State Early Childhood Inclusion Self-Assessment

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Adapted by the ECTA and DaSy Centers from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education's *Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs*

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This self-assessment tool provides a framework for examining key aspects of a State infrastructure that are useful for promoting high quality inclusive practices, programs and policies. The sections of the self-assessment are organized by the nine state recommendations of the Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs (2015). The policy statement is reflective of the defining features of access, participation and supports as described by the early childhood professional organizations of Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2009) available at https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/DEC_NAEYC_EC_updatedKS.pdf.

The self-assessment is useful for examining components of a state system, identification of system strengths and gaps. It can be used to facilitate discussions and cross- sector strategic planning among early childhood agencies and programs to promote partnerships that will benefit young children with disabilities and their families. After completion of the self-assessment, sections may be prioritized for determining future actions and improvements. The policy statement is available online at http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/earlylearning/joint-statement-full-text.pdf.

Rating Scale: 1. Not yet   2. Planning but not implemented   3. In process, and/or partially implemented   4. In place/fully implemented

	Rating	Evidence What does it look like?	Comments (e.g., Next Steps, Status, Prioritization)
1. Create a State-Level Interagency Task Force and Plan for Inclusion			
1a. Does your State have a State Interagency Task Force with the authority to create or strengthen early childhood inclusion? This can be any team working on inclusion such as such as a council, Leadership Team, or workgroup.			
1b. Does your State Interagency Task Force include representatives from different sectors and groups within the State? At a minimum include representatives from all early childhood sectors and programs as referenced in the joint policy statement.			

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	Rating	Evidence What does it look like?	Comments (e.g., Next Steps, Status, Prioritization)
1. Create a State-Level Interagency Task Force and Plan for Inclusion *(Continued)*			
1c. Does your State Interagency Task Force have a cross-sector vision and mission for expanding access to and participation in high-quality inclusive early childhood programs?			
1d. Do your State Interagency Task Force and their respective agencies have established expectations and resources for programs to implement the vision and mission locally?			
1e. Does the State Interagency Task Force have a cross-sector interagency strategic plan in place based on existing data?			
1f. Do your State Interagency Task Force and their respective agencies take an active role in identifying barriers and ensuring policies and investments support a coordinated, comprehensive early childhood system that provides access to inclusive early learning opportunities?			
1g. Do your State Interagency Task Force planning efforts build on existing State early childhood efforts/initiatives to ensure that early childhood inclusion and the necessary services and supports for children with disabilities are consistently addressed across existing State strategic plans?			
1h. Does your State Interagency Task Force have a strategic plan for inclusion that utilizes applicable technical assistance (TA) networks within the State?			
1i. Is the strategic plan being implemented?			
2. Ensure State Policies Support High-Quality Inclusion			
2a. Do State policies address implementing evidence-based inclusive practices to provide the necessary supports and services to young children with disabilities in early care and education programs?			

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2. Ensure State Policies Support High-Quality Inclusion *(Continued)*			
2b. Do State policies consistently align with federal and/or State legal requirements?			
2c. Do State policies facilitate high-quality inclusion rather than create barriers?			
2d. Do State policies promote coordinated and culturally and linguistically responsive, comprehensive services across early childhood programs, including health, mental health, and other social services?			
2e. Do State policies address children who are dually placed in more than one program and specifically address practices that create unnecessary transitions between service providers and different locations?			
2f. Do State policies ensure children with a disability stay in their existing early childhood program while still receiving early intervention/special education services?			
2g. Do State policies promote the principle of natural proportions in inclusive early childhood programs?			
2h. Do State early learning guidelines and standards address the learning and developmental needs of children with disabilities?			
2i. Do current or prospective early learning initiatives include policies and procedures to recruit, enroll, and support children with a range of disabilities?			
2j. Do State policies promote and support a mixed delivery system of high-quality inclusive early learning opportunities by establishing partnerships with public and private early learning programs?			
2k. Does your state ensure that families, administrators, practitioners and other key stakeholders are meaningfully involved in policy decisions, discussions, planning and evaluating state progress towards the inclusion plan?			

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3. Set Goals and Track Data			
3a. Do individual state agencies have concrete goals aligned with the State Interagency Task Force goals on the agreed upon vision and mission for expanding access to inclusive and high-quality learning opportunities?			
3b. Do state agencies track the enrollment of children with disabilities in early childhood programs?			
3c. Do the State Interagency Task Force and their respective agencies establish a baseline that identifies the number of high-quality early learning childhood slots available and the number of children under five with and without disabilities in those slots?			
3d. Does the State use data and have benchmarks to track the progress toward increasing the number of high-quality early childhood program slots available and the number of children under five with and without disabilities in those slots?			
3e. Do State agencies have and use data that provide information about children and family having equal access to high-quality early childhood programs (such as suspension and expulsion data, IDEA educational environments, mediation and due process data, enrollment information, and child care subsidy program, etc.)?			
3f. Do State agencies have and use data that provide information about program quality and inclusive program practices (QRIS standards, tools to measure inclusive practices)?			
3g. Do State agencies use data to monitor program quality and inclusive program practices?			
3h. Do State agencies provide data on access and quality to local programs in user-friendly formats with the expectation that local programs will use it for decision-making and program improvement?			

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4. Review and Modify Resource Allocations			
4a. Do State agencies review how resources are allocated to better support access to inclusive programs?			
4b. Do State agencies allow the braiding of funds across early childhood programs, when appropriate to support inclusion?			
4c Do State agencies have guidance or procedures for braiding and coordinating resource allocation to their programs with each other to support inclusion?			
4d. Do the State Interagency Task Force and/or their state agencies develop finance mapping plans to determine how to most efficiently and effectively utilize funds from different funding streams to support the participation of children with disabilities across the full range of early childhood programs?			
5. Ensure Quality Rating Frameworks are Inclusive			
5a. Does your State Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) include early childhood programs beyond child care?			
5b. Do your State QRIS framework indicators address the learning and developmental needs of children with disabilities within each level of the framework?			
5c. Does your States QRIS offer incentives and supports to effectively provide inclusive program practices?			
5d. Does your State QRIS supplement traditional environmental assessments with tools that specifically measure the quality of inclusion?			

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6. Strengthen Accountability and Build Incentive Structures			
6a. Do State agencies address barriers to early childhood inclusion as part of their accountability systems?			
6b. Do State agencies hold local programs accountable for providing access to inclusive learning environments for children with disabilities (e.g., rules, requirements, policies, monitoring)?			
6c. Do State agencies incorporate inclusion indicators in their child care licensing standards and/or in agreements made with providers who offer subsidized placement options?			
6d. Does your State Education Agency (SEA) and Lead Agency (LA) for Early Intervention require documentation from local programs for how Least Restrictive (LRE) and Natural Environments requirements are met?			
6f. Do State agencies offer incentives to support high-quality inclusive early learning models (e.g., publicly recognizing high-quality inclusive programs, using tiered reimbursement in their QRIS, providing child care subsidy payment differentials per child with a disability, ensuring all trainings on children with disabilities and inclusion are credit bearing, providing tuition assistance for credit bearing courses on inclusion and offering TA to programs to implement inclusive practices)?			

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7. Build a Coordinated Early Childhood Professional Development (PD) System			
7a. Do State agencies have a common knowledge and competency base across early childhood, early intervention and early childhood special education programs so that all personnel supporting with young children have knowledge of child development and learning and include considerations for children with disabilities?			
7b. Do State agencies ensure that personnel standards, certifications, credentials, licensure requirements, and workforce preparation programs for early childhood program personnel, including administrators, include competencies for supporting with children with disabilities and their families?			
7c. Do State agencies partner with institutions of higher education (IHEs) to ensure that early childhood preparation degree programs include specific pedagogy for children with disabilities woven throughout the entire curriculum, including coursework and practicum experiences, rather than contained in a small number of supplemental courses or a separate program?			
7d. Do State agencies partner with IHEs to ensure that there are programs within the State that prepare early childhood personnel to collaborate to support young children with disabilities, including children with low-incidence disabilities?			

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7. Build a Coordinated Early Childhood Professional Development (PD) System *(Continued)*			
7f. Do State agencies ensure personnel policies support the delivery of services and supports to children with disabilities through consultation with and under the supervision of professionals with specialized training and certifications (e.g., early childhood special educators, early interventionists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists, teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing)?			
7g. Do State agencies promote co-teaching models where specialists and teachers or providers work jointly with children in inclusive settings?			
7h. Do State agencies promote and recommend coaching/ mentoring models to support teachers and providers in developing competencies?			
7i. Do State agencies offer cross-sector professional development, ongoing access to resources and TA tied to specific competencies? Examples of cross-sector PD and TA are referenced in the joint policy statement.			
7j. Do State agencies offer on-site professional development and TA in evidence-based practices that support inclusion?			
8. Implement Statewide Supports for Children's Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health[*]			
8a. Do early childhood programs have access to guidance to build capacity in working with young children, with an emphasis on fostering social-emotional and behavioral health such as the early childhood mental health (e.g., ECMHC, PBIS or Pyramid Model)?			

[*]Please see Appendix 2 in the joint policy statement at https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/earlylearning/joint-statement-full-text.pdf for resources on Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support {PBIS}, and expulsion in early learning settings.)

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8. Implement Statewide Supports for Children's Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health* ***(Continued)***			
8a. Do early childhood programs have access to guidance to build capacity in working with young children, with an emphasis on fostering social-emotional and behavioral health such as the early childhood mental health (e.g., ECMHC, PBIS or Pyramid Model)?			
8b. Do State agencies have specialists or policies around funding and hiring specialists to work with public and private early childhood programs to support children with social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs, as well as their teachers?			
8c. Does your State have a Statewide system that offers program supports so that children with disabilities, including those with emotional and behavior difficulties, can be successful (e.g., ECMHC, PBIS or Pyramid Model)?			
8d. Do State agencies have policies and provide guidance and technical assistance to early care and education programs to prevent and address suspension/expulsion?			

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9. Raise Public Awareness			
9a. Do the State Interagency Task Force and its respective agencies have established partnerships with state and community leaders to communicate the benefits of early childhood inclusion?			
9b. Do the State Interagency Task Force and its respective agencies affirm and communicate laws and research that provide the foundation for inclusion to key partners (e.g., families of children with and without disabilities, pediatric healthcare providers, businesses and private sector partners and other relevant community leaders)?			
9c. Do the State Interagency Task Force and its respective agencies communicate their expectations to local communities that they are responsible for ensuring all children and their families have access to high-quality early childhood programs and the individualized supports they need to fully participate in these programs?			
9d. Do your State's public awareness efforts address the attitudes and beliefs about inclusion?			