

PRESCHOOL INCLUSION: TOGETHER FROM THE START

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Co-sponsored by NJ Department of Education/Office of Special Education Programs (NJOSEP) and
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All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten...or Preschool

(by Robert Fulghum)

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Share everything.
Play fair.
Don't hit people.
Put things back where you
found them.
Clean up your own mess.
Don't take things that aren't
yours.
Say you're sorry when you
hurt somebody.
Wash your hands before you
eat.
Flush.

Warm cookies and cold milk
are good for you.
Live a balanced life -
Learn some and think some
And draw and paint and sing
and dance
And play and work everyday
some.
Take a nap every afternoon.
Hold hands and stick together.
Be aware of wonder.

Overview

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- What do we mean by inclusion and what is inclusive education?
- What are the benefits of inclusion that begin in preschool?
- What is the family's role?

Early Childhood Inclusion...

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...embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society...

Joint Position Statement on Early Childhood Inclusion

The National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (NAEYC/DEC)
www.dec-sped.org and www.naeyc.org

Research on Preschool Inclusion

- **Strong research base supporting preschool inclusion** (Buyse & Bailey, 1993; Guralnick, 2001; Holahan & Costenbader, 2000; Odom, 2000; Odom et al., 2002; Rafferty, Piscitelli & Boettcher, 2003).
- **The more varied & differentiated types of instruction used in inclusive classrooms have been found to benefit learners of all abilities** (NIEER, 2006; Odom et al., 2002).
- **Unexpected social-emotional gains for both children with and without disabilities** (Buyse, Goldman & Skinner, 2002; Peck, Carlson & Helmstetter, 1992).

Federal Law



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- ❖ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) - governs education of students with disabilities
- ❖ Americans with Disability Act (ADA 1990) - governs access for individuals with disabilities to community programs (includes Head Start, nursery school & daycare programs)

New Jersey



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- ❖ N.J.A.C. 6A:14 – NJ Administrative Code (Special Education chapter)
 - Special Education Regulations
- ❖ NJ Preschool Teaching & Learning Standards (Revised 2009)
 - Developed with all children in mind , including children with disabilities.

Coming together...

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QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment - LRE

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N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.2(a)

Students with disabilities shall be educated in the **least restrictive environment**. Each district board of education shall ensure that:

1. ...a student with a disability **is educated with children who are not disabled**
2. **Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of a student with a disability from the student's general education class occurs only when** the nature or severity of the educational disability is such that education in the student's general education class with **the use of appropriate supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily**

Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment - LRE

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- Placement in a typical early childhood classroom should be the first option that is considered by the IEP team of which you (the parent/family member) are a member.
- The key question to ask is – “what aids, supports, and services does my child need to make this possible?”

Joint Position Statement on Early Childhood Inclusion

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- Identifies high quality inclusive programs and services as having the following features:
 - Access – to a broad range of activities & environments
 - Participation – in play & learning with peers
 - Supports – for the child, program staff & family

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Early Childhood Program Opportunities – (LRE)

- ❑ Childcare settings
- ❑ Community activities
- ❑ Community early childhood programs
- ❑ Head Start
- ❑ District preschool classrooms



High Quality Inclusive Programs

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Take components of high quality general education preschool programs and look at the components we need to adapt, modify and/or change

...and apply them to create a high quality inclusive preschool program that supports all children.

Staying together...

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Individualized Education Program (IEP)

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The IEP is a written plan that:

- Is developed collaboratively with the family and team of professionals
- Describes where the child is now
- Lists educational and functional goals & objectives
- Identifies supports and services and where they will take place
- Describes how progress will be measured
- Is reviewed at least yearly

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

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At the IEP meeting, the focus should be on:

- The unique needs of the child
- The routines and activities of the preschool day and consideration of what accommodations and/or modifications need to be made to include the child in the general education classroom.

Family Participation in the IEP Process

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- You are a member of the team
- You are the ‘expert’ on your child
- You contribute valuable information about the individual needs of your child – likes/dislikes, routines, interests, strengths/successes, challenges/needs
- You contribute valuable information about your family – priorities, values, culture, relationships, and vision/dreams for your child

The Family's Role

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- ❑ Become familiar with the process
- ❑ Keep the discussion on the needs of your child
- ❑ Be available and willing to try new things and be creative – ‘think outside the box’
- ❑ Monitor your child's progress
- ❑ Understand your rights and your child's rights
- ❑ Work collaboratively with other experts on the IEP team

Reflection

Coming together is a beginning...

Staying together is progress...

Working together is success...

~ Henry Ford

Working together...

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Resources

- ❑ Center for Inclusive Child Care www.inclusivechildcare.org
- ❑ Circle of Inclusion www.circleofinclusion.org
- ❑ Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/
- ❑ UNC FPG Child Development Institute www.fpg.unc.edu
- ❑ National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) www.naeyc.org
- ❑ Division for Early Childhood, Council for Exceptional Children www.dec-sped.org
- ❑ National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) www.nectac.org
- ❑ National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHY) www.nichcy.org