

# Let's Chat... about Inclusive Education

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**  
**Roberto Lattanzio**  
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Roberto Lattanzio is the Executive Director of ARCH Disability Law Centre. He first joined ARCH in 2003 and was appointed Executive Director in 2015. Roberto has acted as legal counsel in test case litigation at all levels of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada, and has made law

reform submissions to various levels of government, committees, and administrative bodies. Rob has been appointed to numerous advisory committees and has written and guest-lectured on diverse topics including equality and human rights law, administrative law, education law, capacity and supported decision making, disability rights, legislative reform, and social science evidence. He also has delivered extensive rights education training to diverse communities of persons with disabilities and continuing legal education to the legal profession. Robert received his LL.B and B.C.L. law degrees with distinction from McGill University in 2003. Robert has a long-standing interest in disability rights and social justice, with extensive work and volunteer experience within disability communities and other equality seeking communities. He has supported initiatives to promote inclusive education in cooperation with Community Living Ontario and Inclusive Education Canada. Roberto Lattanzio is a member of IEC's Network of Associates.

# Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Supporting Families:** It is important for families to understand their options and potential strategies for gaining access to the type of education they want for their child. ARCH provides summary advice and referral services to persons with disabilities (and their families) regarding education.
- 2. Lawyers Need the Help of Experts Too:** ARCH provides education to the legal community on the rights of persons with disabilities in general and in relation to education.
- 3. Communication is Key:** When families are seeking assistance from ARCH, often there is a breakdown in communication between a student/family and the school. In many instances, there is a lack of transparency, or accountability and structural issues in the school that are causing disputes that lead a family to seek legal support.
- 4. Inconsistencies in Policy:** There are major inconsistencies on policy and practices in the education system at both the provincial and local level. Canada, and in our case Ontario, has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Article 24 of the Convention provides an individual the right to inclusive education, yet the Ontario education act does not explicitly consider students as rights holders thus creating a dilemma for parents and advocates.
- 5. Ground Swell Needed for Change:** The law is a critical factor in addressing segregated education for students with disabilities. However, the opinions of parents and community members matter as well, and they are not always supportive of inclusion. A true ground swell of advocacy is needed to educate stakeholders on both the legal and educational reasons for our schools to be inclusive.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. What role can the law play in the movement towards inclusive education?
2. What types of issues do you think people seeking legal advice pertaining to inclusive education are dealing with?
3. What agencies or support groups support parents with the legal issues they encounter in advocating for inclusion?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. How do you think the provisions of Article 24 of the CRPD align with the perceived inconsistencies in education policy and practice connected to the inclusion of students with barriers to learning?
2. What do you consider the most important aspect of the work of agencies such as ARCH Disability Law Centre? Should they engage in individual or systemic advocacy? Which do you think should be given priority?
3. Do you know of other agencies that provide similar services as ARCH?

## More from Roberto Lattanzio:

- Reid, L., Parekh, G., Lattanzio, R., A Relic of the Past: Identification, Placement and Review Committees in Ontario's Education System, (2020) No. 194 CJEAP.  
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- Reid, L., Bennett, S., Specht, S. White, R., Somma, M., Li, X., Lattanzio, R., Gavan, K., Kyle, G., Porter, G. & Patel, A. If Inclusion Means Everyone, Why Not Me? (2018). ARCH Disability Law Centre, Community Living Ontario.  
<https://archdisabilitylaw.ca/resource/paper-if-inclusion-means-everyone-why-not-me/>
- Lattanzio, R., Disability and Public Education in Ontario: A Primer – Chapter 6, (2013) Disability Law Primer, ARCH Disability Law Centre.  
[https://15285public.rmwebopac.com/item/multimedia/faZ5CPdfmECrNHvh6fSQCQ\\_48Zg nRzAckqyZChmxfpP9w?isForView=True](https://15285public.rmwebopac.com/item/multimedia/faZ5CPdfmECrNHvh6fSQCQ_48ZgnRzAckqyZChmxfpP9w?isForView=True)
- Lattanzio, R., Letheren, L., Comparing the Incomparable in Human Rights Claims: Moore Guidance, (2013) Ontario Bar Association.  
<https://archdisabilitylaw.ca/resource/comparing-the-incomparable-in-human-rights-claims-moore-guidance/>
- Kerri, K., Lattanzio, R., Inclusive Education: Opportunities for ReDesign, in Roderick C. Flynn ed., CAPSLE 2010: The Rocky Road Ahead: Balancing Competing Interests at 85. Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for the Practical Study of Law in Education, held in Calgary, Alberta, April 25-27, 2010, (Toronto: CAPSLE, 2011). <https://archdisabilitylaw.ca/resource/inclusive-education-opportunities-for-redesign-2010/>



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