

PARENTAL PERSPECTIVES ON SPECIAL AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

By: Lee Soo Haon
4th National Early Childhood Intervention Conference
Sibu, Sarawak
7th- 9th June, 2012

OUTLINE



- Development of Inclusive Education in Malaysia
- Background of Survey
- Findings & Recommendations
- Sharing of Inclusion Experience (Video)

Development of Inclusive Education in Malaysia

- Integration efforts started in 1981 by MOE
 - Special education classes in mainstream schools
- Inclusion efforts following endorsement of Salamanca Statement 1994 - *'Persons with disabilities shall not be excluded from the general education system on the basis of disabilities'*
 - Partial or full inclusion programmes through the Special Education Division, MOE

Development of Inclusive Education in Malaysia

- In reality, majority children with special needs are still being excluded from mainstream education system
 - Partial and full inclusion is not a general practice in mainstream schools
 - Some children with special needs, particularly those requiring minimal supports, are learning in mainstream classrooms because of parents' push for inclusive education
 - Inclusive placement due to 'informal agreement' between parents and school administration
 - School supports for child with special needs are not available

The Survey Project

- **Title:** Parents' Perceptions and Expectations of Special and Inclusive Education
- **Sample:** 142 respondents
 - Parents from 3 NGOs in Penang: Asia Community Service, Bold Association for Children with Special Needs, Penang & Penang Down Syndrome Association
 - 59 in mainstream education, 83 in special education
- **Duration of data collection:** 2 months (Jun-Aug 2011)
- **Method:** telephone interview based on survey questionnaire

The Survey Questionnaire

- Two questionnaire types
 - **MSQ** - Children with special needs in mainstream classes
 - **SPQ** - Children with special needs in special classes/ special schools
- Each questionnaire has 2 sections
 - **Section 1:** Background information of the child with special needs
 - **Section 2:** Schooling experiences and suggestions

The Survey Questionnaire

- **Section 1: Background information of the child with special needs (MSQ & SPQ)**
 - Gender and age
 - Registration with Social Welfare Dept & Special Education Division
 - Present status
 - Disability type
 - Intervention and education history
 - Child's ability level when entering Primary One
 - History of behaviour problems

The Survey Questionnaire

- **Section 2: Schooling experiences and suggestions (SPQ)**
 - Previous experience in mainstream class, if any
 - Reason for enrolment in special class
 - Opportunities for inclusive activities, if any
 - Overall rate of satisfaction
 - Benefits and disadvantages in sp class/ sp school
 - Recommendations for inclusive education

The Survey Questionnaire

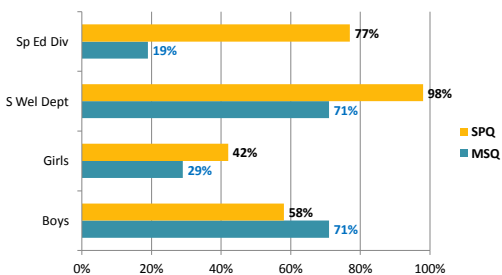
- **Section 2: Schooling experiences and suggestions (MSQ)**
 - Reason for enrolment in mainstream class
 - Problems faced in school
 - Overall rate of satisfaction
 - Benefits and disadvantages in mainstream class
 - Supports needed
 - Recommendations for inclusive education

Respondent Details

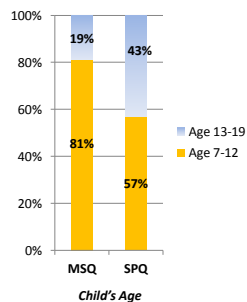


	MSQ	SPQ
Mother	78%	82%
Father	19%	17%
Grandmother	3%	1%

Background Information

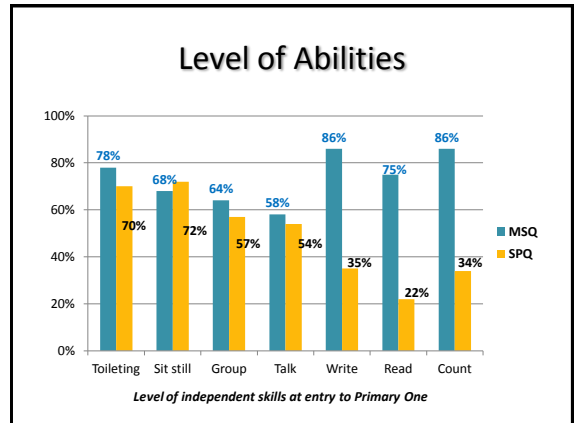
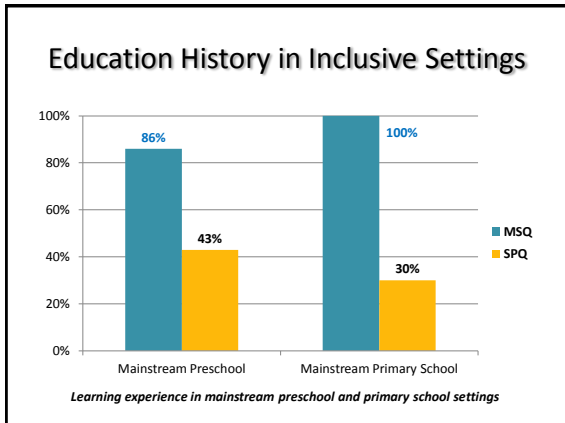
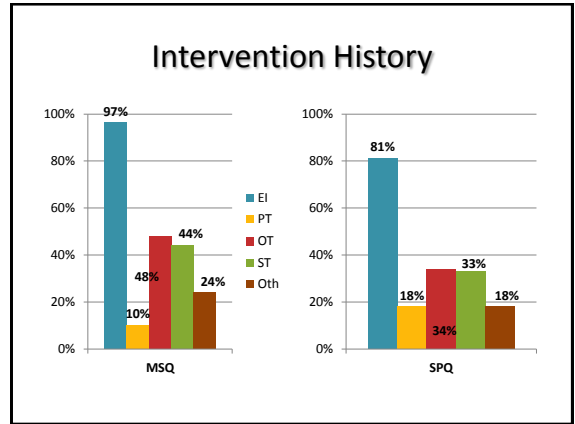
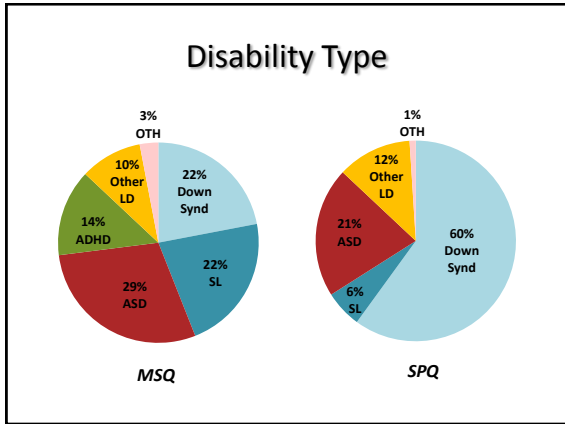


Background Information



Present status

- **MSQ**
 - 95% in mainstream class
 - 2% (N=1) working
 - 3% (N=2) at home
- **SPQ**
 - 58% in special class
 - 34% in special school
 - 8% others



SPQ: Prior enrolment in mainstream education

- 30% (25/83) of SPQ respondents had inclusion experience in mainstream primary school
 - 36% stayed less than a year
 - 28% stayed one full year
 - 8% (N=2) stayed 6 years
- Reason for moving to Special Class/School
 - 40% child cannot cope with academic work
 - 36% pressured by HM or advised by class teacher
 - 12% (N=3) child was bullied by peers

SPQ: Reason for direct enrolment in special education

- 70% (58/83) did not consider mainstream primary education
- Reasons:
 - Majority (39/58) – “child has special needs”, would not be able to cope in mainstream class
 - 7% (N=4) – concern over teacher factors
 - 7% (N=4) – concern over safety issues (environmental & social)

SPQ: Opportunities for Inclusive Activities

- Only 14% had opportunity to participate in mainstream school activities, i.e. Sports' Day, field trips, extra curricular activities
- Preferred inclusive activities:
 - Sports Day
 - Selective subjects (i.e. English, Maths, Art)
 - Outdoor activities
 - Excursions
- Some 13% rejected inclusive activities



SPQ: Benefits

- Progress in child – 36%
 - i.e. improvement in academic skills, communication skills, more independent
- Teacher factors - 24%
 - i.e. teacher can handle child, trained, understanding/caring
- Social benefits - 14%
 - Improvement in social skills, have friends
- More teacher attention as learning in smaller group – 13%
- Safety issues – 4%
 - Safer environment, safe from bullying by peers



SPQ: Disadvantages

- Zero or little academic progress – 29%
 - i.e. "Tak ada kemajuan. Ada complain baru take action.", "Perkembangan merosot", too much idle time in class
- Teacher factors – 27%
 - i.e. teachers not trained, not committed, beat child
- Mixed abilities grouping resulting in higher functioning children losing out - 13%
- Class too crowded resulting in less teacher attention – 10%
- Others:
 - No opportunities to join mainstream peers/activities, lack of toys/equipment, no outdoor play, unhygienic classroom

MSQ: School Types

- National-type Chinese schools – 64%
- National schools – 27%
- Others – 9%
 - 3 Private school
 - 1 International school
 - 1 National-type Tamil school



MSQ: Reason for choosing mainstream education

- Child's condition
 - can cope with normal class work – 19%
 - disability is not 'serious/severe' – 17%
- Opportunity to mix with typically dev peers – 14%
- Advised by professionals (14%) & other parents (5%)
- Concerns over special class conditions
 - child mixing with children with multiple disabilities – 10%
 - No constructive learning activities – 5%
- Others: Neighborhood school (3%), follow mainstream syllabus (3%), learn Chinese (3%)



MSQ: Advice to change to special school

27% (16/59) respondents received advice to change school

- Teachers – 69%
- HM – 44%

Reasons given by school:

- Child cannot follow lesson
- Teacher cannot cope with child's special needs
- Child's behaviour problems



MSQ: Problems faced by child

- Poor focus/short attention span – 19%
- Cannot cope with lesson – 15%
- Slow copying from the board – 14%
- Too much homework – 7%
- Communication/Socialisation problems – 17%
- Other behavioural problems – 24%
- Teacher related problems – 15%
 - Negative attitude, poor understanding of special need
- Teased/bullied by peers – 8%



MSQ: Problems faced by parents

- Seeking communication and cooperation with HM/teachers
- Strict school rules
 - No moving during school assembly, perfect handwriting, parents not allowed in school
- Homework
 - Too much, difficulty borrowing books from peers for copying, have to go early to school to do homework
- Other parents not keen for their children to interact with child with special needs

MSQ: Benefits

- Social benefits
 - Socialisation/friendship with typical peers – 34%
 - Typical peers as good role models – 14%
 - Helpful/caring peers – 8%
- Progress in child – 42%
 - i.e. academic, communication, independence, discipline
- Understanding/dedicated teachers – 17%
- Opportunity to participate in regular activities – 8%
- Neighbourhood school – 5%



MSQ: Disadvantages

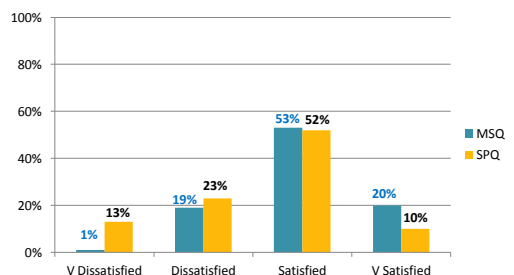
- Teacher factors – 27%
 - i.e. poor understanding of child's needs, inflexible teaching methods, prejudiced attitude, too strict, poor communication with parent
- Child cannot cope with lesson – 15%
- Child avoided/bullied by peers – 8%
- Too much homework – 7%
- Others:
 - child imitating negative peer behaviors, strict HM, school too academic focused, school too far

MSQ: Supports needed

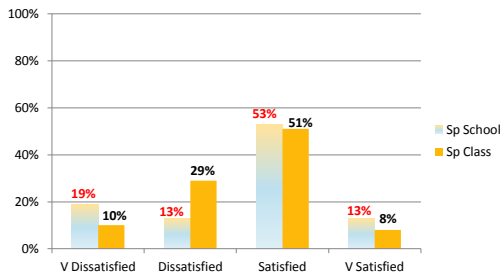
- Additional school resource personnel – 42%
 - Teacher Aide
 - Special Educator
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Speech Therapist
 - NGO staff
- Flexible teaching and lesson adaptation – 15%
- Trained teachers – 10%
- More understanding teachers – 10%
- Smaller classes – 5%
- Others: peer support, feedback from teachers



Comparison of Satisfaction Rating



Comparison of Satisfaction Rating



Additional Findings

- Parents' decision regarding educational placement was largely dependant on their perception of their children's condition.
- MSQ parents highlighted the importance of preschool education in preparing children with special needs for formal schooling.
- MSQ parents wanted more feedback and cooperation from teachers and pointed out the importance of parent-teacher collaboration.
- MSQ parents highlighted the reality that parents must be prepared for hard work to make inclusion work for their children.

Recommendations for Inclusive Education

- Teacher education
 - Positive teacher attributes, teacher knowledge on special needs' children & special education
- Flexible curriculum and teaching methods
- Supporting resource personnel
 - Teacher aide, special educator, OT, ST, NGO
- Sensitisation/awareness programmes for teachers, peers & their parents
- Parent-teacher collaboration
- Others – reward caring schools, smaller classes, abolish special classes, more government funding

Survey Implications

- Memorandum entitled [Inclusive Education as National Education Policy for Children with Special Needs](#) was first drafted in Feb 2012.
- Circulated and endorsed by 57 NGOs nationwide.
- Submitted to the Minister of Education in April 2012 by the National Early Childhood Intervention Council.
- Memorandum was published in May 2012.

Sharing their inclusion experience



- Parents
- Shamalan
- Class teacher
- Classmates

