

Highlights from Community Living Ontario's Inclusive Education Webinar

Some kids might be smarter than you, better at sports than you or have cooler stuff than you – it really does not matter! Be the kid who is nice, kind, generous, easy to get along with, looks out for everyone, includes others, stands up for others and does the right thing!

—**Scott Schihl, Member of Council**

To get an early start on celebrating February's Inclusive Education Month, members of Community Living Ontario's **Council** and **Youth Advisory Committee** hosted a webinar on January 26, 2022. This webinar focused on the educational experiences of people with and without a disability, and was attended by 100 participants from across Canada who represented students, parents, educators, teachers and self-advocates of inclusive education. The Council members and youth advisors shared their personal experiences, perspectives and vision for inclusive education. The webinar also included conversations on the value of real learning opportunities, the impact of inclusivity and the importance of understanding the diverse needs of students.

Insights:

As advocates and changemakers in Ontario, the insights shared by Council members and Youth Advisory Committee youth advisors are crucial to understanding the benefits of an inclusive education system, as well as what opportunities exist to make improvements for all students and advocates (with and without a disability), educators and teachers.

Based on the ideas exchanged during this webinar, Community Living Ontario's Council and Youth Advisory Committee generated the following recommendations:

- Create individual and educational goal plans that support students of all abilities.
- Create workshops about individualized ways of teaching that cater to different needs.
- Provide people with disabilities a 'step-by-step' process of the learning experience.
- Provide inclusive extracurricular activities for students, where all students are welcome.
- Create a system where all educators/teachers receive training for 'one-on-one' discussions with students.
- Create a system to streamline communications and diversify ways to ensure a fair and equal chance of flexible learning.
- Be open, and remember: Everyone learns at a different pace.



- Never be afraid to speak up and reach out if you feel you are not being heard or respected.
- Peer support and acceptance are key in inclusive education.
- Create an abundance of spaces, recreation opportunities, rehabilitation places, transportation options, schools and organizations – where everyone can play, learn, work and connect, regardless of their learning abilities.
- Inclusion means all students receive the resources they need to be successful, regardless of how their identities intersect.
- People deserve the chance to try and explore opportunities.