



IEC Associate Information



Marilyn Dolmage

Independent Consultant - to families, school boards and community agencies.
Toronto, Ontario



Marilyn Dolmage assists schools and families to work together to improve education for students of all abilities. She communicates with a broad network across Ontario concerning the law, provincial policies, educational practices, research and advocacy strategies. She led a series of projects for The Ontario Coalition for Inclusive Education since 1995. Marilyn works alongside people with disabilities and their families to end segregation, promote effective inclusion and create new support relationships. She led the class action and settlement, concerning abuses at Huronia Regional Centre, an Ontario government institution.

The insights of Marilyn's three children have given her hope for the future. Her family struggled to ensure they attended school together, and to assist her older son to have the education, medical treatment, employment and community life he wanted. Matthew's sudden death in 2004 – at the age of 29 – has heightened her resolve to improve policy and strengthen families, schools and communities.

Interests:

- I am often called to advocate with families in the struggle to ensure that their sons and daughters are learning as members of regular classes. Fortunately, I can find a more positive focus because I also connect with the few school boards in Ontario that really promote effective inclusion.
- It is necessary to focus on the strengths of students, teachers, classes, schools, families and communities.
- I want to promote academic learning and career development for students of all abilities.
- I have extensive experience on provincial working groups re policy, funding, planning, and practice.
- I have worked on unique projects in which self-advocates and families took the lead to promote school, board and Ministry change.
- I see inclusive education as key to a better life for people with developmental and other disabilities – whereby they make strong connections with and contributions to their communities.

Publications/Media:

- *Evidence of Effective High School Inclusion: Research, Resources and Inspiration* (2009) - http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/memos/april2009/IAI_EDU_research_report.pdf
- Information and Analysis re: (Special) Education Funding 2012-13 http://www.integration-inclusion.com/uploads/5/2/7/6/5276402/education_funding_2012-13.pdf

- “History examined: one women's story of disability and advocacy” in Disability and Mothering: Liminal spaces of embodied knowledge
- https://openlibrary.org/works/OL16486010W/Disability_and_mothering
- Toronto Star:
http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2013/09/29/the_hidden_heroes_of_huronia_goar.html
- CBC Radio: <http://www.cbc.ca/metromorning/episodes/2013/09/18/money-cant-pay-for-a-life/>

Consultation:

- “Students Learning Together” – a unique lesson adaptation pathway, starting with individual accommodation and moving to universal design
- Strengths-based planning – for students, teachers, classes, schools, families and communities
- Aiming higher – avoiding alternative lifeskills, behavioural and therapy goals; instead, connecting to academic curriculum (at both elementary and secondary levels)
- Provincial policy analysis – re funding, planning, outcomes
- Career development (not just “transition”) – as the goal for all students promoting effective collaboration among students, families, and school staff and administration

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