

Using DEC's Definition and Position Statement to Support Inclusion

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U.S. Office of Special
Education Programs



National Professional Development Center on Inclusion

Helping states achieve an integrated professional development system that supports high quality inclusion

Agenda

- ① Developing and validating the joint position statement on early childhood inclusion (the process)
 - a. Developing and refining the draft
 - b. National field review
 - c. Approval
- ② Getting to know the document
 - a. Definition
 - b. Features
- ③ Using the position statement and related resources
 - a. Recommendations
 - b. Additional resources

What is NPDCI?



The goal of NPDCI is to assist states in developing cross-sector professional development plans to increase opportunities for high quality preschool inclusion.

The NPDCI Team includes Virginia Buysse, Camille Catlett, Shelley deFosset, Jonathan Green, Heidi Hollingsworth, Tracey West, & Pam Winton.

National Professional Development Center on Inclusion

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Developing and Refining the Draft

Who?

Participants in sessions at national conferences

NPDCI workgroup

Joint DEC-NAEYC workgroup

DEC and NAEYC governance boards

When?

October 2007 – October 2008

How?

Conference session discussions

Online “landing pads”

Feedback: Appreciation

I think that this definition provides an awesome place to start our discussion – it offers a solid multi-dimensional foundation evidenced in the literature.

NAEYC Work Group Member

I like that this statement noted that supporting social emotional development along with other developmental skills for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers is critical.

DEC Executive Board Member

Feedback: Suggestions

I think we might be more bold than just offering “suggestions” for how the definition is used. These could be re-framed as declarations that proceed from the definition.

NAEYC Leader

I think “belonging” . . . should be included in the overall definition and throughout the expanded explanation. It represents more than just being a part of the community but is more interactive and meaningful. If you belong to a group versus participate with them, it connotes ownership as well as equality.

DEC Work Group Member

National Field Review

Who?

Members of DEC and NAEYC
General public

When?

October – December 2008

How?

Online survey

Number of Individual Responses?

753

1. 1. Please select one category that best reflects your role.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Consultant/Trainer	83	11%
2	Health Care Professional	4	1%
4	Parent or Family Member	31	4%
5	Researcher	4	1%
6	Teacher/Practitioner	193	26%
7	Early Childhood National Project Director	5	1%
8	Higher Education Faculty	63	8%
9	Program Administrator	148	20%
10	State Agency Administrator	18	2%
11	Therapist	10	1%
12	Early Interventionist	56	7%
13	Mental Health Professional	5	1%
14	Professional Organization Staff	17	2%
15	Student	80	11%
16	Other	36	5%
	Total	753	100%

Statistic	Value
Mean	8.37
Variance	18.06
Standard Deviation	4.25
Total Responses	753

2. 2. Please select the organization(s) of which you are a member.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	DEC	46	6%
2	NAEYC	303	40%
3	Both DEC & NAEYC	116	15%
4	Neither	286	38%
	Total	751	100%

Feedback: Support

Do you endorse this joint position statement?



Feedback: Appreciation

The goal of creating high expectations for every child to reach his/her full potential, I thought was the most crucial of all the goals. So many times people underestimate children, especially infants and children with special needs.

This joint position statement is long overdue and I appreciate the positive step that has been taken to bring the two worlds of early intervention and early childhood education closer together. After all, we are working towards the same goal of providing the best possible experiences for all children and their families. Thank you.

Feedback: Suggestions

I think the position statement is excellent. The only suggested change that I would make is to change "normal environment" to "natural environment" in the beginning of the document.

This is a very thoughtful and complete description of inclusion and its implications. The only aspect missing is any mention of a rationale for typically developing children to be in an inclusive program. The advantages to them are as real as those for children with disabilities in terms of their ability to see others' perspectives, kindness and the practice of an inclusive life beyond the preschool years. I would like to see that mentioned, as well, possibly in the first part of the document.

In the "access" definition, it refers to a "blended early childhood education/early childhood special education program." I think this needs to have a clearer definition.

Approval

Who?

DEC and NAEYC governance boards

When?

April 2009

How?

Governance board meetings

The Document

Early Childhood Inclusion

A Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Today an ever-increasing number of infants and young children with and without disabilities play, develop, and learn together in a variety of places – homes, early childhood programs, neighborhoods, and other community-based settings. The notion that young children with disabilities¹ and their families are full members of the community reflects societal values about promoting opportunities for development and learning, and a sense of belonging for every child. It also reflects a reaction against previous educational practices of separating and isolating children with disabilities. Over time, in combination with certain regulations and protections under the law, these values and societal views regarding children birth to 8 with disabilities and their families have come to be known as early childhood inclusion.² The most far-reaching effect of federal legislation on inclusion enacted over the past three decades has been to fundamentally change the way in which early childhood services ideally can be organized and delivered.³ However, because inclusion takes many different forms and implementation is influenced by a

wide variety of factors, questions persist about the precise meaning of inclusion and its implications for policy, practice, and potential outcomes for children and families.

The lack of a shared national definition has contributed to misunderstandings about inclusion. DEC and NAEYC recognize that having a common understanding of what inclusion means is fundamentally important for determining what types of practices and supports are necessary to achieve high quality inclusion. This DEC/NAEYC joint position statement offers a definition of early childhood inclusion. The definition was designed not as a litmus test for determining whether a program can be considered inclusive, but rather, as a blueprint for identifying the key components of high quality inclusive programs. In addition, this document offers recommendations for how the position statement should be used by families, practitioners, administrators, policy makers, and others to improve early childhood services.



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Definition

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.

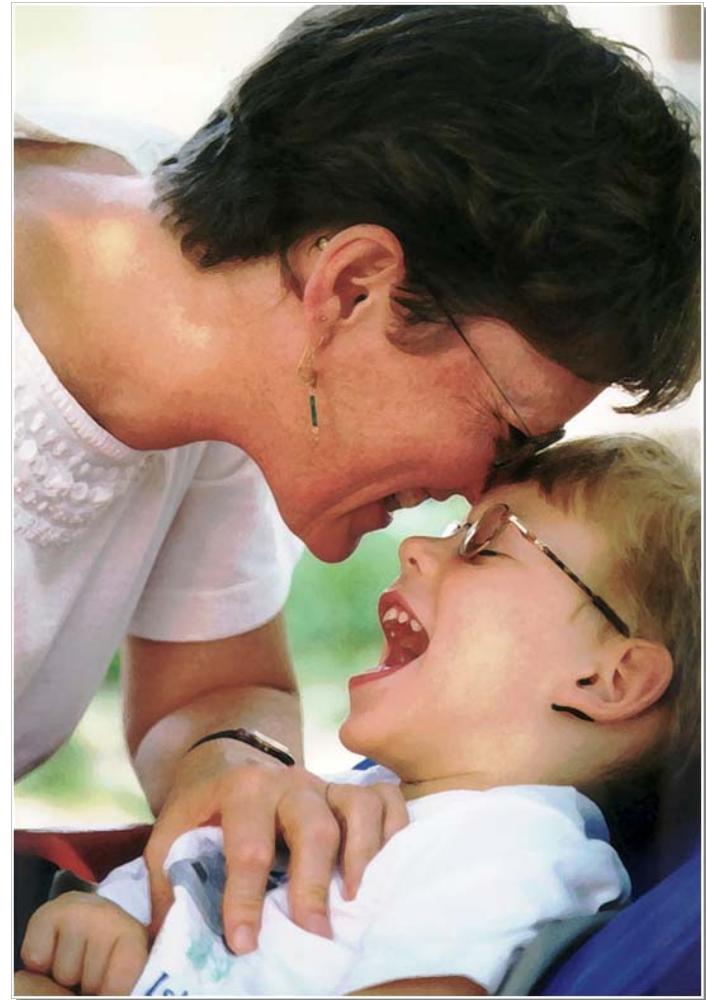
For Discussion:

What words do you find particularly meaningful in the definition of early childhood inclusion?



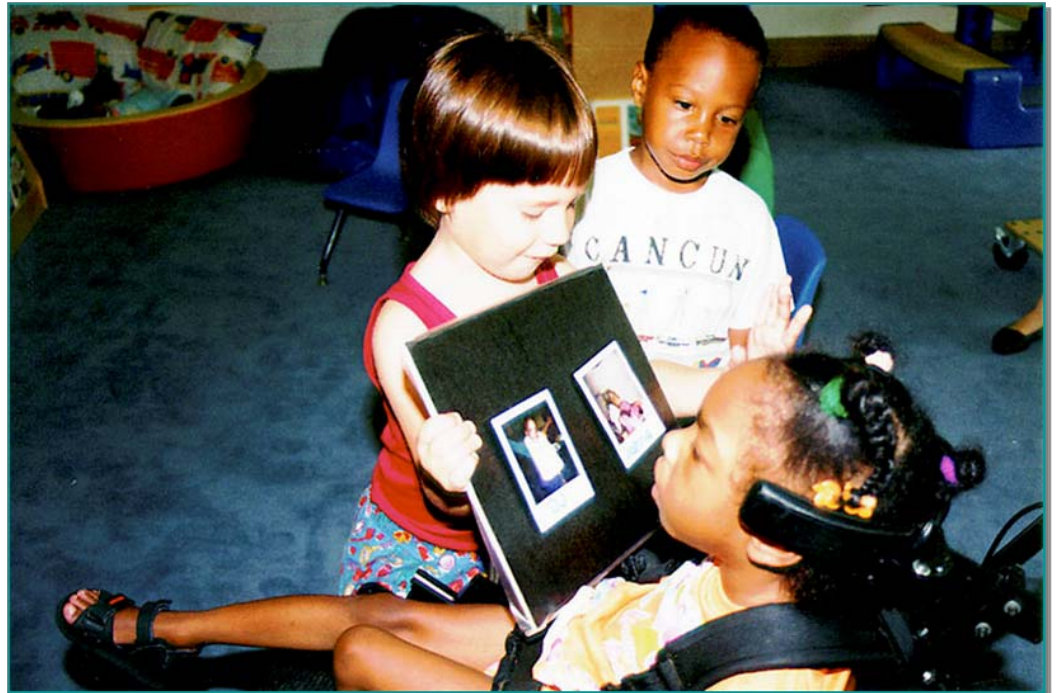
Defining Features

Access – means providing a wide range of activities and environments for every child by removing physical barriers and offering multiple ways to promote learning and development.



Defining Features

Participation – means using a range of instructional approaches to promote engagement in play and learning activities, and a sense of belonging for every child.



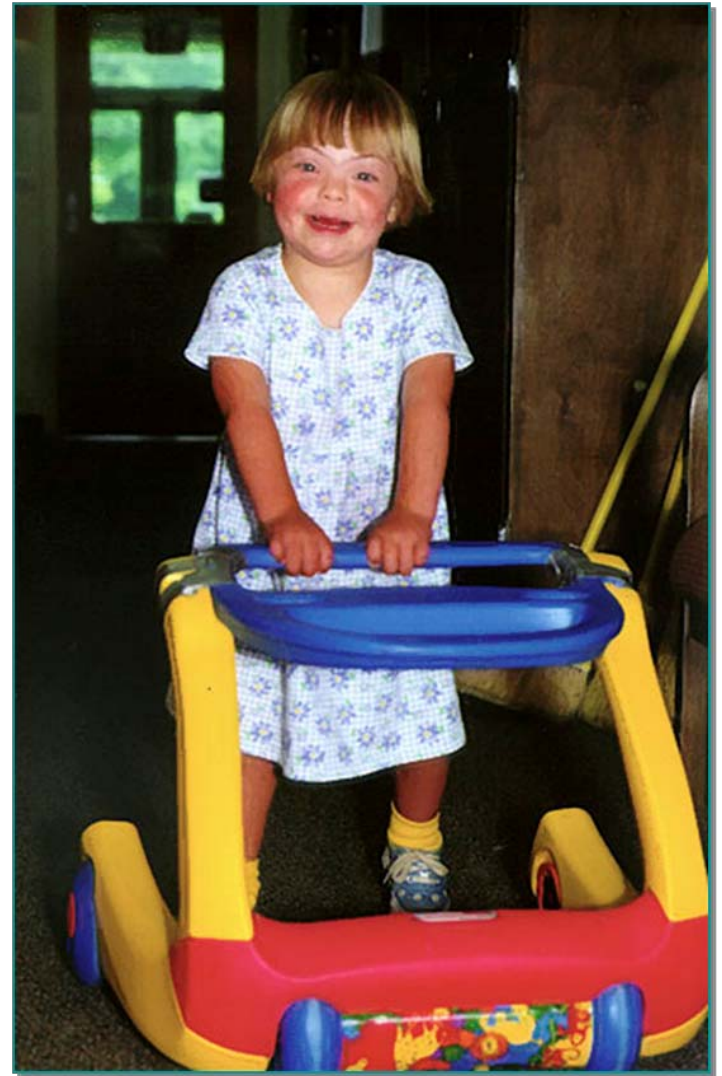
Defining Features

Supports – refer to broader aspects of the system such as professional development, incentives for inclusion, and opportunities for communication and collaboration among families and professionals to assure high quality inclusion.



For Discussion:

What language do you find in the section about defining features that has implications for the work that you do?



Early Childhood Inclusion: A Summary

A Summary of the Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Background

Today an ever-increasing number of infants and young children with and without disabilities play and learn together in a variety of places—homes, early childhood programs, and neighborhoods, to name a few. Promoting development and belonging for every child is a widely held value among early education and intervention professionals and throughout our society. Early childhood inclusion is the term used to reflect these values and societal views. However, the lack of a shared national definition has created some misunderstandings about inclusion. The DEC/NAEYC joint position statement offers a definition of inclusion. It also includes recommendations for how the joint position statement can be used to improve early childhood services for all children.

Definition of Early Childhood Inclusion

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.

What is meant by Access, Participation, and Supports?

Access – means providing a wide range of activities and environments for every child by removing physical barriers and offering multiple ways to promote learning and development.

Participation – means using a range of instructional approaches to promote engagement in play and learning activities, and a sense of belonging for every child.

Supports – refer to broader aspects of the system such as professional development, incentives for inclusion, and opportunities for communication and collaboration among families and professionals to assure high quality inclusion.



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Using The Position Statement

Recommendations

1. Create high expectations for every child to reach his or her full potential.
2. Develop a program philosophy on inclusion.
3. Establish a system of services and supports.
4. Revise program and professional standards.
5. Achieve an integrated professional development system.
6. Revise federal and state accountability systems.

For Discussion:

- Who needs to know about this?
- With whom would you share this?
- How?
- In what ways do you hope faculty, administrators, teachers, family members, and other colleagues will use this?

Additional Resources

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Early Childhood Community' website. The browser's address bar shows the URL: http://community.fpg.unc.edu/resources/articles/Early_Childhood_Inclusion. The website header includes the title 'Early Childhood Community' with the tagline 'Enhancing Early Childhood Professional Development'. A navigation menu at the top lists 'home', 'discussions', 'resources', 'npdci', 'connect', 'news', 'help/faq', and 'about community'. A search bar is located on the right side of the header. Below the navigation menu, a breadcrumb trail reads: 'You are here: Home → Resources → Articles and Papers → Early Childhood Inclusion'. On the left side, there is a 'NAVIGATION' sidebar with links for 'Resources', 'Articles and Papers', 'Early Childhood Inclusion', 'Planning and Facilitation Tools', 'Presentations', and 'Multimedia'. The main content area features the article title 'Early Childhood Inclusion' with tags: 'NAEYC, DEC, NPDCI, inclusion'. The article title is followed by a subtitle: 'A Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)'. Below the subtitle is a photograph of two young children playing. To the right of the photograph is a text box containing the following text: 'Two major early childhood organizations, DEC and NAEYC, created a joint definition and position statement on early childhood inclusion through a process facilitated by the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI). Return here often to discover new resources and examples for using these resources to improve early childhood services.' Below this text box is a section titled 'Position Statement Documents' with a list of links: 'Full Version pdf | spanish pdf | large print pdf | mp3 | spanish mp3' and 'Summary: pdf | spanish pdf | large print pdf | mp3 | spanish mp3'. Below that is a section titled 'How was it developed?' with a link for 'Validation Process'. Finally, there is a section titled 'Who's talking about it?' with a link for 'Blogs' and a list item: '“Short, Sweet, and Useful” by Camille Catlett'.

http://community.fpg.unc.edu/resources/articles/Early_Childhood_Inclusion

http://community.fpg.unc.edu/resources/articles/Early_Childhood_Inclusion

CONNECT: Foundations of Inclusion Birth to Five



Resources

Buyse, V., Hollingsworth, H. L., & Catlett, C. (2009). *DEC/NAEYC joint position statement on early childhood inclusion: The validation process*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI).

http://community.fpg.unc.edu/resources/articles/Early_Childhood_Inclusion

Conversation about position statement with guest bloggers Jerlean Daniel (NAEYC) and Sarah Mulligan (DEC)

<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/discussions>

CONNECT. (2009). *CONNECT: Foundations of inclusion birth to five*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute.

<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect>

DEC/NAEYC. (2009). *Early childhood inclusion: A joint position statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute.

http://community.fpg.unc.edu/resources/articles/Early_Childhood_Inclusion

DEC/NAEYC. (2009). *Early childhood inclusion: A summary*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute.

http://community.fpg.unc.edu/resources/articles/Early_Childhood_Inclusion_Summary