



NATIONAL CENTER ON

Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning



Disabilities Services Newsletter

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Creating a Classroom Culture of Acceptance of Individual Differences

A culture of acceptance is one that welcomes and includes all children. Acceptance goes beyond providing access to an early learning setting. It means being included both physically and socially as a part of the group. A culture of acceptance occurs when each child is accepted and welcomed for who they are. 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 (DEC/NAEYC, 2009)."

Read About It



Ms. Lee watched as Triana and Leo played together at the sand table. The two children laughed as they built mountains and tunnels in the sand. When Triana was first enrolled in her classroom, Ms. Lee had some concerns about how the other children would respond to her and how she could create a welcoming and accepting classroom. Triana has leg braces and uses a walker to move around the classroom. At times, her speech can be difficult to understand. Ms. Lee felt confident about meeting Triana's learning needs, but wanted to make sure she was accepted by the children and their families as a full member of the class. Ms. Lee talked with Ms.

Raina, the disabilities coordinator, before Triana started school about strategies for creating a classroom that was welcoming and accepting. Ms. Raina shared resources, and she and Ms. Lee planned activities for the children and families.

Integration Checklist: Including Children with Significant Disabilities in Head Start

Teachers who create accessible environments for children with disabilities "talk straight, look good, go with the flow, and act cool." This checklist helps disabilities coordinators, teachers, and staff members understand how to make sure children can communicate, socialize, and engage in their Head Start settings and activities. Ms. Lee can use this checklist to ensure she is ready to support Triana's full integration in her classroom.

Take a Look

SpecialQuest Session 6: An Inclusion Story

This session packet includes the Christopher's Story video, a training script, and handouts. Ms. Lee and Ms. Raina can use these materials during family events. Families can see and discuss what inclusive services look like for a young child with disabilities and his family. Ms. Lee and Ms. Raina can also use the session packet with other staff members and community partners to discuss strategies for providing coordinated, comprehensive, family-centered services.

Try It Out

Member of the Class: Tips for Teachers

Discover strategies that support classroom membership, a key feature and goal of true inclusion. Ms. Lee can use these practical tips to ensure shared experiences for every child in her classroom and reinforce a sense of community.

Improve Your Practice

Facilitating Membership in Head Start Classrooms

Disabilities coordinators and education staff, like Ms. Lee, can watch this eight-minute video on building children's sense of belonging to help facilitate the inclusion of children with all abilities. Discover other related videos that model how to teach children to initiate interaction and relationship with another peer in the classroom.

Families, Too!

How to Help Your Child Develop Empathy

Discover practical tips for how family members and caregivers can help infants and toddlers develop empathy and understand that other people have different thoughts and feelings than they do.

Ongoing Features

Free access to a specially selected article from Young Exceptional Children (YEC)

Read the YEC article, **Pick a Book, Any Book: Using Children's Books to Support Positive Attitudes Toward Peers with Disabilities**. It is available through this newsletter until April 30, 2018.

Head Start Disability/Inclusion Network

Engage with Head Start disabilities/inclusion peers around the country in an online community hosted on the MyPeers platform. Our community currently has more than 1,000 members who are sharing resources, engaging in conversations, and asking questions. **Register now** as a member of MyPeers. If you are already a member, find the Head Start Disability/Inclusion Network community under "All Communities" and select the blue "Join" button.

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We Want to Hear from You

The Disabilities Services Newsletter is produced monthly by the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. Submit questions or suggestions for newsletter topics to ecdtl@ecetta.info.

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