

**CURRENT STATUS AND FEATURES OF THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA**

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The relevance of the problem of education of children with deviations in physical or mental health in the world is growing, attracting more and more attention from the state and social organizations. In the 20th century, inclusive education was education only for primary and secondary school students for a long time. Significant developments in the issue of organizing inclusive education in Ukraine in secondary school and in higher education institutions are certainly associated with the ratification in the state in 2009 of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [1]. Despite this, schools and higher education institutions in Ukraine remained somewhat isolated in issues of inclusive education for a long time. Only in the last decade has the practical implementation of educational work with schoolchildren and students with developmental disabilities begun.

The new economic development strategy of our state adopted for the period until 2030, as well as the new STEM educational environment, required the socialization of citizens with disabilities, and, especially, children and youth, who are directly related to obtaining school and university education [2]. In this regard, foreign experience is of particular interest, in particular the experience of inclusive education in US universities, since the current state of inclusive higher education in the US is one of the best in the world, and this is the result of the painstaking and thoughtful work of specialists, teachers, psychologists, public and charitable organizations, religious societies, as well as specialized research institutes.

US public schools are inclusive and have an accessible environment for all categories of children. In the US, an accessible environment for students with developmental disabilities or health problems is a requirement of the law. Schools should have ramps, elevators, wide doorways, and adapted toilets, all of which are a priori provided in school buildings. In addition to physical amenities, schools should also consider the sensory needs of such students are providing soundproofing for children with increased sensitivity to noise. In addition, schools should provide assistive technology for students with developmental disabilities: special reading and writing software, adapted keyboards, audiobooks, and other materials in alternative formats.

One of the goals of inclusive education in the United States of America is to provide equal opportunities for all students and provide additional support for students with disabilities. The historical background of the inclusive education model in the United States allows us to draw conclusions about the high level of justification for the implementation of this system in the educational environment. Until the middle of the 20th century, the attitude towards people with disabilities in the United States was wary, and sometimes even negative. The turning point was World War II, when society became more humane towards people with disabilities as the most vulnerable and least protected group of the population, as evidenced by a number of documents adopted in the USA: «Declaration of the Rights of the Child» (1959) [3], «Convention against Discrimination in Education» (1960) [4], «Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons» (1971) [5], «Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities» (1975) [6], «Convention on the Rights of the Child» (1985) [7], [8] etc. An important principle of the laws is education in the “least restrictive environment”. This means that children with developmental disabilities should be together with their peers as much as possible.

In the 1990s, a movement for the integration of people with disabilities into society, and therefore into the educational environment, developed in the USA, which led to the theory of “normalization” of the lives of people with developmental disabilities [9], [10]. The essence of the theory is that people, and especially children, with health and developmental disabilities should live the same way as their peers without any impairments in physical and mental development. This, of course, does not mean that they become “normal” in the usual sense of the word. First of all, it is about the normalization of their lives. The theory of “normalization”, according to American experts, includes the following provisions:

1. A child with disabilities has the same needs as other children of his or her age; he or she wants to eat, drink, be active, gain knowledge, learn a profession, etc.

2. The best environment for raising a child is the home; only parents can give the child everything they need: love, care, support, and help them realize their potential.

3. Any person, including a child with special needs, lives the same life as other people, goes through the same stages of development, needs to realize their interests, aspirations, etc.

4. The child has the right to a full-fledged education, which must be provided by the relevant state authorities.

It is on this theory of "normalization" that an inclusive program for individual education of students with disabilities was developed and their right to study in regular groups was established.

Thus, the study found that inclusive education in the USA is education based on the theory of equal needs and providing equal opportunities to all children and students, regardless of the degree of their illness. Inclusive education in schools and higher education institutions in the USA uses effective programs and techniques that allow integrating students with disabilities into society, providing assistance at all stages of the educational process by school teachers and teachers of higher education institutions. The main principles of organizing inclusive education: the principle of accessibility, the principle of adaptation, the principle of pedagogical acceptance and professional readiness, the principle of methodological support. Ukrainian teachers have extensive experience and are capable of developing scientific and methodological support, methodological manuals for organizing inclusive education in schools and higher education institutions. The results of the study of inclusive education in the USA can be used to draw up roadmaps for the development of inclusive education for Ukrainian educational institutions. Of course, all children and youth should have equal opportunities, and inclusive education is a necessary component in the development of children with special educational needs, the level of which is one of the main markers of the level of development of society and the state.

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