedures for inclusion of students with disabilities that apply to Catholic schools. However, because federal funding is limited compared to public school funding, Catholic school administrators can face the moral and spiritual dilemma of intending to fully include students with disabilities, while recognizing the disservice of not adequately supporting such students' needs.

Participants will then learn of current best practices models for including students with disabilities, and the roles and responsibilities of administrators and teachers. They will be introduced to six principles of practice, that will be addressed in subsequent workshops. The principles are: (1) maintain high expectations, (2) promote communicative competence, (3) use the principles of universal design for learning, (4) know how to select and use appropriate accommodations for individual students, (5) make use of evidence-based practices, and (6) target instruction and use formative indicators of student performance.

The workshop will integrate opportunities for personalized learning, based on teacher and administrator needs, through small group problem-solving and discussion. The underlying theme will be on the moral, ethical, and spiritual rationale for including students with disabilities in Catholic schools, with practical best-practice considerations taken from current literature in the field of special education.

**CATHOLIC  
COALITION  
FOR SPECIAL  
EDUCATION, INC.**

P.O. Box 673  
Kensington, MD 20895

Tel. 301.933.8844  
info@ccse-maryland.org  
www.ccse-maryland.org

\*This description is taken directly from the manuscript prepared by Sharon M. Malley, “Including Students with Disabilities in Catholic Schools: Guiding Principles for Administrators and Teachers.”