



Olivia's Place Pediatric Therapy Center

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUMMARY

Five Years of Inclusive Education Experiment by a Primary School in Shanghai
Shanghai LongDong Daily Report (Chinese)
2 April 2013

It is estimated there are over a million children with autism in mainland China, and the number is growing every year. 5 years ago, the parents of a child with autism bought a primary school and started the inclusive education pilot by enrolling both children with autism and typically developing children.

The couple learned about inclusive education from their friends in Hong Kong and realized that it is not simply mixing special needs kids with typical ones, but to create an interactive environment to help them improve communication skills, as well as to develop an individualized education plan (IEP) for each child.

When they first took over the school, there were less than 200 students and only 1 autistic child, their own son. Later, another two autistic children joined.

Knowing that they are not experts in this new field, they visited the U.S. three times and tried every resource to get their hands on relevant documents. In 2009, Hong Kong Education College sent two experts on autism to provide training and materials. Afterward, more and more experts and volunteers came to help, such as Fudan University and Pudong Youth Rainbow Center.

The case of Charlie (one of the autistic children) was shared, including how he moved on from one-on-one tutoring to larger classes and his interest in learning English. AnAn and YangYang's talent in piano playing and AnAn's performance in district singing competition are also highlighted in the article.

The current IEP's include language training, scenario teaching, sensory integration, etc. In scenario teaching, people will see very daily tasks, like phone call making, self-introduction, making friends, birthday parties, afternoon tea, and karaoke.

It takes a long time for children with autism to open their hearts but when they do, the joy it brings is overwhelming and all worth it. The school is planning to expand their experiment/pilot to include more children.

To provide more professional training, the school contacted a professional institution called Olivia's Place to develop more tailored IEPs. After talking to Charlie, Educational Psychologist Laura Lofy set the goal of the semester to raise his sense of security and build self-confidence and self-esteem.

According to Laura Lofy, it is not that children with autism don't want to communicate, they simply don't know how. It requires the whole society's support to open the window for them.

Olivia's Place Pediatric Therapy Center

Right now, inclusive education is still a controversial model. Some would argue that putting autistic children with the typical children will disturb the typical ones. According to Mr. Fang, inclusive education will cultivate a loving and equal atmosphere where the autistic children will feel respected and typically developing children will gain a sense of responsibility and care for others in a diverse and inclusive environment. The Qingpu District Education Bureau has approved their expansion. Mr. Fang plans to include 1-2 children with autism in each class and add a junior high department, so that more autistic children can benefit.

Summary provided by Joanna Ren, Foundation Director, Olivia's Foundation