



Promoting the inclusion of infants and young children with disabilities in child care

Participant Module

Welcoming ALL Children



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Session: Welcoming All Children

OVERVIEW

What this workshop should accomplish:

Children can be very different – in their rates of development, the way they play or explore things around them, and in the amount of support and love they need from adult caregivers. Each child is different!!

Some children may need extra help and support in order to grow and learn as other children do naturally. Other children may need help at specific times. It may be hard for them, for example, when they are dropped off at day camp. Some children may actually have conditions that have labels – such as Down syndrome – and others may just seem slow in developing – in learning to walk or talk. Still others may seem more temperamental than others. They may be fussy or difficult to calm.

Caregivers of children need to be able to address the needs of all children – a sometimes daunting task since all children need attention, protection from harmful circumstances, and loving and supportive relationships with everyone who is responsible for their care and upbringing. In this session, participants will

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learn about strengths and differences and how to include all children in inclusive environments.

- i Describe the concept of inclusion and its relationship to infants and toddlers with and without special needs.
- i Identify terminology associated with inclusion and special needs.
- i Recognize families differing cultures and perspectives on child rearing.
- i Define what is meant by “Using People First Language”
- i Describe the concept of making adaptations in the care space

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BACKGROUND

Welcoming all families into your center or child space has an everlasting effect on that family. Families know that they are welcomed and wanted. How does it feel for you to be included: in a conversation, an event, an activity, at church, at your child's school or the playground? Knowing that you belong and are wanted is powerful and uplifting. Everyone tries to attain a sense of belonging. Welcoming all children and families enriches the lives of everyone involved. Being included and including, giving and receiving acceptance is what we all need. Everyone has their own special qualities that can be shared.

Families are as diverse as pieces of a quilt. Each one unique, beautiful and special. Each family is a true one-of-a-kind. And like a quilt, although each piece is different from the other, together they make a whole quilt. When all of the different families and children become a part of one classroom, that room becomes diverse and yet whole. These diverse qualities should be honored and valued. Every family has their own set of values and beliefs. Each family operates under their own set of circumstances and events. The family has a right to make priorities as they see fit. As child care providers, it is our responsibility to honor diversity of values, beliefs, and experiences.

Families that have a child with a disability are often faced with many additional challenges and obstacles that we may never think of or see. Communication between professional and

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parents is vital to create an effective team model for the child. The child is a piece of the family's existence. The focus needs to remain on the family not just the child. Families need to express their needs and goals to the child care team, and the child care providers need to respect this. Parents are the experts on their own children.

Each of us holds unique values and beliefs about many things such as the purpose of child care, the best ways to address the needs of children who are special, our own abilities and confidence in building relationships with people who may be different, or the extent to which particular programs can "stretch" to accommodate diversity. Our values and beliefs come from our families, our communities, and our personal experiences with diversity and difference, including our experiences with people with disabilities. People who have experienced disability through friendships, family members or other circumstances may see disability and inclusion differently than people who have never met or who have had negative experiences with people with disabilities. Understanding our own values and listening to those of others is important when child care providers, family members, and others are trying to work together to successfully include a child with disabilities in a program that has traditionally been oriented to children without disabilities.

Families and professionals have many and often differing opinions and understandings about inclusion. One individual's definition of inclusion frequently differs from ways in which the term may be defined by others. In education, the meaning of

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the term is generally used to refer only to children with disabilities. From other perspectives, inclusion describes the integration or full participation of people together with any number of differences. When various children are included in the same group, the group diversity enriches and impacts the child care provider's, families' and children's experiences and opportunities for development and social interactions. The benefits of inclusion for all children are many and varied, ranging from opportunities to associate and build friendships with typically developing children to learning from other children through the natural ways in which children show and teach each other.

Rationale for Inclusion

There are many different perspectives about why children with disabilities should be included in settings with children who do not have disabilities or special needs. One perspective is **legal** -- both the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) establish a legal philosophy that says that individuals with disabilities may not be excluded legally from settings, such as community child care and preschool programs, participated in by individuals without disabilities. For example, the ADA requires child care (and other settings) to make reasonable accommodation for children with disabilities. IDEA requires school districts to place children in educational settings that are not restrictive; in other words, in settings that would be typical for a child of similar chronological age.

A second perspective values diversity and is rooted in the early childhood education field's view of **recommended practices**.

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Being able to accommodate and address diversity is an essential component of quality practices in any child care or preschool program. Within this frame of reference, children with special needs or disabilities are viewed as one of the kinds of diversity that enriches and improves early childhood education programs. Other types of diversity include differences such as gender, developmental abilities, cultural background, religious preference, or children's individual interests and strengths. Recommended practices are based in research and the body of research about children with disabilities tells us that children learn more, are happier, and generally do better when cared for and educated in inclusive settings.

A third perspective is that held by the **parents and children** themselves -- the consumers of community child care and preschool programs. Parents of children with disabilities most often want their children to be accepted and welcomed into the many opportunities offered by their communities. Parents of children with disabilities make decisions on behalf of their children and families just as parents of all children do. A parent who needs child care wants safe, convenient, reasonably priced, quality child care irrespective of whether or not the child has a disability. The parent of a child with a disability may have additional considerations in order to have both the child's general developmental and special needs met during child care.

Children with disabilities are no different than children who are developing typically in that they want to have opportunities to learn, explore, make friends, and grow up in safe and nurturing environments.

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Summary

Successful inclusion of anyone who is different requires creativity, problem solving, and persistence for success. Often what works to make one situation successful may not work in another similar circumstance or with a similar child. Inclusive practices have been described by people of different faiths, cultures, backgrounds, personalities, abilities, and talents. A reality is that nobody reaches "inclusion" but rather, all of us must work together to accept, respect, and honor our differences -- those characteristics that make each us an individual with unique gifts and talents, strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, abilities and capabilities.

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SESSION OUTLINE

I. Welcome

Promoting the inclusion of young children with disabilities in child care settings has been a primary purpose of PIN. PIN is designed to address the priorities, needs, and concerns of child care providers who are working with young children.

II. Self assessment & Participant Information Forms

III. Interview Introductions

IV. Inclusion

What is inclusion?

Rationale for inclusion

V. Families

Using People First Language

Adaptations

Celebrating Differences

VI. Summing up

What Inclusion Means

Inclusion means

- < making all programs and settings (e.g. educational programs, community activities, etc.) in which typical children and their families participate, accessible and available to children with disabilities and their families
- < integrating infant and young children with disabilities into typical educational programs
- < developing educational and community programs for individuals with and without disabilities
- < placing individuals with disabilities in the same educational program programs their parents would choose for them to attend if they did not have disabilities
- < providing opportunities for special services to be provided within typical educational settings
- < providing opportunities for individual needs to be met within typical educational settings
- < providing services to infants, children and adults with disabilities and their families, providing opportunities for daily routines that are similar to typical peers and their families (e.g. a typical 4 year old may go to a half day preschool and spend the afternoon at home or at a child care center)
- < providing opportunities for social relationships between individuals with and without disabilities
- < teaching all children to understand, accept and value human differences
- < providing adequate support and training to caregivers, service providers and families
- < addressing parents' concerns and priorities for their infants, children and adults

What Inclusion Does Not Mean

Inclusion does not mean

- < dumping individuals with disabilities into child care or school programs for typical children without preparation and support
- < locating children with disabilities in different rooms at day care or school
- < grouping children with a wide range of disabilities and needs in the same program as a form of “integration”
- < ignoring children’s individual needs
- < exposing children to unnecessary risk or hazards
- < placing unreasonable demands on teachers, service providers or program directors
- < not addressing parents’ concerns and priorities for their children
- < placing older children with disabilities in programs for younger typical children

Benefits of INCLUSION

Children with special needs

Develop social skills
Maintain and generalize skills

Families

Find support from other families with and without children with special needs
See their children having opportunities to form a variety of friendships

Peers without special needs

Develop positive attitudes toward diversity
Tend to be more accepting of human differences
Continue to achieve

Caregivers

Become more
- flexible in teaching
- confident
- aware of the needs of ALL young children
Form cooperative relationships

It's the 'Person First'- Then the Disability

What do you see first?

- i The disability?
- i The physical problem?
- i The person?

If you saw a person in a wheelchair unable to get up the stairs into a building, would you say, "there is a handicapped person unable to find a ramp?" or would you say, "there is a person with a disability who is handicapped by an inaccessible building?"

What is the proper way to speak to or about someone who has a disability? Consider how you would introduce someone-Jane Doe- who doesn't have a disability. You would give her name, where she lives, what she does or what she is interested in-she likes swimming or eating Mexican food, or watching Robert Redford movies.

Why say it differently for a person with disabilities? Every person is made up of many characteristics- mental as well as physical-and few want to be identified only by their ability to play tennis or by their love for fried onions or by the mole that is on their face. Those are just parts of us.

In writing or speaking, remember that children or adults with disabilities are just like everyone else-except they happen to have a disability. Therefore, here a few tips for improving your language related to disabilities and handicaps.

- , 1. Speak of the person first, then the disability.
- , 2. Emphasize abilities, not limitations.
- , 3. Do not label people as part of a disability group-don't say "the disabled", say "people with disabilities."
- , 4. Don't give excessive praise or attention to a person with a disability; don't patronize them.
- , 5. Choice and independence are important; let the person do, speak, learn for him/herself; use handicap to describe a situation or barrier imposed by society, the environment or oneself.

It's the 'Person First'- Then the Disability

Say...	Instead of....
Child with a disability	disabled or handicapped child
person with cerebral palsy	palsied, or C.P., or spastic
person who has...	afflicted, suffers from, victim
without speech, nonverbal	mute, or dumb
developmental delay	slow
emotional disorder, or mental illness	crazy or insane...
Uses a wheelchair	confined to a wheelchair
person with retardation	retarded
with Down Syndrome	Mongloid
person with epilepsy	epileptic
has a learning disability	is learning disabled
non-disabled	normal, healthy
has a physical disability	crippled
congenital disability	birth defect
cleft lip	hare lip
mobility impaired	lame
medically involved, or has chronic illness	sickly
paralyzed	invalid or paralytic
condition	disease (unless it is a disease)
seizures	fits
has hemiplegia (paralysis on one side of the body)	hemiplegic
has quadriplegia (paralysis of both arms and legs)	quadriplegic
has paraplegia (loss of function in lower body only)	paraplegic
of short stature	dwarf, midget

Introduction to Adaptation Framework

What does adaptation mean?

- i something that is changed or changes so as to become suitable to a new or special use or situation.
- i a change in behavior of an individual or group in adjustment to new or modified surroundings.

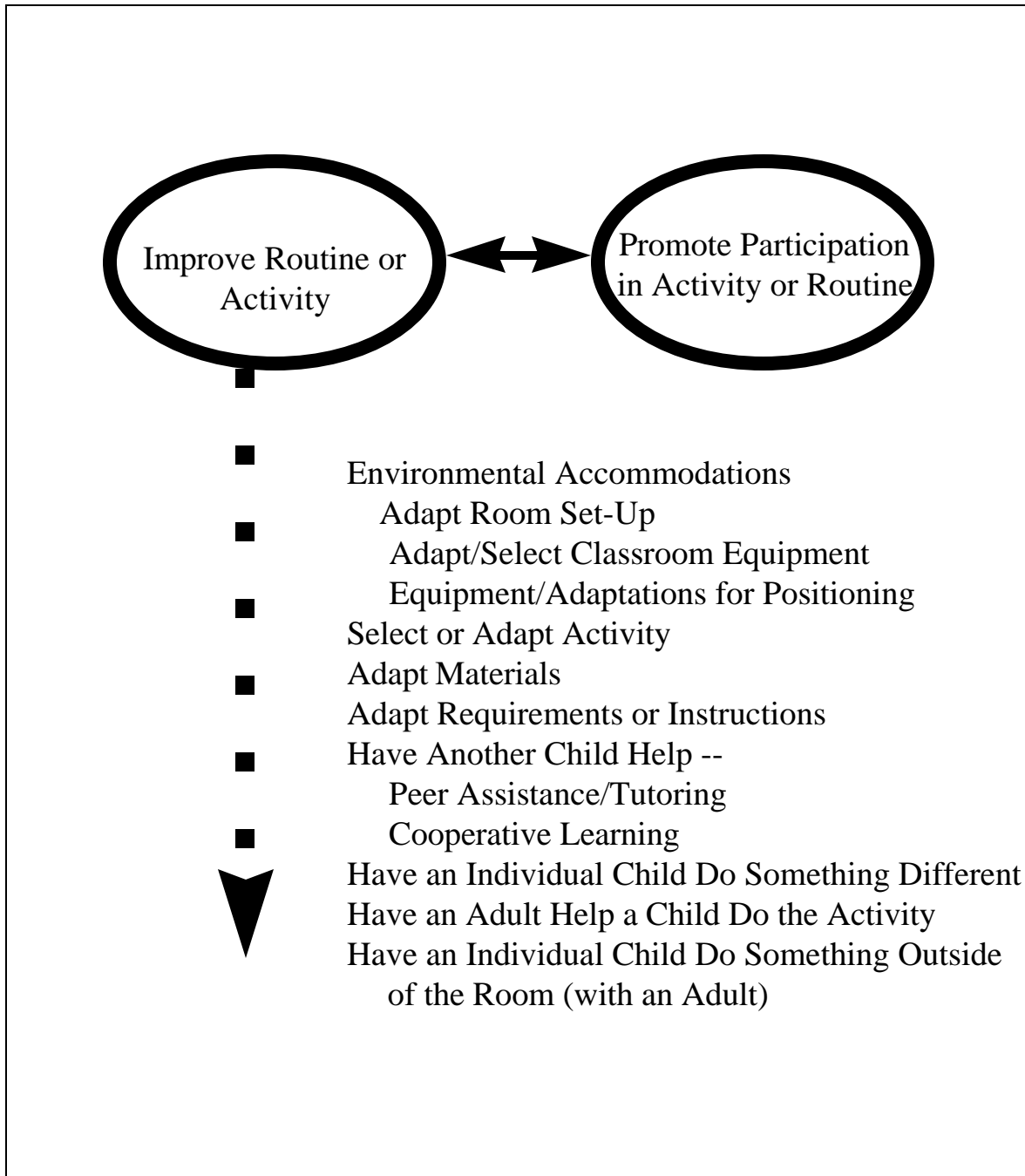
As children with disabilities are included in traditional child care programs, teachers are finding creative ways to adapt toys, activities and learning centers to meet the needs of all their students. Adaptations are the primary way of meeting the unique needs of children with disabilities in child care programs. The whole purpose of adaptations is to prevent the adults from having to do everything. When adaptations are effective, adults can be doing the same things that they would do with all children, which is to facilitate their participation in activities and routines.

What approaches are used to adapt the environment or activity?

- i Environmental accommodations
- i Adapt activities, materials, and/or instruction
- i Have another child help
- i Have an individual child do something different
- i Have an adult help a child do the activity
- i Have an individual child do something outside of the room with an adult

***Remember your approaches should go from the least restrictive to more intrusive (work from top to bottom)**

Facilitating Children's Participation and Learning



Joining the “Quilted Circle”

by Shafik Assante and Associates

“Quilters” are those of us who believe that building an inclusive society i.e. alliance builders, community builders is what our major responsibility must be in today’s society.

If you already agree that “quilting” is what you are about, you are already in the “Quilted Circle”! If you are willing to work with others to build a new “inclusive” society, we need you! Our challenge is to figure out how we can do so together with other “quilters” all over the globe.

Those of us in the “quilted circle” believe that “we are one though not the same”. What this means in the real world is that “quilters” will oppose all forms of “exclusions” every opportunity we get. This means opposing all the negative “isms” we come across daily i.e. racism, sexism, able-ism, ageism, etc. These “isms” play a key role in keeping people from recognizing their oneness. If we can play some role in helping people to recognize that community building is a solution to our turning on one another, we believe we are then truly quilt building and building the new villages for the next century.

A “Quilt Weaver” is an alliance builder. This may be done at your school, in your workplace, your church, your neighborhood. The point is to start weaving wherever you are now. In other words do what you think you can do within your own networks and circles to get people together to start thinking and discussing important issues of the day.

It is important to recognize that there are millions of “quilters” out there already. As we all say TOGETHER WE ARE BETTER. Two wonderful African proverbs sum up our philosophy of work and life “It takes a whole village to raise a child.” (Akan proverb) and “When spider webs unite we can tie up the lion.”

We use the word QUILT to represent our valued diversity and the word CIRCLE to represent our interconnectedness and our interdependence. In traditional African and Indian villages, sitting in a circle represents, among other things, unity of mission and equality of leadership. Collective leadership and ownership of the QUILTED CIRCLE is our vision. We are building it. You are welcome to come.

“We want to be clear about what we are asking. We desire that our unity of purpose be based on four assumptions”:

- 1.Our desire to end fragmentation.
- 2.Our real recognition that “together we are better.”
- 3.Our commitment to build a better society for ALL.
- 4.Our recognition and appreciation of our differences.

All the QUILT WEAVERS today are aware that either we make major changes in how our society is moving or we will continue to suffer major consequences. QUILT WEAVERS understand that the varying gifts we bring to the QUILT is the only thing that makes it whole. We hope that those who receive this writing will be with us in this effort. Help us weave better relationships with one another. Help us be that human broom that is willing to sweep away the dirt that gives birth to ‘isms’ which prevent us from uniting around our common interests. Let’s meet in the circle. Weave with us! Opposing the “isms” is what the “Quilted Circle” supporters are all about. Will you be with us?

Call or fax and let us know.

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It Takes A Whole Village To Raise A Child

Akan Proverb

Note: The name “Assante” means thank you. In a recent ceremony of friendship and to recognize the interconnectedness in their work and lives three of the authors chose to take the same last name.

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Participant Guide

Websites

Websites are a valuable resource for learning more about particular areas and for downloading information that can be used in training. Many websites are linked to other websites, providing easy access to related sites. However, website addresses may change.

The most up to date listing of resources may be found at

http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~scpp/nat_allies/na_resources.cfm or

www.nectac.org

What Did You Learn Today?

1. What did you hope to learn in this session? Was the goal met?
2. List 2- 3 main points you learned from this session.
3. I am leaving this session with a better idea about how to:
4. What is one thing you plan to do differently in your child space before the next session?