

1980s, the Integration Action Group was providing sophisticated support to individual families struggling to achieve integration. Since 1987, the Centre for Integrated Education (now called the Centre for Integrated Education and Community) has been another source of training, consultation, and resource development for both parents and professionals. Such initiatives are unique to Canada and have helped give parents the courage and determination to seek integrated educational settings for their children.

Parents have insisted with considerable success that the traditional special education system change. The increasing demand from parents has been evident in every province and territory and the concerns that have created the demand have been consistent. Parents' demand for integrated education stems from a vision for their children's future which they only see realized in a regular class with non-disabled peers.

*At a meeting for parents of special needs children, we were asked, "What is your dream for your child?" I never [thought] I had a dream for my son Daniel who has special needs ... After thinking about it, [however, I realized] I do have a dream for Daniel — a very simple dream. I dream of Daniel taking an apple to his teacher, of packing his lunch for school, of seeing him in a school play, and of him bringing home his report card. These are very ordinary things for most parents, but to the family of a [mentally handicapped] child, these are dreams that bring unexplained joy.*

*And I have another very special dream for Daniel that is coming true right now. While at play group, Daniel's friend Evan sits with him ... I hope when my son is in high school, his friends will say, "Daniel doesn't need an attendant all day — we'll help him with his lunch — we'll make sure he gets to classes — we'll help him to get on and off the bus. We'll take him to the school dances*