

Using NAEYC's Definition and Position Statement to Support Inclusion

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National Professional Development Center on Inclusion

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

Agenda

- ① The process of developing and validating the joint position statement on early childhood inclusion
 - a. Developing and refining the draft
 - b. National Field Review
 - c. Approval
- ② The position statement
 - a. Definition
 - b. Features
 - c. Recommendations
- ③ Using the position statement and related resources

Process History

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%

Developing and Refining the Draft

Who?

Participants in sessions at national conferences

NPDCI workgroup

Joint NAEYC-DEC workgroup

NAEYC and DEC governance boards

When?

October 2007 – October 2008

How?

Conference session discussions

Online “landing pads”

Developing and Refining the Draft

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 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

Developing and Refining the Draft

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 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

National Field Review

Who?

Members of NAEYC and DEC
General public

When?

October – December 2008

How?

Online survey

Number of Individual Responses?

753

Feedback from National Validation

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.

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.

Feedback from National Validation

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.

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.

Approval

Who?

NAEYC and DEC 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.



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.

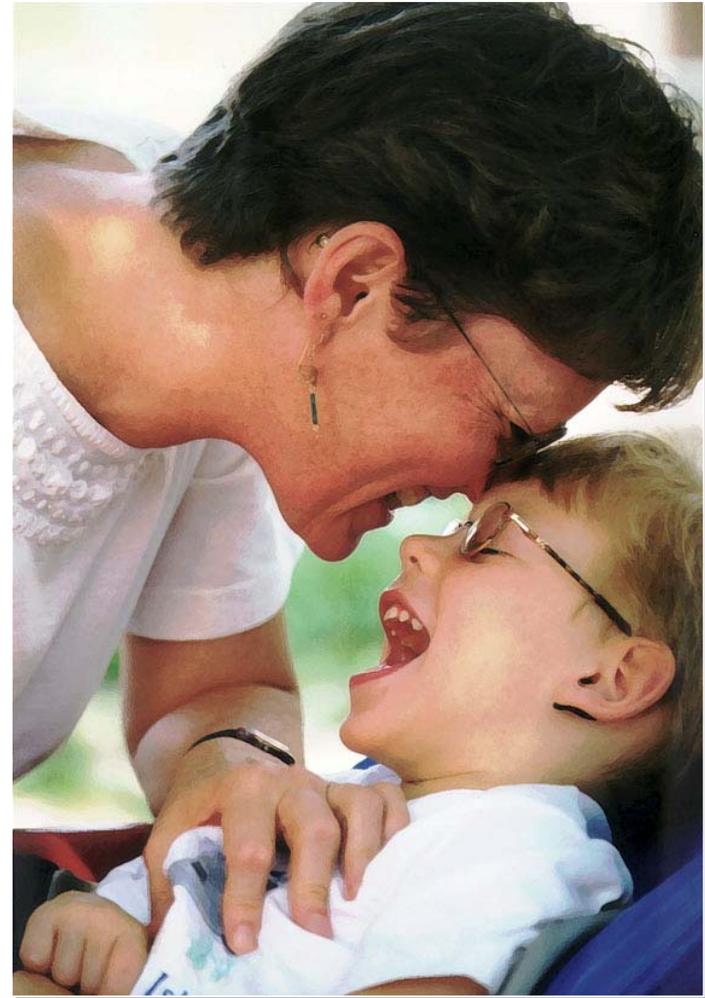
For Discussion:

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



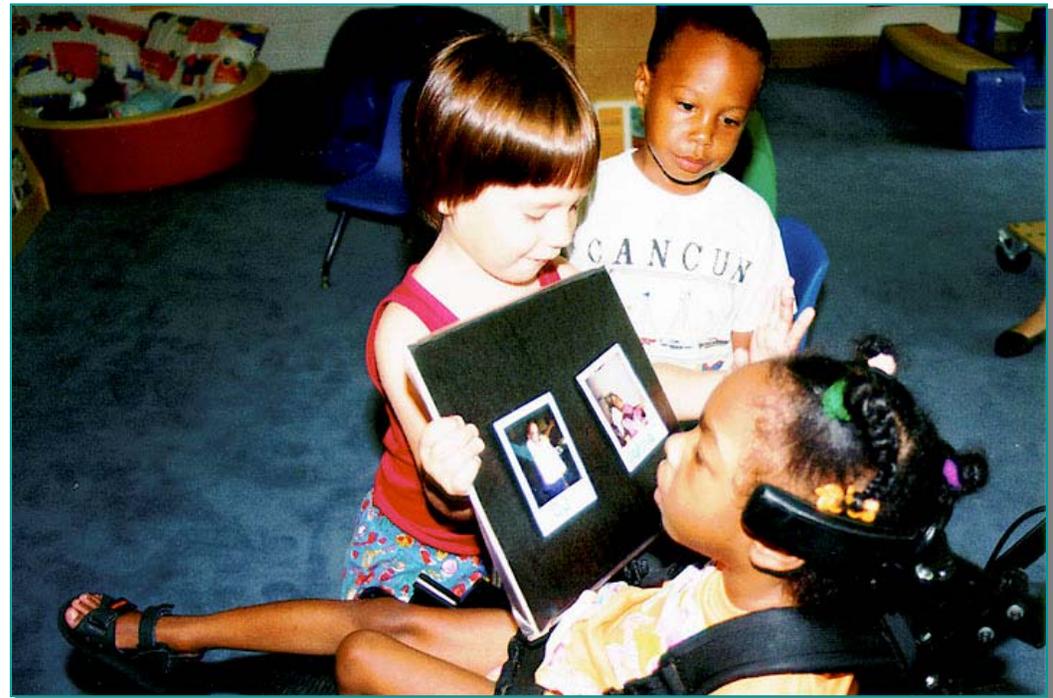
Defining Features

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.



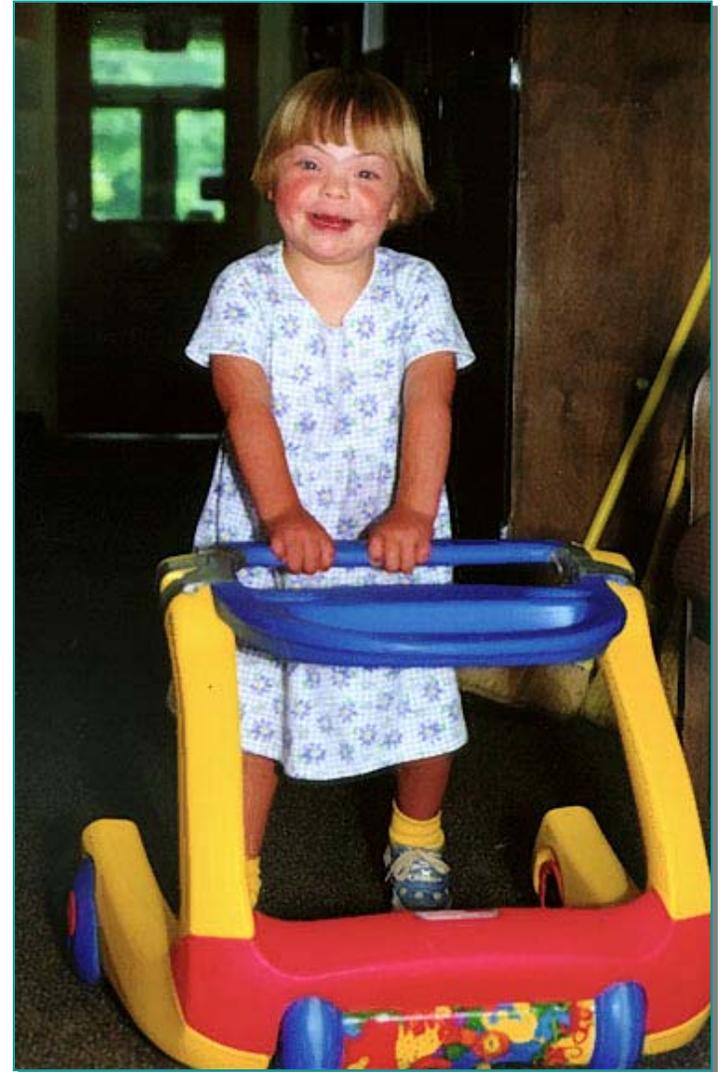
Defining Features

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?



Recommendations

1. Create high expectations for every child, regardless of ability, to reach his or her full potential.
2. Develop a program philosophy on inclusion to ensure shared assumptions and beliefs about inclusion, and to identify quality inclusive practices.
3. Establish a system of services and supports that reflects the needs of children with varying types of disabilities and learning characteristics, with inclusion as the driving principle and foundation for all of these services and supports.

Recommendations

4. Revise program and professional standards to incorporate key dimensions of high quality inclusion.
5. Improve professional development across all sectors of the early childhood field by determining the following: who would benefit from professional development on inclusion; what practitioners need to know and be able to do in inclusive settings; and what methods are needed to facilitate learning opportunities related to inclusion.
6. Revise federal and state accountability systems to reflect both the need to increase the number of children with disabilities enrolled in inclusive programs as well as to improve the quality and outcomes of inclusion.

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.

Using The Position Statement

CONNECT: Foundations of Inclusion Birth to Five



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?

Resources

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

National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI)



NPDCI is helping states achieve an integrated professional development system that supports high quality inclusion.

National Professional Development Center on Inclusion

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