



May 18, 2021

Supporting Preschool Families Through Inclusion

Viewer's Guide

This viewer's guide gives you ideas for supporting preschool families through inclusion. The reflection questions and activities will help you think about ways to support children's learning and work with families as they support their children with and without disabilities. Helpful resources are 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)

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: Families Feel Included in the Learning Environment

What are some things this parent said about inclusion that resonated with you?
Do you agree or disagree? What would you add?

Video 3: Guest Expert- Dr. Enrica Hampton

What are some tips or strategies you would like to try when having the initial conversation with families about additional supports for observed developmental concerns?

Video 4: Documenting Children's Learning

Think about the ways you can incorporate new strategies for observing and documenting children's learning.

Strategies for Supporting Quality Inclusive Learning Environments

Preschoolers



Connecting and Communicating with All Children and Families

Promote social interaction

- Have personal social conversations with each child every morning at arrival or during mealtimes.
- Teach all children to pair key signs and spoken words, to promote social interaction with peers during daily activities and routines.

Individualize. If a child has difficulty expressing thoughts, add gestures or incorporate objects, pictures, and movements into the conversation.

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 freely and independently?

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 and made accessible to facilitate use by all children?

Your answers:

What you might change:

A Daily Schedule and Consistent Routines



Is the daily schedule (with pictures) 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?

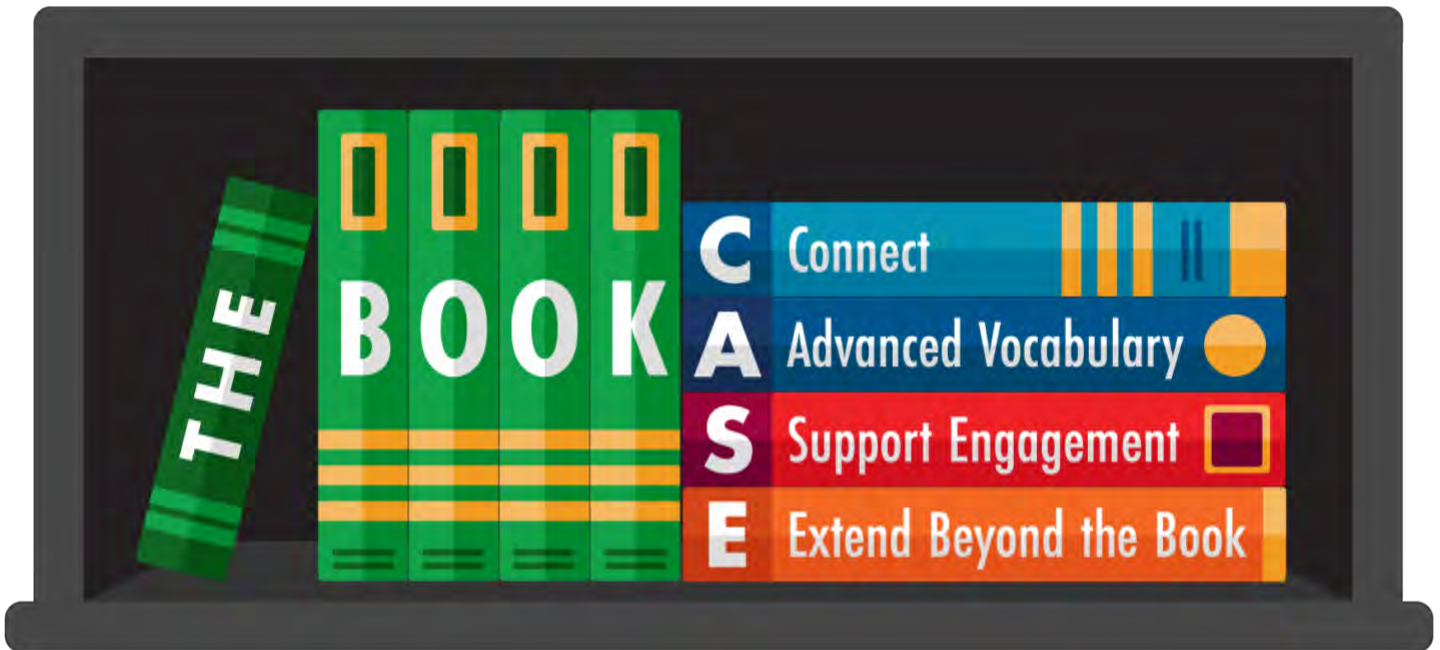
Your answers:

What you might change:

Translating Resources

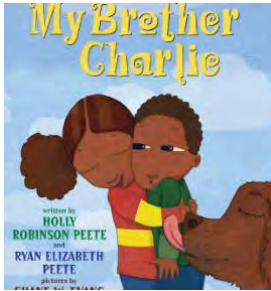
Start by talking with families about their preferred language of communication. This is done through conversations, back-and-forth journals, or maybe even a survey that goes out to all parents. Then work with your program leadership to have any materials that you provide to parents, translated in those languages. Reach out to your networks to see if someone would be willing to help! For example, Part C providers or LEA partners may have translated materials that they would be willing to share. You may also reach out to your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency, local cultural centers, or community college foreign language instructors to obtain translations.

The BookCASE



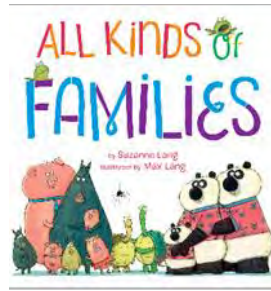
Books are a great way to engage with children. There are books about many things in our world, too. So, matching books with the themes and activities helps meaningful learning experiences. Choosing books on topics that preschoolers are interested in is another way to help them feel included and that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

Selected Books from the BookCASE



My Brother Charlie **by Holly Robinson-Peete**

A heartwarming story about a boy who happens to be autistic. "Charlie has autism. His brain works in a special way. It's harder for him to make friends. Or show his true feelings. Or stay safe." But as his big sister tells us, for everything that Charlie can't do well, there are plenty more things that he's good at. He knows the names of all the American presidents. He knows stuff about airplanes. And he can even play the piano better than anyone he knows.



All Kinds of Families **by Suzanne Lang**

Lots of nontraditional family structures are celebrated in this super-fun and super-accessible board book! Kids will love finding their own family represented, no matter if they have two moms, one grandpa, or just a cousin named Doug. Use this simple book to talk with kids about the different kinds of families they would encounter in the world. A silly and positive introduction to open-mindedness and all kinds of family love.



We Are Family **by Patricia Hagarty**

Through illness and health, in celebration and disappointment, families stick together. Some families are made up of many people, and some are much smaller. Sometimes family members look like each other, and sometimes they don't! But even though every family is different, the love is all the same.

Exploring the BookCASE with *We Are Family*

Connect

This book talks about many types of families and all of the things families do like eating together, riding around town together on bus, bike, or car, and how families care for one another when someone is sick. This promotes children's sense of identity and belonging which is found in the social emotional ELOF domain. This book also promotes children's language and literacy with the wide variety of words presented in this book.

Advanced vocabulary

Explore all the new words children will learn in this book. Ask or explain to new words to children such as creed, bolt, soothe, and comfort. There are even opportunities to explore opposites such as thick/thin, good/bad, backwards/forwards.

Support engagement

We love this book for its rhyming feature. This is a great way to get preschoolers involved and engaged with the story. Pause when you get close to the last word to see if children can fill in the blank! You can also look at the pictures of the different families with children. Have them identify a family that looks like them!

Extend

Have children draw a portrait of their families. Label each family member or have the child talk through their pictures naming who is a part of their family. Provide children with a variety of color paper and drawing materials to represent their skin color. Set up a family center in the dramatic play area with lots of dolls so that children can create their own families.

Explore the BookCASE on Your Own

The preschoolers in my learning environment love this book:

Make the CASE:

Connect:

Advanced vocabulary:

Support engagement:

Extend:

Explore the BookCASE on Your Own

The preschoolers 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

Advocacy and Leadership — Tips for Families: You are a Leader

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/you-are-a-leader.pdf>

Center for Parent Information and Resources

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/the-parent-center-network/>

- Locate a center here: <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/>

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center: Practice Improvement Tools:

Using the DEC Recommended Practices

<https://ectacenter.org/decrp/>

Enhance Parents' Advocacy and Leadership Skills: A guide for Head Start and Early Head Start Staff

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/enhance-parent-adv-lead.pdf>

Head Start Center for Inclusion: IEP Basics: Tips for Teachers

<https://headstartinclusion.org/training-materials/professional-development-packages/iep-basics/>

Head Start Center for Inclusion: IEP Training

<https://headstartinclusion.org/training-materials/extended-professional-development-packages/iep-training-extended/>

How Two-Way Communication Can Boost Parent Engagement

<https://www.waterford.org/education/two-way-communication-parent-engagement/>

Preparing for Challenging Conversation with Families

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/preparing-challenging-conversations-families>

Relationship-Based Practices: Talking with Families about Developmental Concerns

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/learning-module/relationship-based-practices-talking-families-about-developmental-concerns>

Sensitive Conversations with Families—Head Start Heals Podcast

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/podcast/sensitive-conversations-families>

QR Code Generator

<https://www.qr-code-generator.com/>

Mobile Apps

Learn the Signs from CDC- Milestone Tracker App

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html>

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