

Wisconsin's Early Childhood

INCLUSION



The following pages provide an overview of inclusion and inclusive services.

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Welcome Early Care and Education (ECE) Professionals!

Did you know that Wisconsin has three different state agencies that work with and support young children with disabilities between birth and 5 years old?



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES**

Birth to 3 Program



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Early Childhood Special Education



**Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families**

YoungStar and Child Care Regulation

This tool kit was developed by Wisconsin's Early Childhood Inclusion Committee in order to provide information and resources to assist ECE providers as they strive to include and support the youngest of Wisconsin's children.

WHAT IS EARLY CHILDHOOD INCLUSION?

Early childhood inclusion supports the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society.

A Philosophy

Inclusion is an attitude and way of thinking that welcomes and respects all children. It is the fundamental belief that each and every child belongs.

A Practice

Inclusion is a practice that supports the participation of children, with and without disabilities, in community programs. It involves making changes or accommodations that allow children equal access to early care and education programs and environments.

A Community

Inclusion is a community where everyone is respected and seen as capable and essential members. Inclusive communities focus on the things we **can** do, not those we have yet to learn.

What does inclusion look like in an early care setting?

Access – This means that all children have access to the environment, materials, activities and social opportunities. Every child can move about easily and get from one area to another without much help or support from adults. Each child, regardless of ability, has opportunities to learn, play and connect with other children.

Participation – This means children with and without disabilities are engaged in learning, play and social activities. Changes are made to materials and activities in order to support children who learn and play differently. Every child has the opportunity to participate meaningfully in all aspects of their day.

Support – This means there is an underlying system of supports, such as ongoing professional learning, collaboration between partners and stakeholders, specialized services for children, etc., in place to assist individuals and organizations in providing inclusive services to children and families.

WHY DO WE PROVIDE INCLUSION?

All young children with disabilities should have access to high-quality, inclusive early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized support in order to meet high expectations.

Legal Foundation

Federal laws support inclusive policies and practices for young children.

The [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. [Child care programs](#) fall under Title III (Public Accommodations) of the ADA. Therefore, children with disabilities must be provided with equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of their early care and education (ECE) program, including learning activities, services, outdoor spaces, etc. Find [more information](#) on ADA and child care.

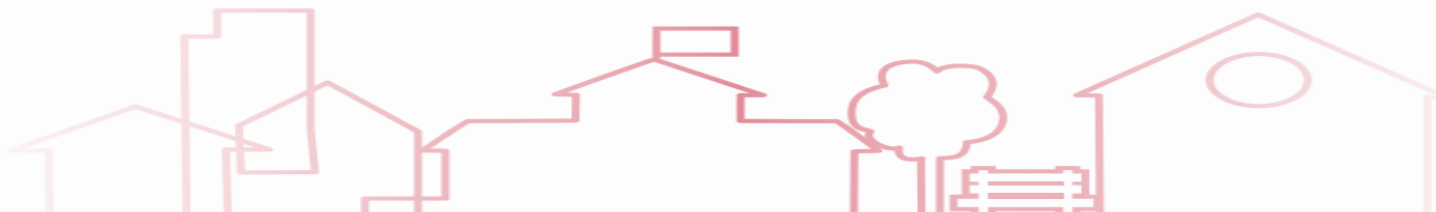
The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) is a piece of legislation that ensures students with a disability are provided with a [Free Appropriate Public Education \(FAPE\)](#) that is adapted to their individual needs. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention ([Part C](#)), special education ([Part B](#)) and related services to eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

Scientific Foundation

[Research supports](#) inclusion for young children with disabilities.

- * Families of children with and without disabilities have positive views of inclusion
- * Inclusive programs are at least comparable to, and at times of higher quality than, segregated placements that do not enroll children with disabilities
- * Children in inclusive programs generally do at least as well as children in specialized programs
- * Inclusive programs promote children's social development

WHAT SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE IN WISCONSIN?



Department of Health Services (DHS)	Department of Public Instruction (DPI)	Department of Children and Families (DCF)
<u>Wisconsin's Birth to 3 Program</u>	<u>Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)</u>	<u>YoungStar Early Childhood Inclusion</u>
Early intervention services and supports are available for eligible children under the age of 3 who have delays or disabilities.	Each school district in WI is responsible for providing Special Education and Related Services for children with disabilities , including those in early childhood programs, who are between the ages of 3 and 21 years of age.	YoungStar is WI's child care quality rating and improvement system. This program, along with child care regulation , help to assure that ECE programs are safe, nurturing and supportive places for each and every child
<p><i>What do I do if I have a concern about the development of a child under the age of 3?</i></p> <p>A referral can be made by contacting the primary point of referral within the county that you live. Visit the Birth to 3 contact webpage and scroll down to find the contact information for your county.</p>	<p><i>What do I do if I have a concern about the development of a child between the ages of 3 and 5 years of age?</i></p> <p>A referral can be made by contacting your local school district's Special Education Department.</p> <p>Child Find is a process designed to locate, identify and refer children with disabilities as early as possible.</p>	<p><i>What do I do if I have a concern about a child in my program?</i></p> <p>A child's development is monitored by their child care provider through observations, developmental checklists and screenings. If a provider has a concern with a child's development, they should talk with the family about making a referral to either the Birth to 3 program or ECSE depending on the child's age.</p>
<p>Additional Information</p> <p>Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP)</p> <p>Natural Environment Guiding Principles</p>	<p>Additional Information</p> <p>Individualized Education Program (IEP)</p> <p>Least Restrictive Environment</p> <p>Special Education Disability Categories</p>	<p>Additional Information</p> <p>Wisconsin Shares Inclusion Rate</p> <p>Inclusion Training for Child Care Providers</p>

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF INCLUSION?

Inclusion promotes acceptance, strengthens families and builds confidence.

Research shows that the benefits of inclusion are wide reaching

Children with Disabilities

Inclusion positively impacts a child's ability to:

- * Develop positive social, emotional and play skills
- * Make friends
- * Practice skills in natural environments
- * Access age appropriate curriculum that is relevant to their needs
- * Learn from shared experiences with same age peers

All of these help to improve outcomes for children with disabilities.

Families of Children with Disabilities

One of the most important benefits that inclusion provides a family is **access!**

- * To high-quality ECE opportunities with the support of professionals/specialists
- * To a support system made up of families with diverse backgrounds and parenting experiences
- * To opportunities to make friends that can help reduce the feeling of isolation

Same Age Peers

Inclusion helps children learn to:

- * Respect **differences**
- * Demonstrate **acceptance**
- * Understand **diversity**

Children in inclusive settings learn important life-long skills, such as empathy and compassion. They grow up seeing disability as a natural part of life and develop a positive attitude toward people with disabilities.

Early Care and Education (ECE) Professionals

Inclusive settings provide ECE professionals with opportunities to:

- * Partner with and access community resources and services
- * Build strong relationships with families with diverse stories
- * Access specific training in order to expand skills, knowledge and professional competence

HOW CAN I MAKE MY PROGRAM MORE INCLUSIVE?

Successful early childhood inclusion begins with collaboration, communication, and acceptance. It continues with developmentally appropriate supports and evidence-based practices.

To Do List

- * Promote acceptance and appreciation of children's individual differences and varying abilities with a focus on children's strengths.
[Attitudes and Beliefs](#)
[Where do my Beliefs come from?](#)
- * Develop authentic and culturally responsive relationships with families that involve daily communication about children's learning and development and frequent celebrations of the child.
[DCF Early Childhood Inclusion – Working Together](#)
[Culturally Responsive Strategies](#)
[Family Engagement and Cultural Perspectives](#)
- * Foster positive adult-child relationships, establish predictable routines, and intentionally teach a range of social emotional skills.
[Supporting Social and Emotional Well Being](#)
[Promoting Social and Emotional Skills During Routines](#)
[You got it - Teaching Social Emotional Skills](#)
- * Use various strategies to promote interactions between children with and without disabilities.
[Universal Support Strategies](#)
[Strategies for Increasing Peer Social Interactions](#)
- * Ensure planned activities consider the individualized adaptations, specialized equipment, assistive technology, and necessary supports for children with disabilities.
[Stemie: A Guide to Adaptations](#) [Making Adaptations](#)
- * Use evidence-based instructional strategies during naturally occurring routines to provide all children with opportunities to learn and practice skills. [Embedded Learning Opportunities](#) [Types of Modifications](#) [Embedded Instruction](#)
- * Communicate and collaborate with interdisciplinary team members (e.g., special educator, occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist, etc.) and families to share information and implement adaptations and supports for individual children.
[Building Partnerships with Families](#)
- * Describe the key indicators and elements necessary for promoting high-quality inclusion at the [community](#), [program](#) and [ECE environment](#) levels.
- * Take a look at these Inclusion Checklists ([#1](#) or [#2](#)) for tips on how to create and maintain an inclusive program.

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT INCLUSION

National Organizations

- [Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center \(ECLKC\)](#)
- [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center \(ECTA\)](#)
- [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)
- [Head Start Center for Inclusion](#)
- [Division for Early Childhood \(DEC\) - Recommended Practices](#)
- [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#)
- [IRIS Center](#)
- [Zero to Three](#)

Additional Resources

- [Barton Lab](#)
- [Center on the Developing Child \(Harvard\)](#)
- [CONNECT Modules](#)
- [The University of Maine—Growing Ideas](#)

Additional Resources

- [Developmentally Appropriate Practice \(DAP\)](#)
- [Developmental Milestones \(CDC\)](#)
- [Universal Design for Learning in Early Childhood \(#1\) \(#2\) \(#3\)](#)
- [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning \(CSEFEL\)](#)
- [Center for Inclusive Child Care](#)

Wisconsin Resources

- [Wisconsin Wayfinder](#)—Resource Network
- [Community Resources for Families and Children \(DHS\)](#)
- [Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs \(CYSHCN\)](#)
- [WI Early Childhood Collaborating Partners](#)
- [WI Alliance for Infant Mental Health](#)
- [Wisconsin DEC](#)
- [Wisconsin Registry—Inclusion Credential](#)
- [Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health](#)