

A Guide For Early Childhood Supervisors
For The Online Module

Together From The Start:

Building Blocks To Inclusion



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In partnership with:



A Guide for Early Childhood Supervisors for the Online Module:
Together from the Start: Building Blocks to Inclusion

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Introduction

Every child has a right to be included and looked at as a child first, not a label.

By encouraging inclusion and participation, you set the stage to support the learning, growth, and interests of each child!

Throughout the day, you and your staff implement practices that emphasize the importance of welcoming and including children of all ability levels. By considering ways you can ensure full participation of children with developmental differences and/or medical needs, you are giving these children the opportunity they deserve to gain experiences and learn with their peers.

What do the staff in your setting need to be prepared to welcome children with special needs?

Use this *Guide for Early Childhood Supervisors* with your staff to facilitate a deeper understanding and application of the training module, *Together from the Start: Building Blocks for Inclusion*.

This Guide supports implementation of best practices learned in the training module to:

- Review the importance of a fully inclusive learning environment
- Identify the rules, policies, and regulations that affect the children you work with and your work environment
- Recognize the first steps you can take to welcoming a child with a disability to your early learning setting
- Apply the process of including a child with a disability in your setting

How to Use This Guide

Tailor-made for supervisors and administrators, this guide lays out step-by-step tips to support early childhood professionals who have completed the online training module, *Together from the Start: Building Blocks for Inclusion*. The guide provides tools that empower your staff to immediately put into action what was learned!

Use this guide to determine areas of focus, follow the worksheets to plan, and achieve goals. Here is what the guide provides:



The Supervisor's Checklist

Review a checklist of the topic areas covered in the online training module, chapter by chapter, so you can focus on supporting staff with creating an inclusive learning environment for children with developmental differences and/or medical conditions. This allows flexibility to have staff collectively work together or take an individualized approach. Either way, you prepare your staff to make quality improvements.

Chapter Summaries

A summary of each training module chapter provides highlights and key points.

Pause and Ponder Page

This one-page summary presents a critical topic from the online training module. Use this with your staff and for your own reflection and investigation of concepts. Then refer to the question prompt to spark curiosity, contemplation, and dialogue about the topic.

Action Plan Worksheets

These one-page worksheets are designed as a collaborative tool to aid staff members in putting into practice what was learned. Use each worksheet to guide discussion about changing practices or select specific worksheets for your staff to complete independently. These concise worksheets are intended to generate ideas and support logical application in everyday settings. Each worksheet includes the following sections:



- **Observe and Plan:** Prior to putting any new practice in place, there needs to be preparation! This section prompts staff to take time to observe their own practices. Then staff consider what they are inspired to change to ensure ALL children in their setting can grow, learn, and develop. Staff are encouraged to complete this sentence, "I am inspired to..." and describe what action they want to take.

Example: I am inspired to make my setting more inclusive by exploring three different strategies shared in this module.



- **Try It Out:** Now it's time to try it out! Think about your end goal and why it is important.



- **Reflect:** After making a change, it is important to pause and reflect. Guide staff to understand what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how it is working, using reflective questions. This allows you to focus on what works together.



- **Engage Families:** Valuing, respecting, and recognizing the vital role parents and family members play in supporting children's development is essential. Effective communication by staff supports the whole child and shows families they matter!



- **Supervisor Follow-Up:** Commit to a time for reconnecting with your staff to provide an opportunity for reflection and ongoing communication

Seeking Resources

Links and resources included in this section provide practical information from recognized experts in the field on creating inclusive spaces for children with disabilities.

Supervisor's Checklist

See something that sparks your interest? Use the checklist to help prioritize areas of focus, then find the corresponding Pause and Ponder Page or Worksheets as guides.

| Module Chapters | I Have an Interest In: | Check the Box | Action Plan Worksheet |
|--|--|---------------|-----------------------|
| Setting the Stage | Considering the WHOLE child Taking notice and sharing about development | | 1 |
| Inclusion Rules, Laws, and Policy | Learning about what laws and policies affect the children I work with | | 2,3 |
| Getting Started | Welcoming a Child | | 4 |
| | Considering your setting | | 5 |
| Putting It All Together | Trying out what you learned with case examples | | 6 |



CHAPTER 1 SETTING THE STAGE

Summary

As Early Care and Education Professionals, you set the stage by welcoming each child into your setting. When you set the stage to support the learning, growth, and interests of each child it encourages participation of all. Each child deserves the opportunity to gain experiences and learn with their peers in community settings, including children with developmental differences and/or medical needs. Providing a safe, supportive environment for each child to participate and thrive is an essential element of an early childhood professional. Research shows that including all children regardless of needs is beneficial to everyone. Starting early supports the child, family, and community, sending a message that all children have the right to quality early childhood experiences with peers.

“Research supports the benefits of inclusion for young children with and without disabilities. Studies have shown that individualized evidence-based strategies for children with disabilities can be implemented successfully in inclusive early childhood programs. Children with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities and the highest needs, can make significant developmental and learning progress in inclusive settings.”

US Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education, 2015

Pause & Ponder A:



Integration vs. Inclusion: What's the difference?

Use this page with staff to spark curiosity, facilitate dialogue, and inspire self-reflection.

1 in 6 children have a developmental disability (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). Those with disabilities are removed from settings at a higher rate than their peers. Research shows including all children regardless of needs is beneficial for everyone and helps children thrive. As an early care and education professional, you make a difference by providing a supportive environment and sending the message that all children have the right to quality early childhood experiences.

Learn the difference in levels of participation

Exclusion: leaving a child out of activities due to a developmental/medical difference. This limits access to early childhood experiences, participation, and engagement with community.

Integration: being in the same space as other children while not doing the same activities. A step towards inclusion, but not sufficient

Inclusion: including children with disabilities in early childhood programs together with their peers without disabilities.

- Holding high expectations for self and program regarding inclusion
- Intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities facilitated by individualized accommodations
- Using evidence-based services and supports to foster their development, friendship with peers, and sense of belonging.

How can I move from integrating to including children? Consider:

Access: removing any structural, physical or communicative related barriers to allow for full participation. *Example: Can all students reach and obtain play materials in the space? Remove any barriers limiting access.*

Participation: Using strategies to promote a child's learning, development, and sense of belonging. *Example: Are there times of the day a student is left out or on the sidelines? Investigate why this might be.*

Support: Systems that enable access and participation, partnering with families, other community organizations, and professional development. *Example: Are there colleagues with suggestions/experience in this area? Are there websites/workshops about inclusion that I can learn from? You're already taking the first step by utilizing this resource!*

Pause & Ponder...

How do I intentionally include each child throughout the day in activities?

Implementing Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)



Observe and Plan

It is important to recognize the multiple assets all young children bring to the early learning program as unique individuals. You can build upon each child’s strengths by designing and implementing practices that help children grow across all domains of development. Taking notice of each child’s strengths and challenges should be a regular part of observation. What are some strengths and challenges I notice for this child? What barriers to participation do I notice about each child? Do certain aspects of the physical space, times of day, activities chosen, or materials being used affect a child’s participation? How can I build upon strengths and raise expectations for each child’s participation? Plan to enhance strengths and address participation barriers.

I am inspired to implement inclusive practices by:



Try It Out

Take notice! Observe during daily activities and plan to share.

| Effective action planning challenges you to ask yourself important questions. Think about your end goal and why it is important! | |
|--|--|
| Who Is the focus of my plan? | |
| What Action steps are needed? | |
| When Is the ideal time to act? | |
| Where Should the action occur for best results? | |
| How Will I put the action plan in place? | |

Worksheet 1 – Implementing Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) *(continued)*



Keep Data

Ask yourself these questions for data tracking to enhance your skills as an early care and education professional:

- How often will I set up checkpoints to review and revise?
- What additional support (staff support, equipment, resources) will I need to reach my goal?
- How can I keep track of progress in stages to the end goal (one step at a time)?



Reflect

Step back from your day and consider your thoughts and feelings about the experience. Take time to wonder with these questions:

- How will I record my observations of strengths and challenges of each child?
- How will I share strengths and challenges? Who do I need to share them with?
- How can I intentionally focus on each child's level of participation?
- How am I feeling when I notice a child is not participating? How might the child be feeling? How can I address these emotions as they arise?
- How will I address barriers in the environment and activities? Who will I bring these concerns up to?



Engage Families

Parents of children with disabilities are at higher risk of poverty due to challenges accessing quality early learning opportunities. They are three times more likely to leave their job, not take a job, or make significant employment changes due to childcare challenges. Early care and education professionals like you can help provide crucial support for the family by helping provide inclusive early learning settings they can depend upon. This includes communicating with families about a child's needs, collaborating on ways to meet these needs, and making the family feel comfortable asking questions and expressing concerns.



Supervisor Follow-up

I will reconnect with my staff member on _____ (date) to provide an opportunity for reflection and ongoing communication.



Chapter 2

Rules, Laws, & Policy For Inclusion In Early Care And Education

Summary

The ADA guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else. It allows people with disabilities to enjoy school, work, and all spaces open to the public. This includes early learning opportunities for children. The ADA includes guidelines for early learning programs to follow included below:

Moving towards a good life starts with positive early care and education experiences. To ensure this happens for all children, there are rules, laws and policies that apply to early childhood settings. In this chapter, you learn how these are put into place to shape inclusive early learning settings.

ADA Checklist

| Task Item | Examples | Check the Box |
|--|---|---------------|
| Individualized needs assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I have enough information about the child? • Am I looking beyond my feelings or assumptions about children with disabilities? | |
| Make reasonable modifications to your policies and practices allowing children with disabilities to participate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing the discipline policy and training staff on how to respond when a child with autism is upset. • Allowing a child to have additional time to transition to a new setting or group • Modifying your diapering policy to consider the developmentally appropriate setting for a child | |
| Provide accommodations when communicating with children or adults with disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texting or e-mailing a parent that is hard of hearing about an upcoming event • Using picture cards with a child to support communication during mealtime • Using a visual schedule to signal routine changes. | |
| Make physical spaces accessible. This includes removing any barriers preventing a child from participating. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating pathways wide enough for a wheelchair or walker to navigate • Adding a ramp to access an outdoor play space • Adjusting table heights or items on shelves so that a child can take part in activities with their peers | |

Rules and Regulations

True or False

| | Where to Find the Answer | True or False? |
|--|--------------------------|----------------|
| Professionals cannot turn away a child because the child has disabilities or separate that child from their nondisabled peers. | | |
| A child needs to be toilet trained to transition to another age group. | | |
| It is okay to use children’s names when talking to other children’s parents. | | |
| It is okay to explain to other parents why a child might be eating different food, not talking, or using a special chair when they ask. | | |
| Any child’s IEP, IFSP, medical papers, or care plans should be locked in a filing cabinet or office | | |
| I need signed consent from parents before i can collaborate with other professionals about a child’s needs including strengths, interventions, and diagnosis. | | |



Chapter 3 Getting Started

Summary

Welcoming a child to your setting allows you the chance to get to know all about the child, family, and important people in their lives. Following these steps of Prepare, Observe, Adapt, Try, Reflect, and Revise set the stage for a positive experience for everyone!

“Membership is a key feature and a goal of true inclusion. It includes feelings of belonging, acceptance, and support to form positive relationships with other members within the learning community. Membership is important for all children and being treated as a member of a group and feeling a sense of belonging creates a foundation for positive peer relationships and the development of friendships.”

Head Start Center for Inclusion, The Office of Head Start Department of Health and Human Services

Welcoming a Child

| Steps for Welcoming a Child Checklist | | Complete? |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| How to: | | |
| Prepare | Ask family and other professionals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you want me to know about your child? • What are the child's interests? • What are the child's strengths? • What is the family's vision for a good early childhood experience? • What challenges does the child experience at home or in the community? • What services and supports are already in place? • How can you support the child and family to fully participate in your setting? | |
| Observe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep track of child's involvement during the day • Watch how the child interacts with their peers • Watch how the child plays and engages in activities • Notice activities or times during the day where the child appears less engaged | |
| Adapt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your setting create interest? • How do you support a child's engagement and persistence? • How do you support a child's self-regulation? • How does a child perceiving or receiving information? • What language(s) and symbols are you using? • How does the child access these? • How do you promote comprehension in your environment? • How will you promote the physical participation of the child? • In what ways might they express themselves? • How do you support a child in expanding their knowledge? | |
| TRY IT OUT! | | |
| Reflect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did it go? • Did I give it enough time? | |
| Revise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could be adjusted? • What other support or information do I need? • Who can I connect with to learn more? | |

Worksheet 4 – Welcoming A Child *(continued)*

Adaptive Equipment

Adaptive equipment helps a child access, participate, and engage in activities with peers and adults. It also promotes independence and helps a child move safely through the environment. A child may use one piece of adaptive equipment, assistive technology, or medical equipment, and some use many. This might seem intimidating, but you don't have to be an expert in all of it! It is okay to ask the child, family, and professionals questions about equipment to familiarize yourself with it. The key will be to work collaboratively and follow the family's lead on how to support the child with their equipment. Familiarize yourself with types of Adaptive Equipment below:

- **Adaptive Equipment:** a tool, device, or machine used to help with daily living tasks. Examples include:
 - Ankle-foot orthoses (AFO) or Supra Malleolar Orthosis (SMO)
 - Use of a walker, crutches, or wheelchair to navigate around the room.
 - Use of use different types of chairs, tumble forms, or a stander to sit or eat
- **Assistive technology:** any item or piece of equipment which is used to increase, support, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. Examples include:
 - Tablet and specific apps to learn vocabulary and communicate
 - Photos of items related to daily living needs to communicate
 - Light box to make objects brighter when a child has specific visual need
 - Hearing aid or amplification systems to amplify voices during shared book reading, music, or small group activities
 - Switch to play a game or activate a toy
- **Medical equipment:** a specific item a child may need to support their health. Examples Include:
 - **Feeding tube:** inserted through the nose or stomach and connected to a bag that helps children get nutrition
 - **Trach:** a tube inserted through a hole in the neck and secured in place with a strap to help a child breathe – in some instances, a child might need to be attached to a ventilator to receive oxygen
 - **Shunt:** thin tube inserted in the body to direct fluid, it might be inserted in their brain

It will also be important to model respect and acceptance of differences for other children in your setting. Children will naturally be curious and ask questions about adaptive technology. It may be helpful to brainstorm with the child and their family ahead of time what responses they prefer you to use. It is important to consider the child's privacy and to be sensitive to their level of comfort with their equipment.

Consider your Setting

Apply what you have learned about adaptations to your own setting. Identify what areas, activities, and materials in your setting may be challenging for children with developmental or medical differences? Brainstorm ways to problem-solve these challenges to better meet the needs of these children and increase their access and participation.

| | Identify Potential Areas of Need: | How Might You Go About Doing That? |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Adaptive equipment | | |
| Assistive Technology | | |
| Medical Equipment | | |



Chapter 4 Putting It All Together

Summary

Now, you're ready to apply what you've learned. In this activity, you will be presented with children starting in your program. Use the process of prepare, observe, adapt, try, reflect & revise to welcome them to your setting.

"All children, regardless of ability, have the right to fully engage in learning opportunities, activities, and routines across home, educational, and community environments. In quality inclusive environments, early care and education professionals create spaces that bring people together and promote a sense of belonging for all children."

Circle Time Magazine (2020)

Putting It Into Practice!

Apply what you've learned to a child you may have already had in your setting or have been thinking about throughout this module. If a child does not come to mind, complete this worksheet with a future child in mind! Remember to consider the following steps:

Prepare: Taking the time to gather information and ask questions to give you a richer understanding of a child's strengths, interests, and needs.

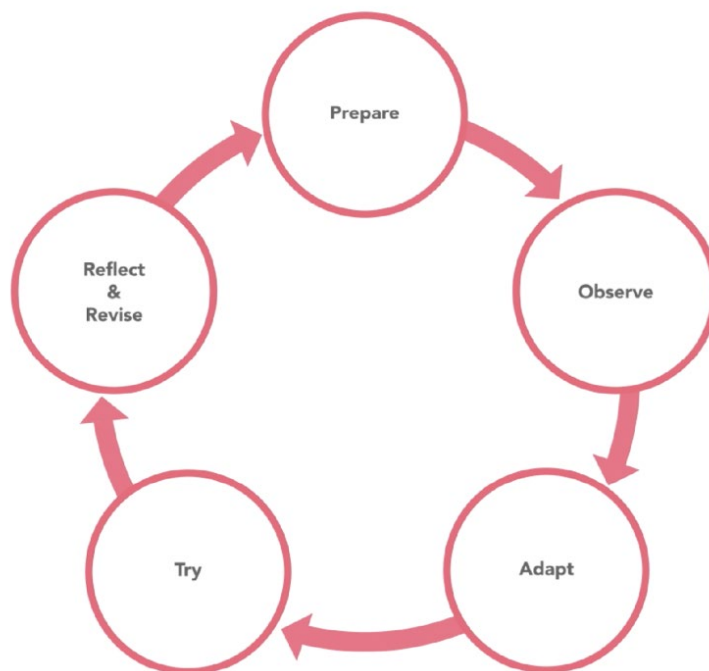
Observe: Step back and notice how a child accesses materials, learns, and engages with others and brainstorm solutions to implement.

Adapt: Adapting your environment and routines with solutions you produced to increase a child's access to learning and engaging with peers.

Try: Experiment with solutions in your setting. This could mean changing your daily routine, moving certain toys or manipulatives to another location, or incorporating a piece of adaptive equipment. Allow for multiple opportunities, exposures, and guidance as you put it into practice!

Reflect: Set aside time for intentional reflection on modifications put in place

Revise: Revise your process and solutions as needed, taking note of progress and new challenges.



Worksheet 6 – Welcoming a Child *(continued)*

Child's Name: _____

Educator(s) Name: _____

| Step: | How Will You Implement? |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Prepare | |
| Observe | |
| Adapt | |
| Try | |
| Reflect & Revise | |

References and Resources

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): <https://www.ada.gov/topics/intro-to-ada/>

ADA Equal Access to Childcare: <https://www.ada.gov/topics/child-care-centers/>

ADA National Network: <https://adata.org/learn-about-ada>

Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA): <https://www.atia.org/home/at-resources/what-is-at/>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Child Development Specific Conditions: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/conditions.html>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). Increase in Developmental Disabilities Among Children in the United States. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/features/increase-in-developmental-disabilities.html>

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concept>

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2019). Five steps for Brain-building Serve and Return. Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. Retrieved from <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/5-steps-for-brain-building-serve-and-return/>

Charting the LifeCourse tools: <https://www.lifecoursetools.com/lifecourse-library/foundational-tools/family-perspective/>

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.

ECTA Policy and Position Statements on Inclusion: <https://ectacenter.org/topics/inclusion/policyposition.asp>

Feeding Tube Awareness Foundation: <https://www.inclusivechildcare.org/resource-library/website/feeding-tube-awareness-foundation#:~:text=This%20website%20is%20dedicated%20to,by%20those%20with%20personal%20experience.>

Individuals with Disabilities Act (2019). Section 1401. Individuals with Disabilities Act Retrieved from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statute-chapter-33/subchapter-i/1401#:~:text=The%20term%20%E2%80%9Cassistive%20technology%20device,a%20child%20with%20a%20disability.>

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES *(continued)*

Kids Health Managing Home Health Care (Types of Medical Equipment): <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/machine.html>

NAEYC (2020). Developmentally Appropriate Practice. NAEYC. Retrieved from https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/dap-statement_0.pdf

NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices Resources: https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/dap_list_of_faculty_resources_0.pdf

Nationwide Children's Helping Hand: How to Protect a Child with a Trach Tube: Helping Hand PDF .

OCALI's Center for the Young Child: <https://www.ocali.org/center/cyc>

OCALI, Suite of Resources, We Can Do This, Right Where We Are, Chapter 1,3, &4 retrieved from <https://cycsuite.org/m/190>

OCALI's Early Childhood Inclusion Center of Excellence: <https://cycsuite.org/ec-inclusion>

Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities: <https://www.ocecd.org/>

Ohio Department of Education (Early Learning Preschool Licensing): <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Preschool-Licensing>

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (Childcare): <https://jfs.ohio.gov/child-care/welcome>

Ohio Early Intervention: www.ohioearlyintervention.org

Summit County Developmental Disabilities Board. (n.d.) Welcoming Children with an Official Diagnosis [PowerPoint slides].

Tracheostomy Education: <https://tracheostomyeducation.com/children-at-play-with-tracheostomy-and-mechanical-ventilation/>

Answer Key

| | Where to find the answer | True or False? |
|--|--|----------------|
| Professionals cannot turn away a child because the child has disabilities or separate that child from their nondisabled peers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) | TRUE |
| A child needs to be toilet trained to transition to another age group. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ohio's Childcare Manual | FALSE |
| It is okay to use children's names when talking to other children's parents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) | FALSE |
| It is okay to explain to other parents why a child might be eating different food, not talking, or using a special chair when they ask. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) | FALSE |
| Any child's iep, ifsp, medical papers, or care plans should be locked in a filing cabinet or office. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) | TRUE |
| I need signed consent from parents before I can collaborate with other professionals about a child's needs including strengths, interventions, and diagnosis. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) | TRUE |



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