

Inclusion

Individuals with developmental disabilities have not always had the same opportunities to be involved in the full range of relationships, events, activities and experiences available to the general population in their community.

Individuals with developmental disabilities often lived separately, went to separate schools or classes, 'worked' in sheltered facilities, and had few relationships outside of those involved paid staff. In short, for many years, individuals with developmental disabilities were *excluded* from mainstream society.

Over the past 50 years, there has been effort to ensure that all individuals with developmental disabilities are included in their communities. This means that they have increasingly been included in regular schools, have paid jobs, have opportunities to make their own choices (and mistakes), have opportunities to contribute, and to have that contribution welcomed and recognized, and have opportunities to express their needs and desires. It also means having relationships based on friendship, mutual interest, and reciprocity.

Inclusion begins with connection with others in the community—families, friends, and other community members. From these connections, opportunities for friendships or other relationships may appear and further evolve. Inclusion assumes changes, ups and downs, and a wide range of experiences that can go into having a full life.

The PDD program is based in a number of key principles and values that reflect the important focus on inclusion. Supports and services available through the program are intended to support each person's involvement, participation, and 'inclusion' in their community in the way they desire.

Key ways to foster inclusion and connection include supporting individuals to:

- Grow up in a family
- Have a home
- Go to regular schools
- Develop friendships
- Have meaningful work in the community
- Pursue interests outside of work
- Participate in and contribute to their community

More information about Inclusion is available from the Alberta Association for Community Living www.aacl.org or the PDD Central Region Community Board website at www.pdd.org/central or from any PDD Central Region office:

Camrose	780.679-5058
Drumheller	403.823-1653
Lloydminster	306.820-4257
Olds	403.556-4200
Red Deer	403.340-5003
Rocky	403.845-8393
Vermilion	780.853-8209
Wainwright	780.842-7501
Wetaskiwin	780.361-4532
Regional Office	403.340-5003

(Call toll-free using 310-0000)