Supporting Access and Inclusive Participation for ALL Children

Ready At Five School Readiness Symposium
“Building Equity In Early Learning!”
April 25, 2017

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Today’s Agenda

Introductions
Why We Are Here
Joint Policy Statement on Inclusion
Background on Inclusion: Research, Policies, Profession and Practice
Resources
Workgroup Activity
Closing
Why We Are Here

• [http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/resources/videos/video-1-10](http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/resources/videos/video-1-10)

• [http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/resources/videos/video-1-12](http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/resources/videos/video-1-12)

POLICY STATEMENTS
ED-HHS Joint Policy Statements

- Suspension and Expulsion (released December, 2014)
- Inclusion in Early Childhood (released September, 2015)
- Family Engagement (released May, 2016)
- Dual Language Learners (released June, 2016)

Policy Statements - Purpose

- Raise awareness
- Review the research base and legal foundation
- Provide State and local recommendations
- Disseminate free resources
Policy Statement

Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs

www.ed.gov/early-learning/inclusion
www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/inclusive-high-quality-early-childhood-programs

Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in EC Programs

It is the Departments’ position that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with appropriate support in meeting high expectations.
Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in EC Programs

The importance of early childhood inclusion:

- Meaningful inclusion is the **first step to equal opportunity**, and is **every person's right**
- Research indicates that meaningful inclusion is **beneficial to children with and without disabilities**
- Meaningful inclusion in high-quality early childhood programs can support children with disabilities in **reaching their full potential** resulting in broad societal benefits
- Meaningful inclusion in early childhood programs can set a **trajectory for inclusion** across the course of an individual's life

Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in EC Programs

The need to focus on inclusion in early childhood:

- Children with disabilities continue to face significant barriers to accessing inclusive early childhood programs
- Too many preschool children with disabilities receive special education services in settings separate from their peers without disabilities
- While States have worked to expand access to high-quality early learning programs, there has not been a proportionate expansion of inclusive early learning opportunities for young children with disabilities
Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in EC Programs

• A “high-quality” early childhood program is one that is inclusive of children with disabilities and their families and ensures that policies, funding, and practices enable their full participation and success.

• Families, early childhood programs, schools, communities, and government at all levels must develop a robust partnership to build a culture of inclusion to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to thrive.

Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in EC Programs

• Sets an expectation for high-quality inclusion in early childhood programs

• Highlights the legal and research base for inclusion

• Provides recommendations to States and local programs and providers for increasing inclusive early learning opportunities for all children

• Links to free resources for States, local programs and providers, and families that have been developed to support inclusion of children with disabilities in high-quality early education programs.
Policy Statement on Inclusion

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in EC Programs

Recommendations for Action

• Create an interagency team that plans for inclusion
• Partner with families
• Ensure policies are consistent with high-quality inclusion
• Track data on goals on inclusion
• Review and modify resource allocations
Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in EC Programs

Recommendations for Action

• Ensure systems are in place to assess and improve the quality of inclusion
• Strengthen accountability to ensure programs adhere to legal provisions
• Enhance professional development
• Ensure access to specialized services and supports, including those for social and emotional development
• Raise public awareness

What we know about inclusion

RESEARCH
Preschool Inclusion: Research

- Inclusion benefits children with and without disabilities
- Families of all children generally have positive views of inclusion
- Children with disabilities can be effectively educated in inclusive programs using modifications and specialized instruction
- Individualized instruction can be used to teach a variety of skills in inclusive preschool programs

Preschool Inclusion: Research (Cont.)

- Inclusion is not more expensive
- Children with disabilities do not need to be “ready”
- Successful inclusion requires intentional and effective collaboration and teaming
- High quality inclusive preschool = high quality early childhood program
Benefits of Inclusive EC Programs

- Activities and interactions help children understand that everyone makes an important contribution
- Individual strengths and needs are embraced
- Children learn to accept similarities and differences
- Children with disabilities benefit from role models
- Children without disabilities gain confidence, self-esteem and an understanding of diversity

POLICIES

IDEA, Dear Colleague Letter, Child Care Block Grant Law, Head Start Performance Standards
Preschool Inclusion: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

• § 300.114 LRE requirements. (ii) Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

• § 300.42 Supplementary aids and services. Supplementary aids and services means aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

• § 300.119 Technical assistance and training activities. Each SEA must carry out activities to ensure that teachers and administrators in all public agencies—
  (a) Are fully informed about their responsibilities for implementing § 300.114; and
  (b) Are provided with technical assistance and training necessary to assist them in this effort

Dear Colleague Letter related to Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) - Preschool LRE

• Reaffirms ED’s position that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized and appropriate supports to enable them to meet high expectations.

Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) - Preschool LRE

• Covers:
  – Key Statutory and Regulatory Requirements
  – Preschool Placement Options,
  – Reporting Educational Environments Data for Preschool Children with Disabilities
  – Use of IDEA Part B Funds for Preschool Children with Disabilities.
Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) - Preschool LRE

- Placement decisions regarding a preschool child with a disability who is served under Part B of IDEA must be individually determined based on child's abilities and needs as described in the child's individualized education program (IEP).

- Before a child is placed outside the regular education environment, the group of persons making the placement decision must consider whether supplementary aids and services could be provided that would enable the education of the child, including a preschool child with a disability, in the regular educational setting to be achieved satisfactorily.

Child Care Block Grant Federal Law

The CCDBG Act of 2014 requires that States:

- Develop strategies for increasing the supply and quality of child care services for children with disabilities;

- Provide information about the availability of the full diversity of child care services that will promote informed child care choices and that concerns programs carried out under Part B section 619 and part C of the IDEA;

- Provide information on developmental screenings including Part B section 619 and part C of the IDEA; and
Child Care Block Grant Federal Law

The CCDBG Act of 2014 requires that States:

- Provide training and professional development appropriate for a population of children that includes children with disabilities
- Promote and expand child care providers’ ability to provide developmentally appropriate services for infants and toddlers through training and professional development; coaching and technical assistance and improved coordination with early intervention specialists who provide services for infants and toddlers with disabilities

Applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS)

- § 1302.33 Child screenings and assessments.
  (a)(5) If...the child is not eligible for ... IDEA, the program must:
    (i) Seek guidance from a mental health or child development professional to determine if the ... evaluation shows... the delay ... is likely to interfere with development and school readiness; and,
    (ii) If the child has a significant delay, partner with parents to ... access services and supports to ... address the child's needs.
Applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS)

- § 1302.60 Full participation in program services and activities
- § 1302.61 Additional services for children
  (a) Additional services for children with disabilities.
  (b) Services during IDEA eligibility determination.
Preschool Inclusion: Profession

- The Council for Exceptional Children’s Division of Early Childhood (DEC) & the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)’s (2009) joint position statement supports inclusion:
  - Access
  - Participation
  - Supports


DEC/NAEYC Position Statement on Inclusion: Access

- Ensure that all children have access to effective learning environments; typical routines, activities, and settings; and general education curricula
- Enhanced physical accessibility
- Identify and eradicate physical or structural barriers
- Offer multiple and varied learning opportunities
DEC/NAEYC Position Statement on Inclusion: Participation

- Ensure all children are active, independent participants in their families, classrooms, and communities
- Use a range of instructional practices to ensure all children have opportunity to engage, participate, and learn across all domains
- Individualized accommodations, modifications, and adaptations to promote active participation and sense of belonging for all children
- Driven by the needs of the individual child and his/her family

DEC/NAEYC Position Statement on Inclusion: Supports

- Broader, infrastructure level support to administrators, teachers, staff, etc. to provide effective quality programs
- Programs ensure that all adults involved have access to:
  - Quality professional development, effective ongoing follow-up assistance, and support for collaborative teaming
  - Effective policies in place that promote and incentivize quality preschool inclusion
Preschool Inclusion: Practice

In 30 years, the practice of providing special education and related services in regular early childhood settings to preschoolers with disabilities has increased only 7.2% and many young children with disabilities continue to be educated in separate settings.

Increased only 7.2%
Survey of Inclusion Issues

238 respondents representing 32 states and 1 territory.

Survey Responses: Challenges to Preschool Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>% Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes &amp; Beliefs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiscal &amp; contracting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approval of non-public school setting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Differing Curricula</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Quality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflicting policies</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
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Components of Effective Inclusion

1. Intentional, sufficient, and supported interactions between peers with and without disabilities
2. Specialized, individualized supports
3. Family involvement
4. Integrated, interdisciplinary services and collaborative teaming
5. Focus on critical sociological outcomes
6. Effective, on-going professional development
7. Ongoing program evaluation

What Does a High-Quality Program that Supports All Children Look Like?

- Providers recognize that all children are individuals with special strengths and needs
- Parents are actively involved in planning their child’s education and experiences.
- Broad curriculum is used (and emphasizes cognitive and functional development, as well as social and emotional development).
- Planned/structured activities are in place that promote social integration and friendship development.
What Does a High-Quality Program that Supports All Children Look Like?

- Teaching strategies are individualized to meet the needs of every child.
- Providers monitor children’s development and ongoing progress.
- Creative modifications are made to routines and activities so that each child benefits from participation.

Preschool Inclusion: Summary

- Research is clear: inclusion is effective
- IDEA is clear: inclusion is preferred
- The profession is clear: inclusion is the right thing to do
- Yet rates of inclusion have not increased enough; most children with disabilities still are not being included
Where can you begin? How do you get started?

**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY**

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**Next Steps: Where can you begin**

- Partnering with Families *(Recommendation 1)*
- Assessing and Improving the Quality of Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs *(Recommendation 3)*
- Establishing an Appropriate Staffing Structure and Strengthening Staff Collaboration *(Recommendation 6)*
- Ensuring Access to Specialized Supports *(Recommendation 7)*
- Developing Formal Collaborations with Community Partners *(Recommendation 8)*
### Action Planning Tool

**Goal/Recommendation:** *E.g., Families are knowledgeable about the benefits of inclusion, understand their rights and know how to navigate the system*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Responsible Person(s)</th>
<th>Timeframe/Deadline(s)</th>
<th>Necessary Resources</th>
<th>Barriers/Challenges</th>
<th>Results/Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify existing materials for parents (ID Gaps)</td>
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<td>e.g., Funding, support from administrator, etc.</td>
<td>Getting buy-in</td>
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<td>Create a brochure for families</td>
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<td>Ask parents how they like to receive information</td>
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<td>Create parent texts with key info: Did you know?</td>
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**REPORT OUT**

- What challenges did you target?
- What strategies did you identify?
- What outstanding needs did you identify?
SUSPENSION & EXPULSION IN EARLY LEARNING

Discipline Practices- Preschool

• Early expulsion or suspension predicts later expulsion or suspension
• Estimates indicate that rates in early education are higher than in K12 settings
• Data consistently indicate large racial disparities, with young boys of color being suspended and expelled at disproportionately high rates
Disproportionate Discipline - Preschool

Preschool children are suspended from school at higher rates than school age students.

Disproportionate Discipline - Race

Black public preschool children are suspended from school at high rates: Black preschool children are **3.6 times** as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as white preschool children.

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights  Civil Rights Data Collection: Data Snapshot (School Discipline, 2016)
Disproportionate Discipline - Gender & Race

• Most public preschool children suspended are boys: **Boys** represent 54% of preschool enrollment, but 78% of preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions.

• **Black boys** represent 19% of male preschool enrollment, but 45% of male preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions.

• **Black girls** represent 20% of female preschool enrollment, but 54% of female preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions.

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. Civil Rights Data Collection: Data Snapshot (School Discipline, 2016)

Policy Statement: Suspension and Expulsion in Early Childhood Settings
Recommendations for States

- Develop and clearly communicate expulsion and suspension policies
- Set goals for improvement and analyze data to assess progress
- Invest in workforce preparation and development
- Establish and implement policies regarding program quality

Recommendations for Early Childhood Programs

- Develop and clearly communicate preventative guidance and discipline practices
- Develop and clearly communicate expulsion and suspension policies
- Assess technical assistance in workforce development to prevent expulsion and suspension
- Set goals and analyze data to assess progress
Pyramid Equity Project (PEP)

- ED funded PEP in August 2016 to:
  - Enhance Pyramid Model with explicit emphasis on culturally responsive practices and implicit bias
  - Develop two model sites - program-wide use of effective practices that promote the social and emotional skills of all children, prevent challenging behavior, and provide individualized interventions for children with persistent challenging behavior
  - Demonstrate the implementation of training, data decision-making, ongoing professional development, classroom coaching, and leadership

RESOURCES
Resources: Early Childhood TA Center

Inclusion in Least Restricive Environments

ECTA Team on Inclusion
Kathy Whaley | Katy McCutcheon | Mary Peters
Megan Vanh | Debbie Cato | Barbara Smith | Judy Sweet | Karissa Martin

Most recent additions to this topic:

- Webinar: Preparing a High-Quality Workforce to Support Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs - September 7, 2016 2:00 to 3:00 ET

National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute:

- 2016 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute (May 10-12, 2016)
- 2016 National Inclusion Webinar Series (February-April, 2016)

Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs (September 14, 2016): The U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services released guidance setting a vision for action that recommends states, districts, schools and public and private early childhood programs prioritize and implement policies that support inclusion, improve their infrastructure and offer professional development to strengthen and increase the number of inclusive high-quality early childhood programs nationwide. The Departments crafted the guidance with the input of early learning professionals, families and early learning stakeholders.

Resources: DEC Recommended Practices

- http://www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices
**Additional Resources**

- HHS & ED: *Policy Statement on Inclusion of Young Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs*
- HHS & ED: *Policy Statement Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Settings*
- ACF IM: Developmental & Behavioral Screenings in CCDBG
- DEC/NAEYC: Position on Early Childhood Inclusion
- ECLKC web resources: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/Disabilities
- ED Web page: www.ed.gov/early-learning/inclusion

**Maryland State Contacts**

- **Part C Contact:**
  
  Brian Morrison, Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program  
  Div. of Special Education/Early Intervention Services  
  State Department of Education  
  200 West Baltimore Street, 9th Floor  
  Baltimore, MD 21201  
  Phone: (410) 767-0863  
  Email: bmorrisson@msde.state.md.us  
  Website: http://archives.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/divisions/earlyinterv/infant_toddlers/about/message.htm  
  Refer Phone: (800) 535-0182

- **619 State Contact:**
  
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  Email: nancy.vorobey@maryland.gov  
  Website: http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Special-Education/index.aspx

http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Special-Education/index.aspx