Tip Sheet: *The Definition of Inclusion*

What is INCLUSION?

DEC / NAEYC joint position statement of the defining features of High-Quality Inclusive Classrooms:

Access
Participation
With Supports

Program level recommendations for using the DEC/ NAEYC joint position statement that can be used by families and educators to shape practices:

- Have high expectations for every child, regardless of their ability
- Develop a program philosophy that identifies high-quality practices for inclusion

Timeline of Inclusive Education:

- **1973: Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)**
- **1975: Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) or PL 94-142**
- **1986: Education for All Handicapped Children Act Amendments (EAHCA)**
- **1990: Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)**
- **1990: Title II of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA)**
- **2004: Reauthorization of IDEA**

Glossary

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. – DEC/NAEYC Joint Position Statement

Participation: means using a range of instructional strategies to promote engagement in play and learning activities, and a sense of belonging for every child. – DEC/NAEYC Joint Position Statement

Support: refers 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. – DEC/NAEYC Joint Position Statement

Inclusion: A philosophically based approach to providing accessibility and participation in typical early childhood settings. Exclusion: The process or state of excluding or being excluded.

Integration: Combine (one thing) with another so that they become a whole

Segregation: The action or state of setting someone or something apart from other people or things or being set apart.

What Have We Learned from Research?

- No study has found segregated options to be superior for developmental outcomes for preschool children with disabilities.
- With support, children with special needs in inclusive settings do not lose ground in their skills or development.
- Inclusion has the largest impact on the social skills of young children with special needs. Positive social outcomes occur only when interaction among children with and without disabilities is frequent, and systematically planned by teachers. Language skills also increase.
- The curriculum influences the extent to which children with special needs benefit from inclusion; inclusion alone is not enough.
- Research indicates only positive outcomes for typically developing children when they are in inclusive settings.
- Children who do not have special needs continue to learn and grow in the same ways that they did before they had classmates with special needs. In addition, they may become more accepting of children who are different as they learn to work and play with children who have a wide range of abilities.
- Typically developing children do not learn inappropriate behaviors as a result of inclusion.
- In programs studied, when inclusion was of high quality, all children had successful experiences.
- There are long-term effects of early placement decisions. Research has shown that children of matched demographics and developmental levels who were placed in inclusive preschool programs were significantly more likely to be in inclusive elementary classes several years later than their matched peers who started off in segregated preschool programs.

Where to Go to Learn More

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