

## **Could kindergarten teachers' dispositions influence the inclusion of pupils with special needs in their classrooms?**

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### **Abstract:**

According to the principles of UNESCO, as they defined in the Declaration of Salamanca (1994) for the recognition of rights of students with special needs, the principle of inclusion should guide any educational policy and thus children with special educational needs should attend ordinary public schools. Greek law for the special education and training (Law 3699/2008) promotes the inclusion of pupils with disabilities in the normal kindergarten classrooms. The purpose of this study is to investigate how the dispositions of the kindergarten teachers, according to Bourdieu's theory, could influence the inclusion of pupils with special needs to the kindergarten. The research was carried out during the school year 2012-2013 using questionnaire with kindergarten teachers who worked in kindergartens in the region of the city of Patras. The results revealed that the dispositions of kindergarten teachers could affect the effort of inclusion on the grounds that: a) the kindergarten teachers, who participated in this research, expressed low level of agreement to the specific policy; And, b) the kindergarten teachers showed a low level of readiness to educate pupils with special needs because they argued that they lack suitable knowledge, ability, teaching experience and training to correspond to the demands of this purpose. Thus in case that pupils with disabilities enroll in their kindergarten in all probability teachers would feel anxiety, insecure and fear. Also, they would immediately ask the help of the Advisors for the kindergarten school in order to support them, and if possible to send special personnel for the education of the children with special needs. Consequently, the necessity for establishing official in-service training programs on special education for kindergarten teachers arises from this research in order to change their dispositions and facilitate the pupils' with special needs inclusion in ordinary kindergarten classrooms.

### **Introduction**

Issues that are related to the education of people with special educational needs and disabilities, as well as perceptions and attitudes of teachers who interact with them in daily educational reality, are an important area of scientific interest (see Anati & Ain, 2012; Campbell, Gilmore, & Cuskelly, 2003; Gal, Schreur, & Engel-Yeger, 2010; Lambe & Bones, 2008; Nind, Flewitt, & Payler, 2010; Odom & Diamond, 1998).

A trend that has formed internationally for the education of students with special needs is the inclusion of attendance in classrooms of ordinary schools (Barton, 1997; Schlifer, 2005; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009, 2012). In the case of Greece the enactment of Law 3699 (2008) for special education and training requires the inclusion of pupils with disabilities in normal kindergarten classrooms. This Law follows the principles of UNESCO as defined in the Declaration of Salamanca (1994) for the recognition of the rights of students with special educational needs and the promotion of equal educational opportunities for specific pupils (Tzivinikou & Koutsokosta, 2011). Furthermore, according to the current curriculum for Greek kindergarten (Pedagogic Institute, 2011),

the adoption of a “differentiated pedagogical approach” is required for every single case of a student with special needs. Therefore, every form of learning disability is a challenge for the kindergarten teacher who is asked to design and implement different educational programs in order to cover the educational needs of these students that attend his/her class. This fact leads to the question: Are kindergarten teachers willing and have the ability to implement the educational policy of inclusion for pupils with special needs and disabilities?

This paper focuses on the exploration of how the dispositions of Greek kindergarten teachers could influence the inclusion of pupils with special needs in kindergarten.

This study begins with theoretical remarks followed by the research question and methodology and a presentation and discussion of the findings in subsequent sections. Finally, the paper ends with concluding remarks.

### **Theoretical Remarks**

According to Bourdieu (1977) the term disposition “*expresses what is covered by the concept of habitus (defined as a system of dispositions)*” (p. 214). The dispositions of a person are formed under the influence of experiences in the social environment in which these external structures are internalized (Swartz, 1997, p. 103) setting limits in his/her actions and choices. These “*acquired dispositions*” define how each person understands, realizes and evaluates social reality, because they guide the formation of behaviours and strategies that he/she chooses in various social fields in which he/she participates (Bourdieu, 1990a).

In particular, Bourdieu claims that dispositions define the ways in which people act and they make up an internalization and incorporation of the basic social conditions of their being. The contribution of primary socialization within the family is important in the creation of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990b; Jacobs, 2007). This primary habitus is subject to change during the life of individuals under the influence of education and the exercise of a profession (Bourdieu, 1977). Consequently, habitus is a product of a person's past (Bourdieu, 1990a) that is why “*different conditions of existence produce different habitus*” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170).

In the case of this study kindergarten teachers provide dispositions in order to approach students with special educational needs. These are formed as a result of: a) the knowledge and experience that they have acquired during their historical journey and actions in different social fields; b) their education and training; and c) their professional occupation with students with special needs and disabilities (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990a; Swartz, 1997). These dispositions, although they change, appear frequently as if they are permanent in character (Bourdieu, 1990b, 1998) because they are integrated into teachers' daily practices and guide their pedagogical choices for the education of students in their classrooms. Habitus consists of embodied social knowledge and is detected in the practical effects of a person's actions, in his/her way of speaking, in his/her perceptions and arguments that he/she expresses on specific issues (Bourdieu, 1990b, pp. 68-79), such as the implementation of an inclusion educational policy. Therefore, habitus consists of a practical logic that appears as an embodied conviction (Bourdieu, 1998). Also, habitus has a productive character on the grounds that it guides the way that people improvise and exhibit creative behaviours in order to face difficult or unpredictable situations (Sterne, 2003). Such is the case that kindergarten teachers, who do not have sufficient knowledge on special education, choose to formulate strategies to educate children with special needs that enrol to attend their classrooms.

Habitus is reshaped under the influence of experience that actors gain by their daily presence and activation within specific social fields (Bourdieu, 1998). This fact allows a change of teachers' dispositions on the inclusion of students with special needs and disabilities in ordinary schools. In addition, that could push them to try to gain theoretical and practical knowledge on special education in order to be able to adapt to current educational requirements that are strictly connected with the application of an inclusion policy.

### **Research Question and Methodology**

The main research question of this study is: Could kindergarten teachers' dispositions influence the inclusion of pupils with special needs in their classrooms?

In order to answer this question we carried out research during the spring semester of the school year 2012-2013 using an appropriate questionnaire. Forty-five kindergarten teachers (44 women and 1 man) that worked in ordinary public kindergartens in the region of the city of Patras participated in the study. Their average age was 42.5 years old and their teaching experience was 15.3 years. Thirty-four kindergarten teachers of the sample (75.6%) were university graduates and 11 individuals (24.4%) were two-year Preschool Pedagogical Academy graduates (8 of them had attended in university an imitation of a real degree program). Moreover, three kindergarten teachers (6.7%) had a master's degree. In conclusion, 93.4% of the kindergarten teachers of the sample were university graduates.

To accomplish this study an appropriate questionnaire has been utilized that consisted of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire included questions on demographic characteristics of the sample. The second part of the questionnaire is composed of questions related to: the kindergarten teachers' opinions on the educational policy of inclusion, their self-esteem on their ability to educate children with special needs and disabilities, and their thoughts and reactions when they are informed that a child with special needs is going to attend their classroom. It should be noted that the findings of this research are not generalizable but are both indicative and revealing of the dispositions of a significant part of current Greek kindergarten teachers on inclusion.

### **Results and Discussion**

Thirty five kindergarten teachers (77.8% of the sample) had teaching experience with students with special educational needs on the grounds that during their educational career they taught children with speech problems (35 cases, 100% of the kindergarten teachers that had experience with children with special educational needs), with learning disabilities (34 cases, 97.1%), with behavioural problems (30 cases, 85.7%), with diagnosed attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (13 cases, 37.1%), with autism (13 cases, 37.1%), with mental retardation (5 cases, 14.3%), with physical limitations (4 cases, 11.4%), with vision problems (4 cases, 11.4%), with hearing problems (3 cases, 8.6%) and with Down Syndrome (2 cases, 5.7%). A significant part of the kindergarten teachers of the sample, who had taught children with special needs, claimed that their experience were neither positive nor negative (18 teachers, 39.6%). Consequently, their experience could be assessed as neutral. In addition, 10 kindergarten teachers (22%) evaluated their teaching experience with children with special needs as negative and 7 individuals (15.4%) as positive or very positive.

When the kindergarten teachers were questioned if they think that "the policy that determines the inclusion of students with special educational needs in normal classes is right", 29 of them answered negatively (cases "not at all" and "a little",

64.4%), 8 (17.8%) stated that they don't have a clear view and only 8 teachers (17.8%) had positive attitude towards the inclusion policy. Moreover, when they were asked to choose to teach either in a classroom in which children with special educational needs attended or in another classroom with children without special needs only 1 kindergarten teacher (2.2%) chose to work with the first group of children, 39 (86.7%) chose the second group of pupils and 5 teachers (11.1%) stated that they had not a clear view on their choice.

Table 1 presents the answers given by the kindergarten teachers of the sample when asked about which of the students with special needs and disabilities should attend in regular kindergarten classes, as defined by Law 3699/2008.

**Table 1. Cases of children that should be included and study in regular kindergarten classes.**

<b>Pupils with:</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>A little</b>	<b>I don't know</b>	<b>A lot</b>	<b>Very much</b>	<b>Mean (SD)</b>
Learning disabilities	1 (2.2%)	10 (22.2%)	3 (6.7%)	24 (53.4%)	7 (15.5%)	3.58 (1.08)
Behavioural problems	1 (2.2%)	15 (33.3%)	3 (6.7%)	24 (53.4%)	2 (4.4%)	3.24 (1.05)
Speech disorders	2 (4.4%)	8 (17.8%)	3 (6.7%)	25 (55.6%)	7 (15.5%)	3.6 (1.1)
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	12 (26.7%)	10 (22.2%)	9 (20.0%)	14 (31.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2.56 (1.2)
Physical limitations	12 (26.7%)	15 (33.3%)	8 (17.8%)	7 (15.5%)	3 (6.7%)	2.42 (1.23)
Vision problems	18 (40.1%)	6 (13.3%)	16 (35.5%)	4 (8.9%)	1 (2.2%)	2.2 (1.14)
Hearing problems	17 (37.9%)	7 (15.5%)	15 (33.3%)	5 (11.1%)	1 (2.2%)	2.24 (1.15)
Autism	22 (48.9%)	11 (24.4%)	10 (22.2%)	2 (4.4%)	0 (0.0%)	1.82 (0.94)
Mental retardation	26 (57.8%)	5 (11.1%)	12 (26.7%)	2 (4.4%)	0 (0.0%)	1.78 (1.00)
Down Syndrome	26 (57.8%)	3 (6.7%)	13 (28.9%)	3 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1.84 (1.07)

The results in Table 1 reveal that kindergarten teachers accepted (cases "a lot" and "very much") the inclusion of students in normal classrooms with speech disorders (32 teachers, 71.1%; Mean=3.6, SD=1.1), learning disabilities (31 teachers, 68.9%; Mean=3.58, SD=1.08), and behavioural problems (26 teachers, 57.8%; Mean=3.24, SD=1.05). In contrast, they were negative for the perspective of attendance in normal classrooms (cases "not at all" and "a little") of children with autism (33 teachers, 73.3%; Mean=1.82, SD=0.94), mental retardation (31 teachers, 68.9%; Mean=1.78, SD=1.00), Down Syndrome (29 teachers, 64.5%; Mean=1.84, SD=1.07), physical limitations (27 teachers, 60.0%; Mean=2.42, SD=1.23), hearing problems (24 teachers, 53.4%; Mean=2.24, SD=1.15) and vision problems (24 teachers, 53.4%; Mean=2.2, SD=1.14).

In Table 2 the self-evaluation of kindergarten teachers' knowledge and abilities regarding their readiness to teach students with special educational needs are presented.

**Table 2. Self-evaluation of kindergarten teachers' knowledge and abilities regarding their readiness to teach students with special educational needs.**

Answers	Not at all	A little	I am not sure	A lot	Very much	Mean (SD)
I'm trained to teach students with special needs and disabilities in my classroom.	25 (55.5%)	17 (37.8%)	1 (2.2%)	2 (4.4%)	0 (0.0%)	1.56 (0.76)
I can diagnose which children have special needs and disabilities.	1 (2.2%)	17 (37.8%)	2 (4.4%)	22 (48.9%)	3 (6.7%)	3.2 (1.1)
I can design and implement individualized teaching programs for students with special needs.	25 (55.5%)	18 (40.0%)	2 (4.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1.49 (0.59)
I have experience to support the educational needs of children with special needs.	20 (44.0%)	19 (42.2%)	3 (6.7%)	3 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1.76 (0.86)
I am mentally and emotionally prepared to work in classes with children with special needs.	22 (48.9%)	18 (40.0%)	2 (4.4%)	2 (4.4%)	1 (2.2%)	1.71 (0.92)

From Table 2 we can conclude that although most of the kindergarten teachers of the sample said they could diagnose and identify which children are students with special needs (cases "a lot" and "very much": 25 teachers, 55.6%; Mean=3.2, SD=1.1), almost all of them replied they cannot design and implement individualized educational programs for these students as required by the modern kindergarten curriculum (43 teachers, 95.5%). This is because they feel they lack the necessary education and training for this purpose (42 teachers, 93.3%). Thus, they do not feel mentally and emotionally prepared to work in classrooms that have students in attendance with special needs (40 teachers, 88.9%). They also believe that their experience is not sufficient to help them respond to the education of children with special needs (39 teachers, 86.2%).

Table 3 presents the thoughts and emotional reactions of the kindergarten teachers of the sample in the case in which they are informed during the school year that a student with special educational needs is going to unexpectedly enrol and attend their classroom.

**Table 3. Thoughts and emotional reactions of kindergarten teachers at the sudden arrival of pupils with special educational needs attending their classes.**

Answers	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Very much	Mean (SD)
Concern because they are not trained.	1 (2.2%)	8 (17.8%)	1 (2.2%)	21 (46.7%)	14 (31.1%)	3.87 (1.12)
Fear of facing serious teaching problems.	2 (4.4%)	10 (22.2%)	2 (4.4%)	20 (44.5%)	11 (24.5%)	3.62 (1.21)
Insecure that they would not succeed to	3 (6.7%)	10 (22.2%)	2 (4.4%)	23 (51.1%)	7 (15.6%)	3.47 (1.19)

educate children with special needs.						
Overturn their teaching plan.	1 (2.2%)	13 (28.9%)	4 (8.9%)	22 (48.9%)	5 (11.1%)	3.37 (1.09)
Interfere with operating rules of their class.	0 (0.0%)	14 (31.0%)	7 (15.6%)	17 (37.8%)	7 (15.6%)	3.38 (1.09)
Belief that their work in kindergarten will be more difficult.	0 (0.0%)	12 (26.6%)	4 (8.9%)	21 (46.7%)	8 (17.8%)	3.55 (1.08)
Need to ask immediately for help and support by experts.	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.4%)	1 (2.2%)	23 (51.1%)	19 (42.2%)	4.31 (0.73)
Confidence that they will manage to work as expected.	15 (33.4%)	24 (53.3%)	2 (4.4%)	3 (6.7%)	1 (2.2%)	1.91 (0.92)

From Table 3 it can be concluded that the majority of kindergarten teachers participating in the survey did not have appropriate dispositions to accept and educate students with special educational needs. More specifically, the raw emotional reactions of most kindergarten teachers (cases "a lot" and "very much") for such perspective are: concern (35 teachers, 77.8%), fear (31 teachers, 69%) and insecurity (30 teachers, 66.7%). This is because they believe that their work will become very difficult (29 teachers, 64.5%) and will topple their teaching programming and teaching preparation (27 teachers, 60%). Also, kindergarten teachers of the sample believe there will be problems in maintaining the operating rules of their class (24 cases, 53.4%) because students with disabilities face difficulties adjusting to the "new" classroom environment. So they feel it is imperative to seek immediate help and support from specialists (42 teachers, 93.3%; Mean=4.31, SD=0.73). Therefore, there seems to be an apparent reluctance of kindergarten teachers to work with students with special needs. This fact explains the small number of teachers (4, 8.9 %) who felt confident that they would be able to educate and integrate students with special needs and disabilities into their regular classroom.

Table 4 presents the proposed actions of the kindergarten teachers of the sample in the case that during the school year a pupil with special educational needs unexpectedly comes in order to attend their classroom.

**Table 4. Proposed actions of kindergarten teachers when a student with special educational needs comes to attend their classroom**

Questions	Not at all	A little	I am not sure	A lot	Very much	Mean (SD)
They would simultaneously inform both the Advisor of Early Childhood Education and the Advisor of Special Education.	0 (0.0%)	4 (8.9%)	1 (2.2%)	14 (31.1%)	26 (57.8%)	4.37 (0.91)
They would ask for immediate assistance from the Advisor of Early Childhood Education.	1 (2.2%)	10 (22.2%)	5 (11.1%)	12 (26.7%)	17 (37.8%)	3.75 (1.12)

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They would ask for immediate assistance from the Advisor of Special Education.	0 (0.0%)	5 (11.1%)	2 (4.4%)	14 (31.1%)	24 (53.3%)	4.27 (1.0)
They would seek frequent support mainly from the Advisor of Early Childhood Education.	3 (6.7%)	20 (44.4%)	4 (8.9%)	10 (22.2%)	8 (17.8%)	3.00 (1.0)
They would seek frequent support mainly from the Advisor of Special Education.	0 (0.0%)	3 (6.7%)	2 (4.4%)	16 (35.6%)	24 (53.3%)	4.35 (0.87)
They would ask the parents to ensure an examination of their child by a special committee in order to offer clear assistive instructions.	1 (2.2%)	5 (11.1%)	2 (4.4%)	16 (35.6%)	21 (46.7%)	4.13 (1.09)
They would ask for the examination of the child by a special committee in order to be transferred to a special kindergarten or to a special classroom.	4 (8.9%)	11 (24.4%)	7 (15.6%)	11 (24.4%)	12 (26.7%)	3.35 (1.23)
They would seek support from qualified staff in order to keep the pupil in their classroom.	2 (4.4%)	5 (11.1%)	3 (6.7%)	19 (42.2%)	16 (35.6%)	3.93 (0.87)
They would ask for support from a special teacher.	1 (2.2%)	1 (2.2%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (33.4%)	28 (62.2%)	4.51 (0.81)

An examination of the data in Table 4 shows that if a student with special needs and disabilities is going to attend an ordinary classroom, the kindergarten teachers that participated in this research would react (cases “a lot” and “very much”) as follows: They would inform the Advisors of Early Childhood Education and of Special Education, as they have to according to rules of their agency (40 teachers, 88.9%), but they would seek immediate help from the latter (38 teachers, 84.5%) and they would seek to ensure that his/her support will be permanent (40 teachers, 88.9%). That is teachers of the sample desire the assistance of the Advisor of Special Education to be stable and permanent. Also, they would like their teaching work to be supported by a special educator (43 teachers, 95.6%). Moreover, they would ask the child’s parents to ensure the examination of their child by the Centre of Differential Diagnosis and Support (CEDDS), which is the official scientific committee for this purpose. They expect that the CEDDS will make the proper diagnosis and will give them instructions on how they should approach and work with the particular student (37 teachers, 82.3%). An interesting finding is the smallest degree of confidence in the Advisor of Early Childhood Education, who has a direct employment relationship with the kindergarten teachers of the sample, compared with the Advisor of Special Education to deal with issues related to pupils with special needs. Therefore, the number of kindergarten teachers who would seek immediate help and advice by the Advisor of Early Childhood Education is smaller (29 cases, 64.5%) and even smaller is the number of those who would like frequent support mainly from this Advisor to deal with problems related to the education of students with special needs in their classrooms (18

cases, 40%). Moreover, it seems that a large part of the kindergarten teachers of the sample maintain a traditional rationale in approaching the children with special needs. Thus, in order to keep specific students in their classrooms they ask for permanent support by qualified staff (35 teachers, 77.8%). Also, many kindergarten teachers (23 cases, 51.1%) would request the examination of a child by the expert committee (CEDDS) in order to decide to move him/her to a special kindergarten or to a kindergarten that includes a special classroom for students of a specific group. Therefore, these views reflect the existence of dispositions for the separation rather than the inclusion of pupils with special needs in ordinary kindergarten classrooms.

Table 5 presents the opinions of the kindergarten teachers on the educational and training requirements that could facilitate the inclusion of students with special needs in the mainstream kindergarten classrooms.

**Table 5. Requirements for the education of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes from kindergarten teachers.**

Questions	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Very much	Mean (SD)
A kindergarten teacher in order to be effective should know how to approach students with special needs and disabilities.	1 (2.2%)	2 (4.4%)	3 (6.7%)	18 (40.0%)	21 (46.7%)	4.24 (0.93)
Current kindergarten teachers should be trained in teaching pupils with special needs and disabilities.	2 (4.4%)	5 (11.1%)	5 (11.1%)	17 (37.8%)	16 (35.6%)	3.89 (1.15)
If I had trained on issues related to the education of children with special needs I could succeed.	0 (0.0%)	9 (20.0%)	5 (11.1%)	26 (57.8%)	5 (11.1%)	3.6 (0.92)

The elements in Table 5 show that a significant number of kindergarten teachers (cases “a lot” and “very much”: 31 teachers, 68.9%) believe that if they had participated in in-service training programs in special education they could have managed the education of students with special needs in their classrooms. It is obvious that they believe that current kindergarten teachers should be trained in teaching children with special needs (33 teachers, 73.4%) in order to be able to be effective in their job (39 teachers, 86.7%).

Consequently, the findings of this study show that the majority of kindergarten teachers of the sample have negative dispositions both for the acceptance of inclusion educational policy and to the prospect of teaching in classrooms in which students with special needs attend. The specific kindergarten teachers' dispositions emerged as a result of the construction of their habitus during their history in the fields of education and from the exercise of their profession (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990a). It is striking that these kindergarten teachers consider their education and in-service training to approach issues of children with special needs and disabilities inadequate. Also, this study revealed that



the majority of kindergarten teachers (84.4%) did not have a positive experience in their effort to educate students with special needs in their mainstream classrooms.

As habitus is directly linked to the experiences of individuals and determines their perception of everyday and professional reality (Bourdieu, 1990a), we observed that teachers of the sample had worked in their classrooms primarily with students who had speech problems (77.8% of the total sample), learning disabilities (75.5%) and behavioural problems (66.7%). This seems to have contributed to shaping acceptance dispositions in ordinary classrooms of children presenting specific problems.

Furthermore, this study noted the existence of a cultural lag or "hysteresis effect" in the kindergarten teachers' habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; Swartz, 1998). This is because, although the objective conditions for the education of students with special needs and disabilities have changed by Law 3699/2008 and the contemporary kindergarten curriculum (Pedagogic Institute, 2011), there is a trend in the minds of kindergarten teachers to maintain outdated perceptions in the approach of specific individuals. Thus, it is typical that the expectation of a significant part of the kindergarten teachers of the sample (51.1%) is that the examination by the CEDDS of children with special needs who attend their classrooms will lead to either moving them to a special kindergarten or to a kindergarten that has a special classroom. Also, it seems to be dominant in the minds of kindergarten teachers (77.8%) the misconception about the possibility of negotiating with educational authorities to accept that children with special needs in their ordinary classrooms stay if their effort is enhanced by the appointment of qualified special staff. In addition, kindergarten teachers find it difficult to respond to new work conditions requiring the implementation of the inclusion policy because of their objective life conditions that contributed to shaping their professional habitus (Bourdieu, 1990b, 1998). That is why we pinpointed feelings of insecurity, anxiety and fear to teachers of the sample in perspective of working in classrooms that include students with special needs. Indeed, kindergarten teachers trying to improvise to tackle difficult professional situations (Bourdieu, 1990b; Sterne, 2003), such as the arrival of a new student with special needs and disabilities in their classroom, stated that they will be immediately active in order to guarantee themselves the provision of moral and scientific support mainly by the Advisor of Special Education. Simultaneously, the exercise of educational work in the new conditions creates preconditions for changing the habitus of kindergarten teachers (Bourdieu, 1977). That is why the kindergarten teachers who participated in this study recognize the necessity of education and training of modern teachers in issues of special education in order to be able to approach and educate students with special needs and disabilities.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In this study we tried to answer the question whether kindergarten teachers' dispositions could influence the inclusion of pupils with special needs in their classrooms. The results revealed that the dispositions of kindergarten teachers could affect the effort of inclusion on the grounds that: a) kindergarten teachers who participated in this research expressed a low level of agreement to the specific policy; and, b) kindergarten teachers showed a low level of readiness to educate pupils with special needs because they argued that they lacked suitable knowledge, ability, teaching experience and training to correspond to the demands of this purpose. Thus, in the case that pupils with disabilities enrol in their kindergarten classroom in all probability teachers would feel anxiety, insecurity and fear. Also, they would immediately ask for help from advisors for the kindergarten school and especially of the Advisor for Special Education in order to support them, and if possible to send special personnel for the

education of children with special needs. Thus, the necessity for establishing official in-service training programs on special education for kindergarten teachers arises from this research in order to change their dispositions and facilitate pupils' with special needs inclusion in mainstream kindergarten classrooms.

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