INCLUDING ALL KIDS:
Am I, Should I, Can I?

I KNOW IT’S INCLUSION WHEN...

♦ Everybody play, learns and grows...together
♦ Each child is included in every activity, routine and learning opportunity
♦ Teachers and caregivers plan activities appropriate for both the developmental abilities and interests level of each of the children
♦ Parents value diversity and the powerful way children learn from each other
♦ Each child has opportunities to enjoy typical every-day-little-kid experiences

(Adapted from Child Care Plus, Volume 5, No. 1)

The above picture is the logo from the Circle of Inclusion Home Page (http://www.circleofinclusion.org/)

WHY SHOULD WE INCLUDE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES?

It is the law... What the Americans with Disabilities Act says:

• We can’t use eligibility standards, which screen out children with disabilities
• We are required to identify and remove barriers to a child’s participation
• That costly structural changes are NOT required--think of affordable alternatives

We cannot:
• Exclude a child because we lack specialized skills
• Exclude a child because of intolerance
• Refuse to accept a child because of insurance rate increases
• Charge extra for a child with a disability

➤ Because children deserve respect for who they are
➤ Because it makes early childhood professionals better at what we do
➤ Because peers learn that differences are celebrated, not made fun of
➤ Because children with disabilities will be members of our communities for the rest of their lives...the best time to start is right at the beginning!
BENEFITS OF INCLUSION

For the child with a disability:
⇒ better developmental outcomes for the child with a disability
⇒ social competence and communication skills improve in inclusive settings
⇒ provided with excellent peer models to learn new skills
⇒ an opportunity for social interactions among all kinds of kids
⇒ a knowledge that they are part of the community
⇒ skills are learned in a natural environment—better generalization

For all children:
⇒ modifications for the included child frequently result in better programming for all
⇒ reinforces the best practice notion of building activities based on the individual interests, and strengths and needs of each child
⇒ develop an acceptance of differences
⇒ diversity of friendships
⇒ ability to problem solve creatively

For providers:
⇒ providers have an opportunity to develop leadership skills
⇒ providers learn to be a crucial member of a team
⇒ providers learn where to gather the wealth of information and support that is available
⇒ providers develop a solid understanding of early childhood development

For parents:
⇒ awareness of disabilities
⇒ recognition that all families are part of the community
⇒ chance to teach their children about acceptance and celebration of differences
⇒ creates an avenue for support and information

For the community:
⇒ provides a model for building on the strengths of all community members
⇒ lets communities best allocate early childhood resources by limiting the need segregated programs
⇒ creates the foundation for included school aged programming

For all:
⇒ everyone has an opportunity to learn something new
⇒ everyone gets to teach something
⇒ everyone has a chance to problem solve
⇒ everyone gets to be an observer of the power of inclusion

Remember...
Think of parents as a primary resource for support in including their child

Use:
❖ joint problem solving
❖ joint evaluation of progress
INCLUDING CHILDREN IN YOUR CHILD CARE SETTING: WHAT WORKS

- Using parents as primary partners
- Knowing your resources
- Expecting a professional relationship with providers of specialized services
- Attending Team Meetings
- Thinking of the child as a teacher
- Recognizing the similarities among children while respecting and planning for the differences
- Celebrating the powerful role you have as a central communicator

Child Care Provider

Communication
- Therapy goals
- Strategies for generalization
- Evaluation of progress

Special Educator Clinical Specialist

Family
Thinking of Inclusion
Where I am…Where I am Going?

When I think about including a child with a disability I:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Including children with disabilities is so important that I will:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
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Thank you for your dedication to young children.