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Learning Materials that Promote Inclusion for Infants and Toddlers

Viewer's Guide

This viewer's guide gives you ideas for creating learning environments for all infants and toddlers. The reflection questions and activities will help you think about ways to support children's learning. Helpful resources can be found in the Resources section of this guide.

Definition of Early Childhood Inclusion

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) together provided a shared definition of what inclusion means and looks like in early learning environments.

“Early childhood inclusion 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.

The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high-quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports.”

(DEC/NAEYC, 2009)



National Center on

Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning

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Video 1: Disability Laws Video (Available on MyPeers)

Below is a list of important terms and acronyms related to disabilities laws and practices.

Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Accepting children with disabilities into educational programs is the law. IDEA, or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the special education federal law that ensures the educational needs of students with disabilities are met throughout the nation.

IDEA Part B and Part C

IDEA Part B regulations relate to the education of children aged 3 and above with disabilities. IDEA Part C regulations relate to early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An IEP is a written legal document that describes individualized special education and related services a child qualifies for. It includes annual goals and objectives and specific accommodations and modifications.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

Every infant and toddler who is eligible for early intervention services has an IFSP. An IFSP is a written legal document that describes individualized early intervention services for infants, toddlers, and their families. The plan includes specific outcomes and services for children and families.

American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

This federal law requires that all childcare and early learning programs make reasonable efforts to serve children with disabilities.



Familiarize yourself with the terms and acronyms



Access this video on MyPeers



Share this video with parents and colleagues

Video 2: Participation in the Infant Toddler Environment

Write down some ways this teacher supported the toddler's participation with the learning materials in the environment.

Small Changes – Big Impact

Write down some modification ideas you saw that you'd like to try for the infants and toddlers in your learning environment.

Strategies for Supporting Quality Inclusive Learning Environments

Infants



Inviting materials

Offer a variety of soft toys, cloth books, and sensory toys

- Toys are washable and safe for infants to explore with their mouth.
- Place them at the infant's level during free play.

Individualize: If an infant is having trouble with an object, offer another object that is easier to explore.

**Source: Circle Time Magazine, Season 3, Episode 1*

Toddlers



Inviting materials

Have materials that engage the five senses

- Having toys and materials that provide opportunity to explore different smells, textures, movement, visual effects, volumes, and types of sound.
- Make sure enough materials are available for all toddlers to explore.

Individualize: If a toddler shows little interest in materials, make them larger or brighter. Use big, sturdy books; brightly colored blocks and puzzles; shiny paper and scented markers.

**Source: Circle Time Magazine, Season 3, Episode 1*

Try it Out!

Begin with taking time to reflect on how well your early learning environment offers equitable and inclusive experiences for children and families.

Here are some aspects of high-quality inclusive early learning social and physical environments. Think about each of these aspects and what you do or can do to increase access and participation for all children.

A Safe and Supportive Physical Environment



Is your early learning environment welcoming and comfortable for all children, families, education staff, and consulting specialists?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Is the space arranged to allow all children to move around safely and explore?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Inviting Materials



Are toys and materials interesting and stimulating for all children?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Have materials been adapted to facilitate use by all children?

Your answers:

What you might change:

A Daily Schedule and Consistent Routines



Is the daily schedule posted at children's level, so it is visible to all children?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Do you adjust routines to facilitate all children's participation?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Connecting and Communicating with All Children



Have staff developed strong personal relationships with all children?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Do staff use a variety of ways to facilitate communication for all children?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Engaging Interactions and Meaningful Learning Experiences



Do learning activities build on children’s interests and individual strengths?

Your answers:

What you might change:

What supports and modifications do you provide to make sure all children participate in regular learning activities?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Reflection

When thinking about the materials in your learning environment, look at them from the infant toddler perspective. Take a moment to answer these questions from the eyes of the infants and toddlers in your learning environment.

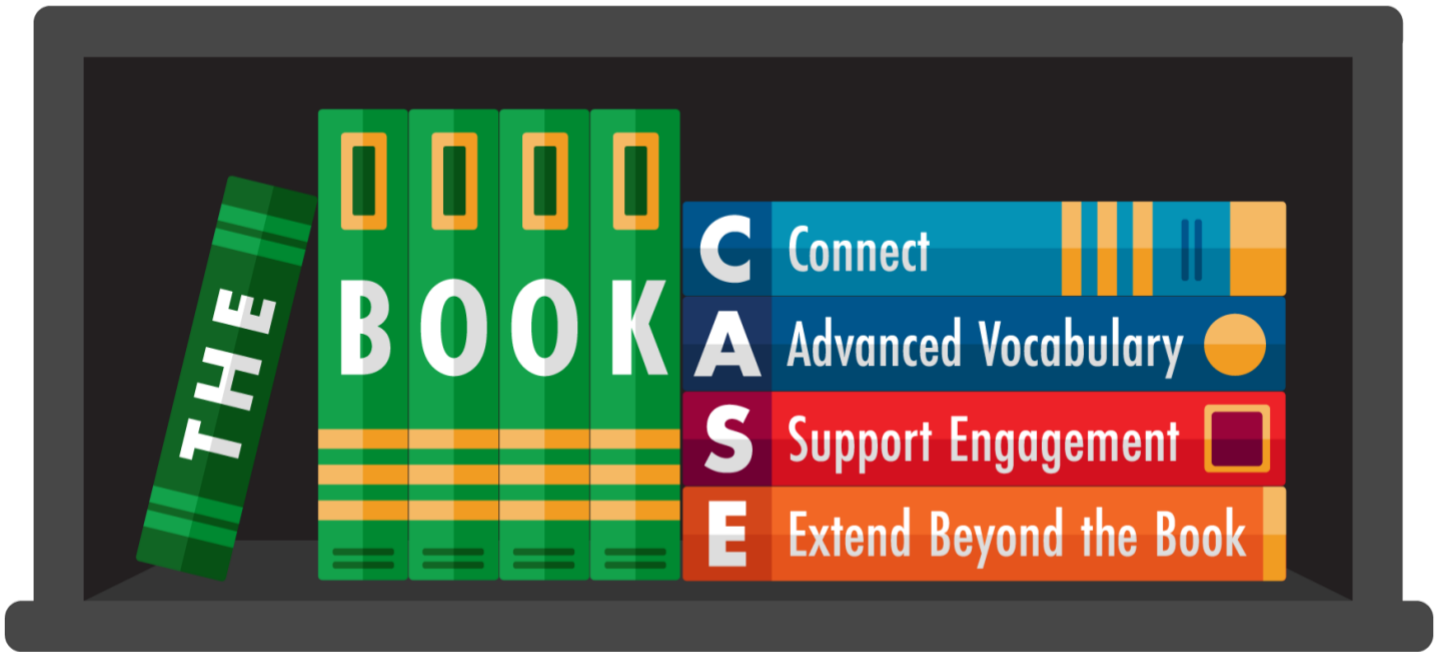
Is there something I know how to use and can use independently in each learning area?

Are there objects and materials that reflect my interests and make me excited about learning?

Video 3: Adapting Materials

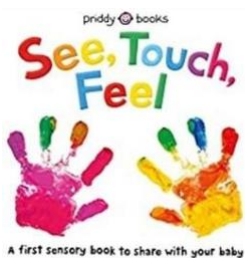
Write down some of the things this teacher does or says that you would like to try when adapting materials!

The BookCASE



Books are a great way to engage with children. There are books about many things in our world, too. So, matching books with the themes and activities helps meaningful learning experiences. Choosing books on topics that infants and toddlers are interested in is another way to help them feel included and that their interests are important.

Selected Books from the BookCASE



See, Touch, Feel **by Roger Priddy**

This sturdy board book, with bright photographs of happy babies, is specially designed to stimulate curiosity through sensory play. Each page has a colorful picture activity that invites baby to touch and explore.



Baby Touch: Vehicles Tab Board Book **by LadyBird**

Babies and toddlers will love this interactive touch-and-feel tab book. Use the vehicle-shaped tabs with babies to turn the pages and find and name the different bright vehicles throughout, from cars and trains to helicopters and diggers.



Cloth Books for Babies **from Baby Bibi**

Help infants and toddlers learn the fundamentals of reading with these bright and colorful learning books. Constructed from soft plush materials, this set of toddler toy books are safe for newborns, infants, babies, and children of all ages.

Exploring the BookCASE with *See, Touch, Feel*

Connect

Toddlers love to see other toddlers doing things that they love! This book has great pictures of toddlers and babies engaged in familiar activities like painting and playing a musical instrument. This book helps build infants and toddlers' sense of identity and belonging with Goal IT-SE 10. Child shows awareness about self and how to connect with other. Also, this book promotes children's vocabulary development and supports Emergent Literacy ELOF goals.

Advanced vocabulary

There is so much vocabulary in this book! There are words like bumpy, messy, bang, even naming shapes! Say the words to infants and encourage toddlers to point and identify familiar objects in the book. Try to include children's home language when possible.

Support engagement

You can ask children questions about what the babies are doing in the book and see if they have ever done that before (what do you like to eat? Do you like to be held? What games do you like to play?). You can also ask children to tell you how the different textures feel! Encourage children to touch the different textures and describe what they may be feeling!

Extend

After reading the book have children do some of the things they saw! Maybe add sand to the paint for some fingerpainting fun. Play musical instruments and march around the room. Or maybe even go outside after a rainy day to look for snails! This provides children with opportunities to make connections from what they read about to the world around them!

Explore the BookCASE on Your Own

The infants and toddlers in my learning environment love this book:

Make the CASE:

Connect:

Advanced vocabulary:

Support engagement:

Extend:

Explore the BookCASE on Your Own

The infants and toddlers in my learning environment love this book:

Make the CASE:

Connect:

Advanced vocabulary:

Support engagement:

Extend:

Books I would like to add to my learning environment:



Helpful Resources

Online Resources

Environments That Support High-Quality Inclusion

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/environments-support-high-quality-inclusion>

Practices to Support Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities of Suspected Delays Through Embedded Learning Opportunities

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/practices-support-infants-toddlers-disabilities-or-suspected-delays-through-embedded-learning>

Including Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/specialquest-multimedia-training-library/including-infants-toddlers-disabilities>

Curriculum Modifications

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/curriculum-modifications-introduction>

Head Start Center for Inclusion

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/head-start-center-inclusion>

- Curriculum Modifications for Infants and Toddlers: <https://headstartinclusion.org/training-materials/professional-development-packages/curriculum-modifications-for-infants-and-toddlers/>
- Embedded Learning Opportunities (English & Spanish): <https://headstartinclusion.org/training-materials/extended-professional-development-packages/embedded-learning-opportunities/>

Mobile Apps

ELOF2GO Mobile App

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/elof2go-mobile-app>

MiELOF Mobile App (Spanish)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/preparacion-escolar/articulo/aplicacion-movil-mielof-en-espanol>

Head Start Resources App

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/head-start-resources-app>

Head Start Resources App (Spanish)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/desarrollo-profesional/articulo/aplicacion-recursos-de-head-start>

Text4Teachers

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/teaching-practices/article/text4teachers>

Text4Teachers (Spanish)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/practicas-docentes/articulo/text4teachers>

Ready DLL Mobile App

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/ready-dll-mobile-app>

Ready DLL Mobile App (Spanish)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/cultura-e-idioma/articulo/aplicacion-movil-para-los-dll>

Online Communities

MyPeers

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/mypeers-collaborative-platform-early-care-education-community>

- Teacher Time Community
- Head Start Disabilities and Inclusion Network