

cooperatively. We found that IEPs were not necessary when our son had good, experienced teachers who were committed to integration. We have also known parents whose children have had poor teachers despite IEPs.

A WORD OF CAUTION

Although our principles are simple, putting them into practice is difficult. Parents should be wary of people who promote simple answers to the complex questions facing education today.

One potentially dangerous cry is "back to the basics". Any education system built around the back-to-the-basics theme will be system-centred and norm-referenced with no place for exceptional pupils. Securing a decent education for exceptional children means supporting integration, with all the inherent challenges involved. It means supporting theories and practices that are called progressive, rather than those that are called conservative.

It is also important to realize that our society asks the impossible of teachers and school administrators. We expect them to resolve all our social problems and have all kinds of programs such as AIDS and anti-racism education and propaganda from the nuclear industry. Integration means appropriate education for *all* pupils and is best accomplished when teachers are not over-stressed.

Parents should support efforts to reduce class size, eliminate curriculum overload and improve support services for teachers; parents should also support rewards for exceptional teachers. Parents must resist any postponement of integration based on the excuse that the system is not ready. If the time, effort and money spent opposing integration were spent implementing it, integration would be a reality.

System-wide integration can work; good teachers and administrators have discovered that they can integrate exceptional students much better than they thought possible.