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## BACKGROUND

Much of the current focus within education is upon the inclusion of children with emotional and or behavioural difficulties in the classroom, with very little consideration given to those with physical disabilities who use a wheelchair. Meeting the inclusivity agenda can present significant challenges to both the teacher and the disabled child and assumptions are that every school can accommodate every child, regardless of their disability. It has been increasingly acknowledged that teacher attitudes, alongside cooperation and commitment of other professionals working directly with children with disabilities, are essential in facilitating inclusion (Avramidis et al 2000; Salend 2007).

## STUDY AIMS

- To identify the attitudes and concerns of teachers towards the inclusion of a child who uses a wheelchair in the classroom.
- To identify the training and support needs of teachers in order to facilitate the inclusion of a child who uses a wheelchair in the classroom.



## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

15 primary school teachers from a range of schools in N.Ireland.

### Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews.

Qualitative interrogation of transcript data.

## EMERGENT THEMES

- *To environment*
- *To curriculum*
- ".....there's a lot of moving around the room..... I would have to create space"

ACCESS

- ".....because of the age of this building, the main disabled toilet is upstairs...."

MODIFICATIONS

- "....swimming or PE, obviously they wouldn't be able to do those...."

ATTITUDES

- "....I'm not aware of what I would need to know. I don't know what's out there to ask for..."

TRAINING  
NEEDS

## CONCLUSION

### Benefits Identified

Facilitates increased social integration; self-esteem; opportunity to teach understanding and respecting diversity; equal opportunity to learn amongst peers.

### Lingering Concerns

Insufficient knowledge how disability impacts upon child's learning and physical skills; impact upon workload, teaching methods, space required, and availability and access to support, especially for PE and outings.