



May 11, 2021

Supporting Infant Toddler Families Through Inclusion

Viewer's Guide

This viewer's guide gives you ideas for supporting infant and toddler families through inclusion. The reflection questions and activities will help you think about ways to support children's learning and families' sense of inclusion and belonging. Helpful resources are found in the Resources section of this guide.

Definition of Early Childhood Inclusion

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) together provided a shared definition of what inclusion means and looks like in early learning environments.

“Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support 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.”

The desired results of 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. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high-quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports.”

(DEC/NAEYC, 2009)

Video 1: Disability Laws Video (Available on MyPeers)

Below is a list of important terms and acronyms related to disabilities laws and practices.

Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Accepting children with disabilities into educational programs is the law. IDEA, or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the special education federal law that ensures the educational needs of students with disabilities are met throughout the nation.

IDEA Part B and Part C

IDEA Part B regulations relate to the education of children aged 3 and above with disabilities. IDEA Part C regulations relate to early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An IEP is a written legal document that describes individualized special education and related services a child qualifies for. It includes annual goals and objectives and specific accommodations and modifications.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

Every infant and toddler who is eligible for early intervention services has an IFSP. An IFSP is a written legal document that describes individualized early intervention services for infants, toddlers, and their families. The plan includes specific outcomes and services for children and families.

American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

This federal law requires that all childcare and early learning programs make reasonable efforts to serve children with disabilities.



Familiarize yourself with the terms and acronyms



Access this video on MyPeers



Share this video with parents and colleagues

Video 2: Families Feel Included in the Learning Environment

What are some things this parent said about inclusion that resonated with you? Do you agree or disagree? What would you add?

Video 3: Guest Expert- Dr. Enrica Hampton

What are some tips or strategies you would like to try when having the initial conversation with families about additional supports for observed developmental concerns?

Video 4: IFSP Meeting Process

What feelings come up as you listen to one teacher's experience in the IFSP meeting?
What are some ways you have contributed to the IFSP team or meetings?

Strategies for Supporting Quality Inclusive Learning Environments

Infants



Connecting and Communicating with All Children and Families

Assign a primary caregiver to each infant

- Closely observe and get to know each infant.
- Develop a strong relationship with each infant's family.
- Be responsive to individual infant's cues and meet their needs.

Individualize. Try your best to interpret the infant's meaning, and then respond. Keep trying until you have figured it out.

Toddlers



Connecting and Communicating with All Children and Families

Stay close by and at the child's level

- Create a system to track that you are connecting with each child each day.
- Observe carefully to find out each child's preferred way of communicating and learning.

Individualize. If a toddler has a hard time communicating, model what you think the toddler is trying to say. Give choices between interpretations if you are not sure.

Try it out!

Begin with taking time to reflect on how well your early learning environment offers equitable and inclusive experiences for children and families.

Here are some aspects of high-quality inclusive early learning social and physical environments. Think about each of these aspects and what you do or can do to increase access and participation for all children.

A Safe and Supportive Physical Environment



Is your early learning environment welcoming and comfortable for all children, families, education staff, and consulting specialists?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Is the space arranged to allow all children to move around safely and explore freely and independently?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Inviting Materials



Are toys and materials interesting and stimulating for all children?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Have materials been adapted and made accessible to facilitate use by all children?

Your answers:

What you might change:

A Daily Schedule and Consistent Routines



Is the daily schedule (with pictures) posted at children's level, so it is visible to all children?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Do you adjust routines to facilitate all children's participation?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Connecting and Communicating with All Children



Have staff developed strong personal relationships with all children?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Do staff use a variety of ways to facilitate communication for all children?

Your answers:

What you might change:

Engaging Interactions and Meaningful Learning Experiences



Do learning activities build on children's interests and individual strengths?

Your answers:

What you might change:

What supports and modifications do you provide to make sure all children participate in regular learning activities?

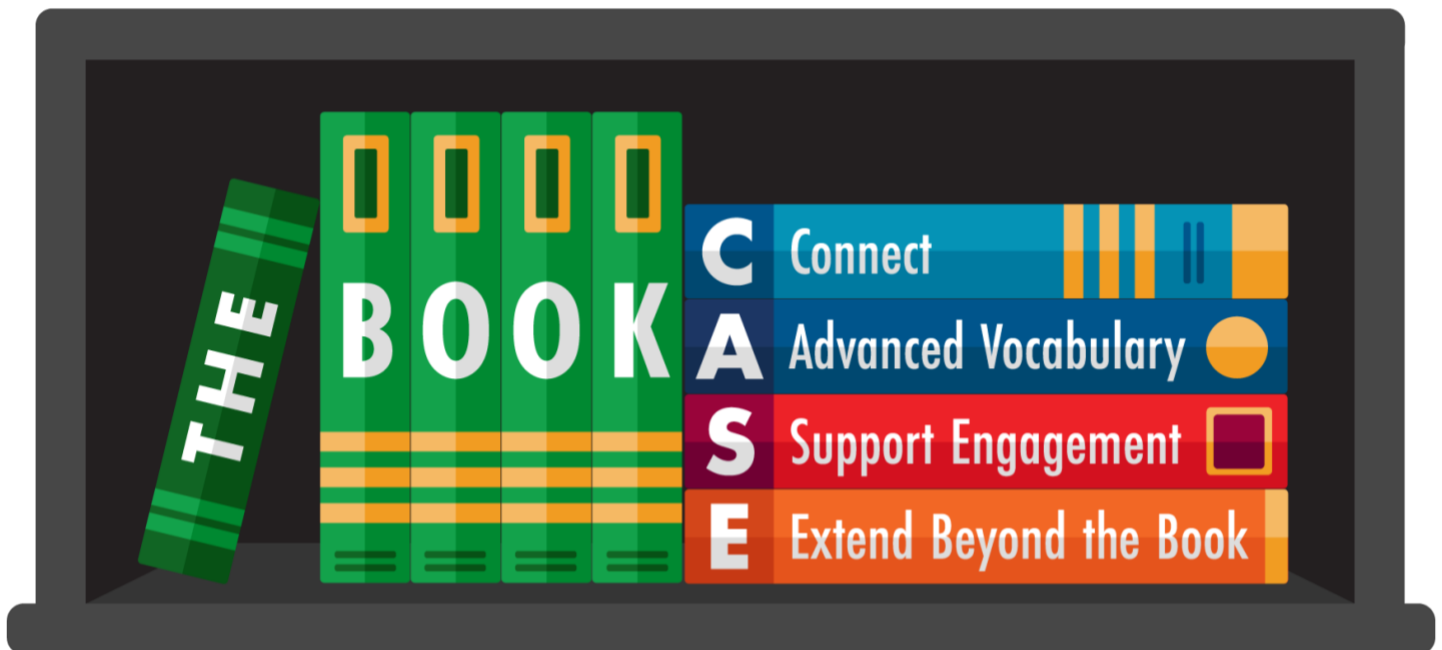
Your answers:

What you might change:

Translating Resources

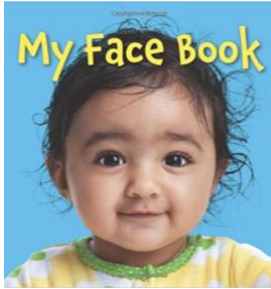
Start by talking with families about their preferred language of communication. This is done through conversations, back-and-forth journals, or maybe even a survey that goes out to all parents. Then work with your program leadership to have any materials that you provide to parents, translated in those languages. Reach out to your networks to see if someone would be willing to help! For example, Part C providers or LEA partners may have translated materials that they would be willing to share. You may also reach out to your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency, local cultural centers, or community college foreign language instructors to obtain translations.

The BookCASE



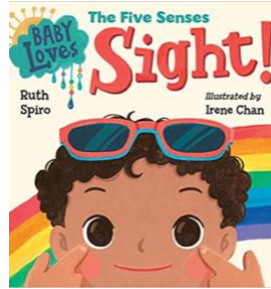
Books are a great way to engage with children. There are books about many things in our world, too. So, matching books with the themes and activities helps meaningful learning experiences. Choosing books on topics that preschoolers are interested in is another way to help them feel included and that their interests are important.

Selected Books from the BookCASE



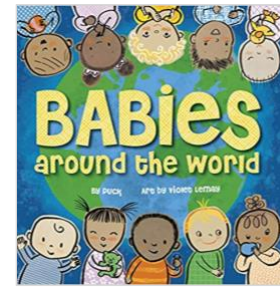
My Face Book by Star Bright Books

Babies love looking at other babies and these charming baby faces . . . smiling, frowning, laughing, being silly or serious are sure to captivate and delight toddlers and babies. This book comes translated in over 10 different languages.



The Five Senses: Sight! By Ruth Spiro & Irene Chan

Accurate enough for experts, yet simple enough for baby, this clever board book explores the science of vision, light, and color. Beautiful, visually stimulating illustrations complement age-appropriate language to encourage baby's sense of wonder.



Babies Around the World by Puck & Violet Lemay

These friendly babies welcome us to their cities with delightful greetings in their original languages (with English translations) in a simple narration that will appeal to any global mini citizen.

Exploring the BookCASE with *The Five Senses: Sight!*

Connect

Viewing children of varying abilities in this book helps to promote curiosity about objects, such as the eyes and the use of glasses, materials or events which supports the ELOF domain Approaches to Learning. If you have a child who wears glasses in your learning environment, this book will help other children express care and concern for that child, as well as promote a sense of identity and belonging which supports the social emotional ELOF domain.

Advanced vocabulary

This book talks a lot about science, at the infant toddler level. So, with that there will be lots of different words you talk about with children such as colors, the structure of the eye like retina and pupil, and much more!

Support engagement

The pictures are so dynamic in these books that you can just flip through the book and talk about the pictures. Maybe point out how the child wear sunglasses to protect his eyes outside. Or how the child who is blind can still read her book!

Extend

This would be a great book to do some flashlight play! Give children flashlights and label the things they can see with their light! And maybe some things they cannot see. You can also put infants and toddlers in front of a mirror and have them look at their eyes. Maybe identify what color eyes they have!

Explore the BookCASE on Your Own

The infants and toddlers in my learning environment love this book:

Make the CASE:

Connect:

Advanced vocabulary:

Support engagement:

Extend:

Explore the BookCASE on Your Own

The infants and toddlers in my learning environment love this book:

Make the CASE:

Connect:

Advanced vocabulary:

Support engagement:

Extend:

Books I would like to add to my learning environment:



Helpful Resources

Online Resources

Advocacy and Leadership — Tips for Families: You are a Leader

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/you-are-a-leader.pdf>

Center for Parent Information and Resources: Writing the IFSP for Your Child

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/ifsp/>

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center: Practice Improvement Tools: Using the DEC Recommended Practices

<https://ectacenter.org/decrp/>

Enhance Parents' Advocacy and Leadership Skills: A guide for Head Start and Early Head Start Staff

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/enhance-parent-adv-lead.pdf>

Head Start Center for Inclusion: IEP Basics: Tips for Teachers

<https://headstartinclusion.org/training-materials/professional-development-packages/iep-basics/>

Head Start Center for Inclusion: IEP Training Extended

<https://headstartinclusion.org/training-materials/extended-professional-development-packages/iep-training-extended/>

How Two-Way Communication Can Boost Parent Engagement

<https://www.waterford.org/education/two-way-communication-parent-engagement/>

Relationship-Based Practices: Talking with Families about Developmental Concerns

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/learning-module/relationship-based-practices-talking-families-about-developmental-concerns>

Sensitive Conversations with Families—Head Start Heals Podcast

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/podcast/sensitive-conversations-families>

Mobile Apps

ELOF2GO Mobile App

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/elof2go-mobile-app>

MiELOF Mobile App (Spanish)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/preparacion-escolar/articulo/aplicacion-movil-mielof-en-espanol>

Head Start Resources App

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/head-start-resources-app>

Head Start Resources App (Spanish)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/desarrollo-profesional/articulo/aplicacion-recursos-de-head-start>

Text4Teachers

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/teaching-practices/article/text4teachers>

Text4Teachers (Spanish)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/practicas-docentes/articulo/text4teachers>

Ready DLL Mobile App

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/ready-dll-mobile-app>

Ready DLL Mobile App (Spanish)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/cultura-e-idioma/articulo/aplicacion-movil-para-los-dll>

Online Communities

MyPeers

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/mypeers-collaborative-platform-early-care-education-community>

- Teacher Time Community
- Head Start Disabilities and Inclusion Network