

Guiding Principles for the Full Participation of Young Children, Birth through Age Eight, in New Mexico's Early Learning System

Every child in New Mexico has diverse strengths rooted in his or her family's unique culture, heritage, language, beliefs, and circumstances. Early learning programs that support the full participation of every child build on these strengths by promoting a sense of belonging, supporting positive social relationships, and enabling families and professionals to gain advocacy skills that positively impact the life of every child.

We believe that . . .

- Every child has unique gifts and abilities that are to be celebrated and nurtured
- The early years hold enormous promise for every child to reach his or her full potential
- Every child learns within the context of relationships and through playful interactions within their environment
- Every child and his or her family deserve equitable access to appropriate services and supports that acknowledge their uniqueness and enable them to reach their full potential



Therefore, we are committed to . . .

- Valuing and embracing all children and their families
- Involving families and communities as partners and decision makers
- Suspending biases to build trust and establish collaborative partnerships that benefit children, their families, and the professionals who work with them
- Providing choice, flexibility, and continuity of services and supports for families within communities

- Making a variety of services and supports available so all children have access to and can participate in opportunities that are both respectful of and responsive to their family experiences, culture, beliefs, abilities, and circumstances
- Advancing advocacy efforts for inclusive practices that build upon unique child, family, and community strengths and are accountable to every child and their family

We will . . .

- Promote every New Mexico citizen's understanding of the importance of high quality inclusive early childhood programs and practices
- Support interactions and relationships that foster self reflection
- Utilize information about the growth, development, and experiences of individual children and families for program and curriculum development and improvement
- Continuously improve services and supports by evaluating current practices and incorporating effective methods, models, and research in our work with children and families
- Promote the establishment of aligned services and supports that build on both the unique assets of each child and acknowledge the strengths of children's and families' heritage, language, and culture

- Ensure that services and supports are provided by people who reflect the diversity of the community, are well educated, and are well compensated
- Establish an integrated, multi-disciplinary system of professional development, training, and technical assistance that supports the design, implementation, and evaluation of practices that are respectful of and responsive to each child and family



The Guiding Principles were developed at the New Mexico Summit on Early Childhood Inclusion on March 30-31, 2010.

Download the Guiding Principles or this entire brochure at www.newmexicokids.org

TEACHERS AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS CAN USE THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO . . .

. . . *consider* ways to celebrate and nurture every child’s unique gifts.

. . . *increase* attention to the ways in which they learn about and incorporate the languages and cultures of every child in daily practice.

. . . *advocate* for increased professional development on related topics. Examples might include ways to support young dual language learners, ways to respectfully incorporate home and family culture, or ways to collaborate effectively with families.

. . . *identify* collaborating partners and resources. For example, which agencies or organizations could assist you in supporting every family?



Use the Guiding Principles to Support Change in:

- Program Practices
- Professional Development
- Training
- Parent Engagement
- Public Policy

FAMILY MEMBERS CAN USE THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO . . .

. . . *ask* questions about the values that are important to them. For example, a family could ask a program about the ways in which every child is supported to achieve his or her full potential. Or, they could ask teachers and administrators about how they involve family members as partners and decision makers.

. . . *emphasize* to teachers and administrators the importance of having their language and culture reflected in the places where their child spends time.

FACULTY, TRAINERS, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS CAN USE THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO . . .

. . . *support* increased attention to full participation for every child in family, program, and community settings.

. . . *design* course materials for colleges and universities

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS CAN USE THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO . . .

. . . *discuss* how the Guiding Principles can be integrated and implemented. For example, could they become part of a program philosophy or a personnel handbook?

. . . *prompt* reflection and monitor changes in practice. For example, convert the statements into a checklist. Use the checklist to assess the extent to which practices are currently in place (never – some of the time – all the time). Use the responses to identify priorities for change and monitor those changes over time.

. . . *use* the guiding principles to reconsider current commitments. For example, will current plans for training and professional development build your staff’s capacity to implement the guiding principles?

Support provided by the New Mexico Children Youth and Families Department and the National Professional Development Center for Inclusion



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

for the Full Participation of Young Children, Birth through Age Eight, in New Mexico’s Early Learning System