**Personal Philosophy Statement: Meaning of Collaboration in Special Education**

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**Personal philosophy statement about the meaning of collaboration in special education**

Special education is an evolving field. My philosophy of special education is woven together from my years as a general education early childhood teacher, my studies in early childhood education, what I am currently learning in graduate school, and my overall values and beliefs. I want my view to be as dynamic and evolving as the field itself.

As every child is unique and their needs diverse, I want to ensure they receive a differentiated education geared towards what is best for their immediate and future needs. With the right support and appropriate instruction, every student can succeed regardless of their limitations. I want to target the interests, needs, and learning of students with special needs in the least restrictive environment that works best for the child. This will promote equal participation, belonging, and interaction and create an atmosphere where every student feels accepted, valued, and safe.

Culturally responsive and effective collaboration is the key to creating a positive school environment. Parents, teachers, therapists, administrators, and students all play a crucial role in ensuring that students with disability and additional needs have equal opportunities and access to the resources and supports (IEPs, multiple learning styles, weekly evaluation, and detailed planning) required to succeed in school and life. For delivering outcomes that truly cater to the needs and interests of children with disabilities, it is vital to involve them in decision-making actively so that they feel a greater sense of ownership and empowerment, leading to increased motivation and engagement. This helps to gain valuable insights into their preferences, strengths, and challenges, which helps to develop tailored strategies and supports to meet their needs. It is essential to be aware of students' changing needs and effectively cater to them by exploring the various co-teaching models aligned around student achievement, pedagogy, resources, and the classroom environment to best suit their needs. We can effectively differentiate instruction and tailor the methods, materials, and assessments to meet diverse student needs. When a team of professionals is aligned to deliver students' goals and progress, pool their expertise and knowledge, and build on each other's strengths, providing the best possible education to students with disabilities can become a reality.

It is my foremost priority is to work together as a team to gain expertise in all the formal and informal collaborative activities to build relationships of trust, respect, and parity, help address challenges, and provide high-quality special education services. I want to invest time in building relationships with families by actively listening to their verbal and non-verbal cues and subtle meanings in their communication to promote equity and effective communication.

The characteristic that I would like to acquire as a special education teacher is effective communication that is open, respectful, flexible, and honest while carefully considering the background, socioeconomic status, culture, and language of everyone involved. This is a challenge to navigate through as many stakeholders are involved in a student's education, and a simple miscommunication can lead to misunderstandings and conflict. Cultivating perspective-taking skills is vital for educators to create a more inclusive, collaborative, and supportive environment for students with disabilities. As an educator, I also want to think critically and reflect on perspectives of culturally diverse families that can enhance understanding and responsiveness, as parents know their children best when planning for their success.

As an educator with a professional computer science degree, I firmly believe in the benefits of integrating assistive technology in classrooms for boosting students' skills and achieving targets in class, as it can benefit students with a wide range of learning obstacles. I would also like to gain expertise in identifying measurable student outcomes and developing instructional and behavioral plans by leading and participating in meetings with families, individualized education program teams, and instructional planning. I firmly believe data analysis with appropriate student test data should be our guide to finding the most appropriate accommodation and/or modification for the student to reduce and gradually close the achievement gap and help them succeed. We need an individualized approach so that every student can reach their goals in the unique way that will maximize their learning outcomes.

"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." This quote by Henry Ford motivates me to work harder towards improving each of my students' abilities in school, their home, and their community. Meaningful culturally responsive collaboration is our hope for creating a positive school environment where the individualized needs of every student (especially children with special needs) can be adequately met, and high standards for learning can be achieved.