

Included or Connected?

Exploring the Difference Between Access and Belonging

Sometimes a child can be included without feeling connected.

They may attend class, participate in activities, receive support, and be present at school.

Yet belonging is about more than being there.

It is about feeling welcome.

Feeling known.

Feeling valued.

Feeling part of what is happening.

Included

- Present
- Participating
- Accessing support
- Attending activities

Connected

- Feeling welcome
- Feeling known
- Having relationships
- Knowing where you fit

Being there is not always the same as belonging.

What Does Inclusion Look Like?

Some parts of inclusion are easier for adults to see.

☐

Attends class

☐

Joins activities

☐

Goes on excursions

☐

Has accommodations

☐

Has a support plan

☐

Receives support

Reflection

Which of these are most visible to adults?

Inclusion is often what adults can see.

What Does Belonging Feel Like?

Belonging is often felt before it is seen.

☐

Someone sits with me

☐

Someone notices
when I am away

☐

I feel welcome

☐

I have people to talk to

☐

I feel safe being myself

☐

I know where I fit

Reflection

Which of these might adults not notice?

Presence is visible. Belonging is felt.

How Inclusion Feels

Sometimes adults see inclusion differently than children experience it.

At school, I feel most included when:

I feel connected to people when:

Something adults might not realise about inclusion is:

One thing I wish adults understood about belonging:

Final Reflection

Belonging feels like...

Inclusion is not only about being present.
It is about feeling part of what is happening.
