Coaching to Support Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Joyce Escorcia: Hello everyone. Thank you for joining us today for our Coaching Corner Webinar. Today we're going to be talking about coaching to support equity, inclusion, and belonging. Thank you for spending this hour with us. We are excited to get started. We are joined today by our guest expert and friend Brittney Lee. Brittney, do you want to just tell us a little bit about yourself as we get started?

Brittney Lee: I'm Brittney. I work for DTL, and my passion and background is inclusion for kids with disabilities and their families. I've been a school principal, a preschool teacher, and a kindergarten teacher all in that disability inclusion space. I'm very excited to be here today.

Joyce: Wow. Thank you, Britney. We're excited to learn so much from you and learn with you and hear some of your stories from the field as we go. Let's get started. Today, we're going to be talking about strategies and practices that coaches can use to support and promote inclusion and belonging in all kinds of different learning spaces. Talking about coaching strategies that we'll apply and look at through a case example. We're really looking forward to having this conversation together. Before we dive in, we do want to point out our Viewer's Guide. It's going to be there in your resource widget. Please download that. That's just something we put together there for you to help you take notes. Just like a visual reference, and there will be activities and things that we're going to be referring to. It also includes a resource list that you can take and use as you will.

To get this started, we just wanted to set a space just thinking about a time that you felt like you were included or belonged. It can be in your professional life; it could be in your personal life. But thinking about a time when you really felt like you were included or belonged. Thinking specifically about what did that group or individual do to make you feel like you were a part of the group? How was the environment set up? How did you feel? Thinking about what that looked like and felt like for you and what it took for you to feel like you belonged in that place and space. If you want to pop that into the group chat. I still see folks letting us know. We have folks from all over coming through in the chat from New York to Texas. I'm in Louisiana. We're covering the – we're covering it coast to coast here.

Sarah Basler: I've got a story to share about the time that I felt like I belonged, or more so I guess that my son belonged. We started a new school – while we're waiting for chat to come in – his teacher requested some pictures and sent home a survey to get to know us and had an open house. When we got there, they had his cubby decorated with his picture, with his name ready to go. It made me feel like they cared about us and about him. I was really excited and felt really proud to be part of the class. That's just one way.

Joyce: I loved that you shared that, Sarah. Lillian, in the chat, put that she felt like she belonged when she was brought in as a part of on making decisions. Again, that feeling like you were a part of the process in things that were happening. That's great as well.

Sarah: Non-verbal ways to feel included, like including someone in a conversation, making eye contact, smiling.

Brittney: It looks like being included in conversations, decision-making, planning. As people are talking, when I joined DTL, when I joined Head Start, I have been at the University of Washington for almost 20 years, so I've been here a very long time. But I'm new to the Head Start world and new to working with people all over the country, having colleagues that I only see on Zoom, and I was really nervous about it. Just like, "How am I going to have relationships with people?" It's been the most amazing experience just getting to know everyone. I think a big reason is people share, they share about their lives as you would when you're at the watercooler, and ask me questions about my life, talk about the things that are important, whether that's clubs, activities, kids, families, pets, and it makes me feel very included.

Joyce: Again, thank you for sharing, Brittney. That's so true, and that's some of the other things we're seeing come through in the chat. Just keep those coming in. That's really setting the stage for our conversations today. Thank you all for opening up and sharing a little bit in there.

When we think about our conversation today, and we're thinking about children and the children we support, we know that as children begin to learn about their identities and who they are, they really begin to look for acknowledgment, acceptance, validation of their identities and their surroundings, and their sense of belonging.

As we've seen in the chat, and from our own lived experience as adults, that doesn't change. Like what that looks like could change and the situation, but that need to feel accepted and heard and seen. All of that starts at the very beginning. Belonging is that universal human need that is fundamentally linked to learning and well-being. It's a part of what we need as human beings. That's really what we're wanting to talk about and really dig into today. With that said, I'm going to turn it over to Sarah to help get the conversation started.

Sarah: Thanks, Joyce. Over the past two years, we've had a segment called "Focus on Equity," and we like to call to attention topics on equity related to environments or related to delivering effective practices in an equitable way or using equitable practices with a variety of different people. But over the course of the next two Coaching Corner webinars, the focus of equity and inclusion is going to be front and center. We're going to discuss ways that a coach can support their coaches to really use these practices, strategies, and tips for creating these equitable inclusive learning spaces and creating a sense of belonging for all. Today, we're honored to have Brittney join us in this space and for us to ask her some questions and to learn from her. We're going to get started.

Brittney: Hi. One of the things before we get started on some specifics around children with disabilities, I want to hope to stay in context of all our other equity work. We hear the word "inclusion" a lot. In our world in early childhood that seems to be owned by disability inclusion, depending on who you're talking to. I want to highlight that when we're looking at all things around equity and uplifting the voices of marginalized groups, people with disabilities are in that category. Disability inclusion and equity for young African American Black boys are not

competing. They're not two different things. Equity overall is the equitable opportunity, and access, and quality of care for all kids. When we start looking at different identities and intersecting identities, we do start to look at different practices based on research that we know that are effective for certain groups with different development, with different – children with different developmental characteristics, strengths, needs, etcetera.

But I want to put this, when I use the word "inclusion," I'm talking about disability inclusion, which is under that umbrella of inclusiveness of all. That's a great place to start as we're looking at inclusion for kids with disabilities is that it's not something separate to all of the other equity work we're doing. We're looking at disability as an identity characteristic that can be intersected with all other identity characteristics. To get a little … That was very meta, so to now get a little specific about inclusion, disability inclusion particularly in the early childhood space, a couple things that I think are helpful is to think about what inclusion is not.

Inclusion is not a physical space. It's not a program. It's not a classroom. You can pop into chat, but you know how many people have heard, "This is our inclusion classroom," Or "This is our inclusion program," or this child – even more so, "This child is ready for inclusion." That way of thinking makes it seem like disability inclusion is a physical space, or a place, or a school. That is definitely not what it is. Because of the nature of how children qualify for specialized services under the Education Disabilities Act, under IDEA, and an emphasis on placement in the least restrictive environment, we tend to have that push and pull of thinking about inclusion as a space. It's easy to get caught up in those details of where the services are going to be provided. The first thing to think about around inclusion, inclusiveness is, it's not a space. All of our spaces should be inclusive.

Now, because of that not one size fits all either. When we're thinking broadly that all of our spaces are inclusive for everyone, when we think about disability inclusion and the individual characteristics of kids, what their strengths are, what their needs are, that could look very different for every child. It could look very different for every program, just that there's not a one-size-fits-all for kids, there's not one-size-fits-all for any classroom, program, district, region. It should be very individual to meet the needs within that community. I'm going to click "No one size fits all."

Inclusion is not just an issue that is for kids with disabilities, or for disabilities specific. We know that diversity, in general, is beneficial to all that participate in a diverse community and group. That includes kids with disabilities and people with disabilities. When we're thinking about the benefits of diversity and having diverse groupings of kids that are representative of their community, we want to ensure we're uplifting the fact that disability is also an identity characteristic. It's also something that everyone benefits from.

OK, so what is inclusion? You know, I've hinted at it, but when we take a really big step back, it is a human's right issue. For those of you who are interested, there are some inclusion webinars that you can see in ECLKC that we talk about, just the disability rights movement and disability justice. But just like a lot of other social justice movements, there is a long history that started many, many, many years ago, even into the 20s, 30s, and there's been a whole history of

legislation and heroes within that movement that are individuals with disabilities. This has been a human rights and civil rights movement for a long time. It's very exciting to me that we're starting to look at it in the context of other civil rights movements and movements around equity. Again, there is lots of research. I'll touch on the research. I know what we probably included it in the resource list. If not, I'll make sure it's there, but there are decades now, decades of research that supports inclusion, and now it's specifically for kids with disabilities and is beneficial for all children. We'll talk a little bit more specifically about that.

It is important to know that according to Head Start Performance Standards, I think all of us know about the 10% mandate that has been there since the 60s, but also, in 2016 it was expanded in the Performance Standards to not just look at kids who qualify for IEPs and IFSPs, but children who have any individualized needs and that it's not limited to kids with disabilities. I know that someone is going to talk about, "Does that count towards the 10%?" The answer is no. And that is the discussion you can join us on MyPeers to talk about. Again, just to note, we are broadly talking about all kids with individualized needs regardless if they qualify for an IEP or IFSP. When we are looking at enrollment and recruitment, the 10% definitely refers to IEDA only.

Sarah: Awesome. I think it's really helpful for us to see that big picture of what inclusion is. When we start looking through this inclusion lens, it's hard to unsee. You start noticing spaces that maybe aren't so inclusive, and I wanted to take a moment to give you the chance to share a little bit with the participants about what research says about inclusion and its importance.

Brittney: Thank you. A lot of times, and I still hear this anecdotally, that people assume that segregated classrooms, or when we partner with our local lead agency or LEA, and there are classrooms or physical spaces that are specifically designed for kids with disabilities, that they're beneficial and that there is something happening within those physical spaces that is going to be more beneficial for that child with the disability than staying in their community, and their community preschool. Head Start programs being one of those. Instead of staying in their Head Start program all day, they need to leave for a little bit of time to get specialized care. They go to their local lead agency.

It's important to know that there are some distinct features within some of these programs, and most of the programs at the LEA, and that there often are minimal children, usually ten at most, some specially trained staff. Some of the environment is more controlled, so minimal materials at times, specialized equipment sometimes. What the assumption is, is that these physical spaces have better outcomes for children. What research has shown us over and over and over again is that that is just not accurate. These specialized spaces that have been there for decades now don't have superior outcomes for children that are in those segregated programs. What research actually tells us is that when children participate in programs that provide diversity and inclusion across all activities, friendships with peers, things that actually don't exist in those specialized programs. Sometimes, that controlled environment means that the activities are designed to work on one specific skill and the peer relationships might look a lot different because all of the children have disabilities and might have different

communication needs. We're not really looking at a diverse group. We're looking at a group with a lot of needs, and a lot of similar needs.

What we know is that across all developmental domains, children who participate in inclusive programs, so where they would … The best way to think about that is where would they go if they didn't have a disability? If disability wasn't in the picture, where would this child be? Where would their Head Start program be? Where would their childcare be? What does their community look like?

When children are participating in those settings, they have far better outcomes across all developmental domains globally and actually meet their individualized goals at a greater rate, a greater pace. That achievement is sustained and generalized across their settings and into the kindergarten year. We know that there's no evidence that suggests a particular type of disability or particular abilities make you more successful or make the outcomes different in inclusive environments, in those physically inclusive spaces.

Where we see that in practice is, for those of you who have seen the *Forget Me Not* documentary, which can be found on Netflix, I'll pop it in chat where you can watch it. It follows one family, but it is a global issue around placement and particularly an issue within the United States preschool system and that there are physical spaces where children with disabilities are. There are spaces where children without disabilities are. Then there are spaces in between that are highly specialized that kids have to be ready for. Are they ready for the inclusive classroom? Are they ready for this? Oftentimes, that is communication skills which really lends itself to behavior. I mean, it just gets totally, and what our evidence says is that children with disabilities who have behavior that's challenging are excluded at far greater rates. We do know that the opportunity to be in inclusive programs has beneficial outcomes for all kids and provides that opportunity to have higher social acceptance in the future. That was a lot but that's basically what research tells us that separate is not better.

Joyce: What does research tell us about the benefits for children without disabilities? This comes up a lot, and we think so much about, well, "OK, so that's great." It's great for children with disabilities, but what about the children without disabilities?

Brittney: That is a great question and that comes up a lot. It comes up and sounds different. One of the main barriers to inclusion is a feeling that someone will lose. That's either the child with the disability is going to take resources needed to manage a group of 20 kids, or the child with the disability isn't going to get those very specialized interventions that they need to make progress on their individual goals. What we've seen is that perspective, and that view, or that thought, doesn't come from one field or another; it really comes from both fields.

On the special education side, it comes from, "I need that child to come to my controlled space so they can make progress on their individualized learning goal. Like, no one is going to be able to do it the way that I can do it over here." Then, on the other side, you hear, "But I have all these other things to do. I can't. It's going to take away from all of the needs." I'm thinking that a lot more in the post-pandemic era where there's just a lot of need in terms of social-

emotional development overall. When we are adding on a child who does need a different type of teaching, a different type of data collection, a different type of monitoring, it might be more intense, more frequent, that is something else that they're feeling I can't do that. It's coming from all ends of this idea that someone will lose.

What we do know for children without disabilities is that for the longest time research didn't touch it. All that was said was that it didn't have a negative impact. What they saw was that it had no impact on outcomes for kids. Research over the last decade and a half, two decades, has gone further to look at, "Are there benefits for children without disabilities to interact with kids who do have disabilities in inclusive spaces?" And there are. That's not surprising what we know about inclusion of all types of diversity, everyone benefits. That's not different from being in an inclusive space with people with disabilities as an identity characteristic. There are improved learning outcomes. They are either equal to or greater than in spaces without kids with disabilities. In what we would normally, we would traditionally call general education classrooms, the outcomes are the same or even better, and oftentimes better in spaces that are inclusive of kids with disabilities. As with kids with disabilities there are a huge amount of social benefits for kids without disabilities. We see that there is a greater appreciation for difference in general, individual difference. There's a greater understanding of other issues of equity and diversity amongst other identity characteristics. It just contributes to their overall understanding of individuality and identity.

It also has … This was really exciting for me to see. My children participated in inclusive preschool classrooms, one of which was one on an IFSP. One of my daughters has type 1 diabetes, so she's been on a medical plan. In this world, in a lot of different spaces, it was really exciting to see research talk about how children without disabilities actually end up having a more enhanced self-esteem, a more sophisticated interpersonal skills, and including friendship behaviors. Some of that self-regulation, negotiation, that give and take, play leader, play follower, they have increased friendship skills over time. Anecdotally, and this is more of that sort of qualitative data but is still there, they are just children who have participated in programs with kids with disabilities are often described as more kind, caring, friendly, understanding of their peers, and more empathetic to the adults in this space as well.

Sarah: I can say anecdotally, having a child without a disability in an inclusive program and having a child that was not in an inclusive classroom, I can see a big difference in those things that you were saying, like the respect and acceptance, and the empathy. I think that one, he is a different child than my other child, so temperament is built in there too. But already at his young age, I can see a difference in just his social skills, and the way that he interacts with his peers is just more caring and like you were saying. I think it's really cool, and it's no small matter. I think we don't think about – we worry about all the things that you mentioned, like can I do this? Do I have enough support staff? And all those things. But when we hear the research behind it, it just makes me feel like, "We got to keep doing this," like it's there, it's telling us how great it is. I wanted to, before we move on to talking about coaches' work related to inclusion, and belonging, I wanted to know, is there anything else that you want to share with our participants about inclusion?

Brittney: Yes. All of that being said, inclusion, when it comes to kids with disabilities, is a process. One of the things that I find in my work is that a lot of people are looking for formula. I have this child with this disability, or this behavior, how do I fix that? Or how do I teach that, how to – insert verb into here? How do I manage this, so I can get on with my day? And when we're thinking about inclusion, big picture inclusion, it is an ongoing process that we are constantly creating and cultivating spaces of inclusiveness for all individuality, all identity characteristics. The same is going to be true for kids with disabilities.

Now, I specifically talk about kids with disabilities, and we have to right now because when we look at early childhood curricula, even in some of our Head Start Guidance, you know things are changing but even in our Framework for Effective Practice and the Head Start Performance Standards. While some identity characteristics and systems of oppression are specifically acknowledged and called out, disability is not. Specifically in early childhood curricula when we look at social justice curricula in terms of identity, disability is left out.

That would not be an issue if it were innately included. If everyone knew when we said, "You know, we want equitable learning spaces for all children," if we already recognized that there are ableist tendencies and that there is a preference for able-bodied children, then we wouldn't need to talk about this specifically as a big issue. We would be talking about those specific teaching practices that need to happen. But for years, and years, and years we've been talking about very specific teaching practices are imbedded instruction, our positive reinforcement, everything that comes out of the applied behavioral analysis world. We've been talking about these things, but I think that what we're realizing, like other social justice movements in regard to providing equitable access is that disability is not necessarily recognized as an identity characteristic in the same way that other identities are. That's one of the reasons we are specifically talking about disability. I would love to get to a space where when we say, "equity and inclusiveness," we don't need to say, "and kids with disabilities," because we would know that disabilities and identity characteristic and that goes without saying. Let's talk about the specific practices that need to make this a quality environment.

Joyce: Brittney, I'll just say you're getting a lot of love in the chat as well.

Brittney: Thank you, yes.

Sarah: I do want to say that it takes a team to do inclusion and a coach is a part of that team. You're not – no one is left out there to do this alone, and I think also one thing I want to just call out is that there was something in the chat that was acknowledging the staff shortage, and acknowledging that we do have people in roles that don't have the training, and that's hard. I just want to lift that up and just say, "Yeah, that's a real thing and it is hard." We also need to try our best to provide these spaces to make sure that everyone is included.

Brittney: Yes, and not just coaches are a part of it. I think they're critical because we fought for so long to talk about how special education is very, very special. And now, I feel like we're trying to say, "It's really not that special. It's not that hard. Everyone can do it." It's at both ends. When you look at the pyramid of the kids who need the very, very most, we're going to remove

the top 2%. When you're thinking about the most challenging to include, that does take a lot of a coordinated approach, a lot of collaboration, a lot of individuality. But when we're talking about 85 to 90% of the children who do have disabilities or delays, the practices are not so heavily specialized you need to have super advanced training in. We can ... Just like a coach would identify practices for having back and forth conversations. Those feedback loops are hard to do. That is a hard thing to train people to do. We can also teach people how to provide different types of teaching strategies in terms of different types of acknowledgement and reinforcement and pace and rate. There are very specific teaching strategies that do happen for kids with disabilities but they're not any harder or different to learn than some of the other teaching strategies that we're working on.

Sarah: That's where your coach can come in. What we're going to dig into now is ... Since we've talked about the research and a little bit about what we mean when we're talking about inclusion and situating ourselves in this webinar, now we're going to talk a little bit more about things a coach can do to support creating these spaces in the environment. We know that – great segway into this – we know that everybody comes to us, coachees and coaches alike, with different backgrounds, different experiences, which means their level of knowledge and expertise about how to support programs with inclusion is going to vary. What are some things that you think, if you could share, just a few things about what a coach can do to prepare themselves to really be supportive of inclusion and belonging in the learning environment?

Brittney: That's a great question and where do you start? I would love for people to start popping into chat and join either on the MyPeers, on the Coaching MyPeers Network or Disability Inclusion Network to talk about things that people are doing. I know it's the third bullet, but one of the things I would say that is the first is as a coach, thinking about your coordination and collaboration with your disability service coordinator. You might be the disability service coordinator. You're like, "Yup, got that collaboration down because it is me."

Brittney: Looking at your health manager who is going to have – there's so many resources, it almost is overwhelming to have that coordinated approach because we look at that behavioral health side, and our mental health consultant and our health manager. As a coach, first and foremost is understanding what's already in place and who is there. Where is the support coming from, and what's available? What does your team look like? Being very familiar, of course, with the children within the programs, step one, which kids qualify for IEDEA, so for an IPFSP, but probably even more relevant right now because we are still – LEAs have a shortage of staff as well. There is a huge leg in turnaround time for that evaluation for the referral and the evaluation. I mean quite honestly if you're starting in September, it's not going to be until March, April to actually going to qualify.

As a coach like where we can't give the message of let's wait and see what happens with the evaluation because all of a sudden once the child has an IEP or an IFSP something magical is going to happen. As a coach, we know we can help figure out what are the child's – what are their strengths, what are their interests, and what are their needs? Those aren't going to change whether they qualify for an IEP or a IFSP or not. Those types of the individualized needs

are going to be the same. Once we see these are the kids regardless of where they qualify, here's the supports, here's my team whether that's coming from mental health, whether it's coming from for disability service manager, I know in some regions there are disability specific guidance. I know in Region I there's one.

Then what services are already available and how do I start coordinating that. Last but not least, a coach, when we think about practice-based coaching particularly and the effective practices that guide our coaching cycle, it's really important for a coach to understand what those effective practices are, specifically for kids with disabilities. When you're looking at modifications and accommodations and being able to analyze the effectiveness of those accommodations and modifications. Looking at instructional plans, being able to identify what a child is working on, break down that skill, set an appropriate goal, those are things that a coach can do regardless of funding sources and where they're coming from with a child within that program. A coach can find those effective practices for kids with disabilities and then help individualize and select those practices based on that child's individual learning characteristics and strengths.

Sarah: I just wanted to take a moment to share out some of the great things that are coming up in the chat. I saw someone put like when writing goals with a coachee, they often will ask, "Is there anyone that I might need to support you to do this practice within a different way?" Already coming at coaching with an inclusive lens of like, if we're working on a class-wide practice, how can I maybe individualize this for children that maybe don't have a diagnosed disability or delay, but how can I already start thinking about these children? Some other things that have come up were getting to know – supporting the coachee to get to know what the family values are, what and about their culture and about what's important to them, which I think is coming up a lot in here.

Brittney: Thinking about – I won't go into ableism a lot – but thinking about ableism as a systematic system of oppression that prioritizes able-bodied and traditional ways of communicating traditional behavior very heteronormative views on how people communicate, act, behave, and move. It's also important to look at how our ableist views and our bias towards the able bodied, impacts the goals we're selecting and the things we want the children to work on.

Just like all other identity characteristics, we want to talk to the family about their priorities. It's very minor but well, not minor. I will never forget endlessly trying to work when I did early intervention 20 years ago with a toddler on using a spoon to scoop food and working, and working, and working. I was only 20 years old, so you have to give me some grace. Finally meeting with the family and having the family tell me, "We don't care. You know we feed the child in our family community, and our culture, and whatever, we eat with our hands, and we feed our children until they're of a certain age. That's a bonding. That's something for us. You are spending all of this time trying to teach this kid to eat with a spoon where we have these other priorities? We'd like the child to be able to sit for 15 minutes quietly. And I know that might not be developmentally appropriate, but for our family it's important that the child could

sit through a 15-minute family meeting or prayer, or something like that. Can you help us with that?" Really thinking about those spaces of like bringing in what the family also prioritizes.

Sarah: That's so important. I think another thing that we touched on, but that I just want to make sure that we talk about, is this part about if you don't understand what the practices are related to inclusion or what these effective practices around providing that highly individualized support are, if you, as the coach, don't know, be proactive and learn. If your coachees don't know, then support them in their professional development in thinking about how you can get ahead of that. How, when you're planning those PDs and workshops and things to get prepared for the school year, consider including those teaching practices related to inclusive highly individualized practice and thinking about reflecting on what it is that maybe you do need to know more about as a coach. I think it can be kind of humbling and also vulnerable and shows that you're part of the team when you're working with a coachee to be like, 'Yeah, I don't know it all, and I'm going to learn. Let's learn this together.' I don't know if you have anything to add to being proactive and learning in that space.

Brittney: An oldie but goodie, and we're in the process of revising a lot of the In-service Suites, but on ECLKC in the In-service Suites, there are tools that we call "The Roof." When you look at the Framework for Effective Practice, it's the House and the Roof represents highly individualized teaching and learning. Within that, there are three what we call tiers: providing accommodations and modifications, providing some sort of imbedded instruction or specified teaching, and then highly individualized. The bulk of the resources that we have available are on the first – the modifications, accommodations, and a lot on embedded instruction. But if you go into those packages, there are – we call them, it's going to be changed in the new In-service Suites – but right now they're called "Tools for Supervisors."

You can actually look at a list of ten things that are effective practices that are applicable to all of the children within your program but might hone in on specific things that you can do for kids with disabilities. Thinking about belonging and memberships, one of the things we'd want to see: all children represented within the learning environment visually, etcetera, or languages. Looking at is disability, are all children represented? How are they represented? When I think about modifications and accommodations, when we're having discussions, how are children participating? That can look very different. It can look like they're just there within the group. It can look like they're passing a visual image. It can look like anything, but being very intentional about what that looks like for that child. For coaches, you can go to – I know there's exemplar videos on Coaching Companion on these practices, but to think about a go-to quick, "What should I even be looking for? What can start the conversation?" Those tools for supervisors are very helpful.

Sarah: Awesome. I do see we've got in the chat that sometimes parents might have goals that maybe don't align with what we would agree with. I think that's where we can take into account what we might do in our environment and honor what the parent … I mean we're not going to be able to honor everything that a parent requests or values, but I think getting more context can be helpful. The instance of like being able to sit for 15 minutes. That for a toddler

might not be so developmentally appropriate. I think that we have to do our best to be understanding and get information. Some of it, we will be able to use, and some of it we won't.

Brittney: I 100% agree. Just because I'm a behaviorist by training, and just because we can change behavior doesn't mean we should and that does also come from an ableist standpoint is changing a child or having them do things that aren't developmentally appropriate. When I said that example, it needs to be within age and individual and appropriate, but that's not just for kids with disabilities. That's across all individuality. I've worked with families that want their child to be reading fluently before they go to kindergarten.

Being able to talk with families about where to put our efforts and development in general, and how children develop at their own pace, and how social skills and interactions, and self-regulation, their foundations for academic achievement, and being able to help bridge. I always think about it as bridging the gap, not necessarily telling a parent, "Yes, what you want isn't appropriate, and we can't do it," but think about, OK, what do they want? What's developmentally the range of what is ethical for us to be doing with a child? Then where is that child individually? And be able to say, "OK, here's your long-term goal, what you said you wanted. Now, this is where we are. And here's the steps that it will take to get there, and those steps might take a lot of time, like years and years.

But I'm not going to invalidate what you want because we are saying it's developmentally not appropriate. I'm not going to invalidate your priority as a parent because our curriculum, or how we're viewing education and community is saying that that's not appropriate for your child. What I do know about child development is that there are certain foundational skills that would need to happen, there are certain things that need to be integrated, that need to happen to get your child there." As the professional, or someone who loves kids, I would think more about bridging the gap. How do you, both in the end, acknowledge that.

Sarah: Meet them where they are so everyone feels heard. Like, I see what you're saying, and here's how we …

Brittney: Here's your long-term goal, and that's great. I've had people who said, "I want my child to go to college." And I'm like, "I want your kid to answer when I say their name." Taking out, like …

Sarah: The balance.

Brittney: Things are very accurate and very relevant, and there is space for both of those things in our complication.

Sarah: I do want to point out two resources that we've included in the resource list. If we have time, we'll go through a really quick example before we leave for the day. One thing that is important is supporting a coachee to have these proactive conversations about disability. We have linked a resource from the Barton Lab, and it gives you some tips for having some sometimes hard conversations with children. Children are curious. They have questions about

children, about differences and similarities in people and that document can help you to disrupt this ableist language and thinking about how we can have these conversations with courage. Because I think sometimes our first thought is, "Let's move this to the side." You can find that in the resource list.

When we think about coaching to really leverage equity and inclusion and belonging, there's another resource that's inside your Viewer's Guide. It's a resource from the TIES Center. They have modified an already developed tool, the dimensions of belonging from Dr. Carter. This tool is really great because it can be used as a needs assessment of sorts, like a strengths and needs assessment. What are some things that the program is doing really well, or the classroom is doing really well, to support belonging? And we can see here that belonging has many facets, and it's complicated. You think about belonging, but it encompasses a lot of these different things. This resource can really be used as a reflective tool as a coach, to maybe approach some of those things that you're noticing in the class about membership and belonging for children. Before we move on, I just wanted to give you an opportunity, did you have anything else to add about this tool, Brittney?

Brittney: The thing that really stood out to me that I read about this tool was that belonging is elusive to us. It is easy to affirm, just like at the beginning of the top of this hour, when did you feel like you belong? It's easy to affirm that feeling but very difficult to define because it's very different across communities and across groups of people in individual characteristics. It's very easy – or not easy, it is apparent when you feel it, sometimes when you see it, but very difficult to define. I love this tool because it attempted to just that. What are the dimensions of belonging, when you have that feeling, what's happening there?

If you click through the resource that has some indicators and some questions that it will ask you for each of these dimensions. If you click all the way through there's some practice guides as well from the TIES Center. I do want to say that this was designed for kindergarten, a little bit older, but when you look at it, just replace the word "student" with "child," and think about developmentally what that might look like in your program, but it was designed for children with significant cognitive disabilities, so a range of ability is represented. But just so you know, it was not designed for Head Start, so you might have to do some bridging the gap.

Sarah: Thank you so much for being here with us and talking to us about inclusion. I can really tell your passion for this work, and it's been an honor to get to hear from you. I did want to pull a notice to the chat. There's a two-part webinar series about partnering with families to share developmental concerns. There's a link there for a webinar series if you want to learn a little bit more. We have a case study in your viewer's guide where you can meet Coach Freya and IVY who is a preschool teacher and think about how you might support this teacher in the learning context.

It looks like we have a moment, so I'm going to go right ahead, and we'll see where we can get with it. Coach Freya is supporting Ivy, who is a teacher of a three- and four-year-old class. Freya and Ivy are working towards a goal relating to supporting engagement during circle time. This goal was to support all children with being actively engaged and having a variety of ways to

participate or respond and providing choices. Ivy has been successful at increasing engagement with most children, but then we've got the coach who notices that one child, Naomi, doesn't participate. During circle time, Naomi can be seen wandering around the classroom, and when Freya shares this data with Ivy. Ivy lets Freya know that Naomi won't sit for circle time and that they just let her wander around the class. I wanted to take a moment and see what Brittney might suggest. Because I think this can be a typical thing that we might see is like, "Oh, they're not bothering anyone. We're just going to let them wander." Feel free to type in the chat what you might do as a coach, and then Brittney, if you want to share some ideas for what you might do next.

Britney: When I think about this as a coach, I lean on what I know about universal design for learning and what I think about, and thinking about the multiple ways kids can participate, engage, and also express themselves. One of the things that I would look at, and I know that this is global and very difficult, but moving from saying, "What do we need to do to fix this child to participate in our structure, in our circle time, what does circle time look like? Are there multiple ways kids, all kids, can engage, respond, interact? Are there things in there that are tactile, multi-sensory, visual? What does this child – what does Ivy like to do and how can we integrate some of that within our circle time so then she's more naturally likely to participate?"

Then we can use different individualized strategies, but really looking, taking a big step back and thinking, "OK, what does Ivy like? What do all the kids like to do? What are all the modalities that they can participate and engage and respond across multi-sensory inputs, and then what does Ivy specifically like, and how do we integrate that into our activity?"

Sarah: Awesome. Some things, if we could talk about this all day, I'm sure we'd have it all figured out for Ivy, and we would have supports for Naomi. Some of the things that came up were just what you said, find out what she's interested in, maybe have an activity that she does like nearby so that she can be a part of circle time physically but be engaged with something else. How does the child learn best?

Thank you, thank you, thank you so much for being here with us today. Join us on MyPeers. There is the Disabilities Inclusion Network. We'll see you in our next webinar where we're going to be talking more in depth about coaching to support highly individualized practices. Thank you so much.