

Guide to Promoting Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs

**Delaware Health and Social Services
Birth to Three Early Intervention System
Delaware Department of Education**

Purpose of the Guide to Promoting Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs



Information recommendations, and suggestions found in this material are to be used at the discretion of the reader. This material is not intended as a replacement for the family or a child's doctor.

This material has been prepared for the Delaware Health and Social Services by the University of Delaware through a grant under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. This project was conducted through a collaboration of Deborah J. Amsden, CFCS, project coordinator; Joan Schoch, researcher; and Rosanne Griff-Cabelli, Delaware Part C Coordinator and Carol Ann Schumann, Training Administrator from Birth to Three Early Intervention System. Pictures were made available by Delaware families.

This document can be downloaded from the Birth to Three website at: <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dms/epqc/birth3/directry.html>

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Programs, not children, need to be 'ready for inclusion.'

**Ilene S. Schwartz, Samuel L. Odom, and Susan R. Sandall
In *Including Young Children with Special Needs***

The purpose of this Guide is to help early childhood professionals in Delaware be “ready” to meet the needs of young children with disabilities and their families. This guide is for family child care providers as well as preschool and child care center program administrators, directors, curriculum coordinators; and the early childhood professionals in the classrooms—the teachers, the assistant teachers, and the aides who serve infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Inclusion involves providing children with disabilities access to a wide range of learning opportunities, activities, settings, materials, and environments. In many cases, simple changes in the schedule, an activity, or the classroom can provide Access, Participation, and Supports for a child with a disability.

This Guide is a starting point for early childhood professionals to meet the developmental needs of all children. To learn more, attend professional development opportunities now available in our state such as “Cara’s Kit,” “Success in the Classroom: How to Make Learning Accessible to All Children,” and “Special Quest.” After taking all of these courses, apply for the Early Childhood Inclusion Credential. More information about these and other professional development opportunities can be found at the website for the Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood at www.dieec.udel.edu.

Use some of the resources available on inclusion in Delaware libraries and those on the web. The last section of this Guide lists resources designed for early childhood professionals and families. All of these sources of information combined will give early childhood professionals more knowledge and skills for creating inclusive early childhood classrooms.

This Guide is one of a series of publications to help describe quality inclusive environments for children. A publication for families is *Delaware MAPS: Meaningful Access Participation and Supports: A Guide to High Quality Inclusion of Children with Disabilities for Families and their Communities*. It is available at the Birth to Three website:

<http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dms/birth3pubs.html>



Early Childhood Professionals:

High quality early care and education benefits all children. Community programs, family child care programs, preschool programs in the community and within schools which are high quality know how to meet the needs of infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities along with those of other children. This guide has been developed to help early childhood programs have the defining features of inclusion: Access, Participation, and Support.

The guide has been divided into four parts.

Part 1: Strategies for working with families. As all families come to a program, it is a good time to get to know them. There are questions to ask a family when meeting them for enrollment in an early childhood program and information to share with families. This section suggests ways to gather and share information with families. These pages are marked with blue edges.

Part 2: Strategies for including all children in an early childhood program. Organizing activities, space, and materials allows all children to participate. In addition, this section describes the benefits to children with disabilities as they participate in common activities of an early childhood program. These pages are marked with light blue edges.

Part 3: How to have conversations with families when you are concerned a child may have a developmental delay. Find out what is involved in the evaluation process, who to contact if you have concerns about a child's development, and how to support families during the process. These pages are marked with gray edges.

Part 4: Resources and system supports about including children with disabilities in early childhood programs. There are useful websites, books, classes, and other resources that have information about including children with disabilities in early childhood programs. These pages are marked with light gray edges.

Research has shown including children with disabilities in the same activities and educational settings as their typically developing peers benefits all children. We hope you find this guide helpful in your very important work with Delaware's young children during their critical early years of development.

Yours,

Lisa C. Crim
Delaware Part C Coordinator
Division of Management Services,
Delaware Health and Social Services

Verna Thompson
IDEA Coordinator
Early Development and Learning Resources
Delaware Department of Education

Advisory Committee and Reviewers



Member Agencies of the Interagency Coordinating Council's *Expanding Inclusive Early Intervention Opportunities Committee (EIEIO)*

Delaware Department of Education

- Early Development and Learning Resources
- Exceptional Children Resources
- Head Start Collaboration Project

Delaware Department of Health and Social Services

- Birth to Three Early Intervention System, Division of Management Services
- Child Development Watch, Division of Public Health
- Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance
- Division of Social Services

Delaware Early Childhood Center

Delaware Technical and Community College

- Child Development Center
- Early Childhood Program

Early Childhood Programs

- Children's Secret Garden
- Early Essentials Preschool

Easter Seals of Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore

Family to Family Health Information Center

Head Start

- New Castle County Head Start, Inc.
- Telamon Corporation Head Start

Hope Center for Families

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

Parents

Parents as Teachers

School Districts

- Appoquinimink School District, Preschool Program
- Caesar Rodney School District, Early Intervention Program
- Cape Henlopen School District, Little Vikings Learning Center
- Christina School District, Special Services

University of Delaware

- Cooperative Extension
- Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood
- New Directions Early Head Start

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Including All Children

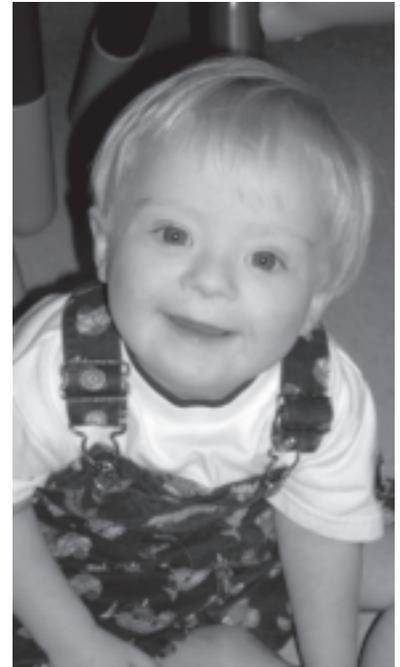
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From the "Joint Position Statement of the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children" (2009)

"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.



Defining Features of Inclusion

The Joint Statement of the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has further described the three components of inclusive early childhood programs. The presence of these three components has been shown through research to result in higher quality early childhood programs for all children.

Access

Providing access to a wide range of learning opportunities, activities, settings, materials, and environments is a defining feature of high quality early childhood inclusion. In many cases, simple changes can provide access to activities for children with disabilities.

Participation

Even if children with disabilities are able to access programs and environments, some may require additional individualized accommodations and modification or adjustments to participate fully in play and learning activities with peers.

Supports

Achieving high quality inclusion of children with disabilities requires that there be a strong foundation of systems-level supports to ensure that the efforts of individuals, programs, and organizations are successful and can be maintained. Systems-level support addresses such things as providing on-going training, well-defined processes, and procedures to be able to work collaboratively among all stakeholders (families, therapists, and staff) to provide specialized services and ensure that quality standards are able to be met. Without these being in place, the efforts of individuals and organizations providing inclusive services to children and families will be compromised.

All children are unique.

Children with disabilities are different from one another.

Each disability has a different impact on a child's abilities.

Children may have the same disability to different degrees.

Within early childhood programs, children are to be encouraged to develop their abilities.



Inclusive Early Childhood Programs



Inclusive Early Childhood Program is

.....children of all abilities and backgrounds living, learning, and playing together.

.....all children participating in all daily activities because the activities and routines are planned to meet the needs of each child.

.....valuing each child's individual strengths and needs.

Inclusion is about Access

The first step in successfully including children with special needs in early childhood programs with typically developing children is providing access for children with disabilities. Early childhood professionals are key

- **in believing that all children have the potential to learn.** A positive attitude helping all children grow and develop is important.
- **in knowing and understanding child development.** Understanding that children learn skills in a particular order will help the early childhood professional set realistic expectations for a child's skill development. As an example, a child needs to practice standing before practicing walking. A child with special needs may need to have a skill divided into smaller steps before the skill can be mastered.
- **in knowing that children with special needs are more like all children than different.** While there are some exceptions, many two-year-olds with special needs have the same challenges of being two that all children face. Where and when possible, setting similar expectations for children will help them to be accepted.
- **in encouraging a child to be independent.** Children like to do things on their own. There is a tendency to "over" help children with special needs. Yet, it is better for development of these children, to encourage them to do whatever they can for themselves.
- **in having a physical environment that meets the needs of the child.** In most cases, the environment of the area may not need to be changed at all. Compare your space with the needs of the child.
- **in planning activities that all children can do.** It is possible to plan activities, snacks, meals, and programs that are appropriate for all children.
- **in partnering with the family and other professionals who may be providing support services to the child.** While in an early childhood program, a child with special needs may receive additional therapy from a specialist. Communication with those providing the support helps to coordinate the activities of the child in the early childhood program which can serve as daily practice between therapy sessions.

Who benefits from high quality inclusive early childhood programs?

You, the early childhood professional:

- Inclusion increases your experiences and skills to benefit all children.
- Inclusion is rewarding. You are able to see all children learn and grow together.

Other children in your care:

- Inclusion helps children discover that all children are more alike than different.
- Inclusion builds children’s self-esteem.
- Inclusion allows children to learn from each other.
- Inclusion helps children see the strengths and abilities of each unique friend.

Children with a disability:

- Inclusion increases children’s opportunities to play and talk together with children of different abilities.
- Inclusion creates opportunities for friendships among children
- Inclusion builds children’s self-esteem.

Families:

- Inclusion connects families to other families and resources in their community.
- Inclusion increases families’ participation in the community.

Community:

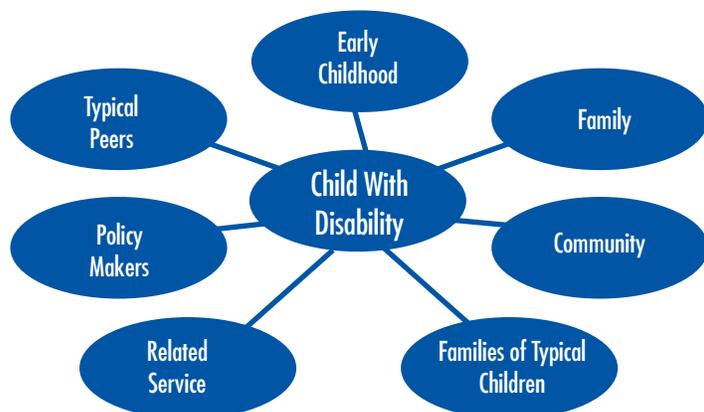
- Inclusive early care and education sends a message to the community that all children are valued and welcomed.

Related Service Providers

- Inclusion shares resources provided by agencies, benefitting all children.
- Inclusion involves early interventionists working as a partner with early childhood professionals in the child’s classroom.

Policy Makers

- Inclusion is supported by policies developed by early childhood program directors, early childhood program regulating agencies, and legislators.



Inclusive Early Childhood Programs



Here are some questions to ask about early childhood classrooms. The questions are designed to show how well a classroom can support children with special needs.

Inclusion Quiz for Early Childhood Programs

1. Children with special needs can easily access any classroom.
TRUE FALSE
2. Children with special needs can access many classroom areas independently.
TRUE FALSE
3. There are many materials and equipment that children can access and use independently.
TRUE FALSE
4. Adults monitor how children use materials and equipment and provide the necessary support for children who have difficulty using the materials.
TRUE FALSE
5. Adults organize the space and activities to encourage peer interaction.
TRUE FALSE
6. Adults in the classroom support children in having conversations with other children.
TRUE FALSE
7. Classrooms have a great variety of recommended toys, materials, and equipment selected to meet individual needs and to promote the participation of all children.
TRUE FALSE
8. Inclusion looks the same for every child.
TRUE FALSE
9. Parents are the best expert of what would best meet the needs of their child.
TRUE FALSE
10. Classroom teachers reflect on their own personal philosophy of serving a diverse set of children.
TRUE FALSE

Items 1-6 based on: Soucacou, E.P. (2010). Inclusive Classroom Profile. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* Available at: <http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/sites/npdci.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/ICP-handout.pdf>

It is likely that the first meeting you, as an early childhood professional, will have with a child and their parents will be the interview or intake session.

It is important to try to hold this meeting when you have a block of time to present a welcoming atmosphere. It is important to use the time to ask questions, answer questions and tour your center without interruption.

It is helpful to have information about children and their families before you start to care for them. Below are some questions to provide you with information to be the best teacher you can be for this child.

To prepare families, you may want to send the questions to the family before you meet so they will have a chance to think about their answers and maybe bring in some information to help you. Learning about a new child is a first step in forming a good working relationship with the parents and child.

About the Child

- What would you like me to know about your child?
 - Favorite activities
 - Interests
 - Favorite toys, games, books
 - Favorite foods
 - Pets

About the Child's Routines

- What is your child's daily routine?
- How does your child get along with other children?
- What is the best way of handling these situations with your child?
 - When your child gets fussy?
 - When it is time to take a nap?
 - What comforts your child?
 - What do you do to calm your child when he or she has been upset?
 - How do you reassure your child?
 - How do you reward your child?
- Are there any "family rules" I should be aware of?
- Does your child have any fears?
- Does your child have any food allergies or require a special diet?
- Does your child need any help with routines such as toileting or eating?
- Does your child use specific medications?
- What do you think will be hard about coming to child care for your child?

Rubin is one year old. From early on, he mostly sat silent during singing time. His teacher tried all the tricks she knew, like sitting him close to her and getting face-to-face.

She sang the same songs everyday for many, many weeks. She even brought props to make the songs more real. Today, during circle time the Speech and Language Pathologist, SLP, sits behind Rubin to help him imitate the Itsy Bitsy Spider. She suggests to Rubin's teacher to slow down the pace of the song to allow Rubin much more time to sing along.

The next time they sing the song, as they reach the word "down," Rubin forces his hands toward the floor and exclaims "Dah!" His teacher has a huge smile and says, "That's right "/d/.../ow/.../n/" and she imitates Rubin's arms going down.

Working with Families



More details about the child

- Does your child have any play restrictions?
- Does your child have any hearing or vision problems?
- Does your child have any physical disabilities?
- Does your child have any problems learning new tasks?
- Are there any others working with your child (specialists such as a therapist, teacher, service coordinator)?
- Does your infant or toddler have an IFSP, an Individual Family Service Plan – a plan for any child identified as having a special need, disability or developmental delay? If the child is 3 years or older, does the child have an IEP, an Individualized Education Plan?
- Is there any special vocabulary or gestures I would need to be aware of to communicate with your child?
- Is there any other information you would like to share about your child?
- Does your child use any special equipment? And if so, when?

Information you may want to share with the family about your program and the teachers.

- Describe your mission and philosophy about being a partner with families in addressing the needs of all children who are enrolled in the program.
- Describe the schedule of the day, teacher/child ratio.
- Describe the program's experience of working with children with special needs and the specialists who may meet with children in the early childhood program.
- Describe the teacher's experience in offering a high quality learning experience for all children.
- Provide a copy of the parent handbook.
- Describe how the program is willing to support the team of the family, early intervention specialists, and program staff encouraging the child's growth, development, and participation.

Sample forms for interviews and daily progress sheets can be found at:

- <http://www.supportingproviders.com>
Large assortment of free child care forms.
- <http://facts.crc.uiuc.edu/facts4/f4ho11a.html>
Worksheet to help parents share information about their child with you and their teacher.

Resource books are available at local libraries or Parent Information Center of Delaware (www.picofdel.org).

Information about daily activities

Here is a sample form to describe what happened during the day.

Parents like to know and need to know what has happened to their children during the day. This form could be completed for each child to give to parents at the end of the day.

Child's name _____ Date _____

Classroom Theme:

Today I played:

The friends I played with:

A fun learning activity I did was:

I want to keep practicing:

Did I eat today? A = all S = some M = most N = none
 Breakfast: A S M N Lunch: A S M N Snack: A S M N

How much did I potty? Wet diaper _____ BM diaper _____ Potty _____

How long did I nap? _____ to _____ _____ to _____

Don't forget to bring next time I come

Ask me about:

Notes or Comments:

Including All Children

An inclusive early childhood program plans activities and routines so that all children can participate.

Some activities may need to be adapted or changed for children of different abilities or stages of development. When you observe children being successful, repeat the activity or plan similar activities to let children practice their skills. Success builds on success. Adjust routines to meet the needs of children with special needs, as well as for all of the children.

Suggestions for activities to support children’s varying needs

To support children with speech delays	
Suggestions:	Activity ideas to help with speech delays:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk while you are doing activities – providing simple words: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Talk to yourself, describing what you are doing ♦ As a child is doing a task, talk about the steps the child is using to do the task ♦ Copy the sounds, actions, or gestures made by the child ♦ Repeat what the child says • Take advantage of natural opportunities or events that occur without planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Talk with children while going through tasks during the day • Create situations where a child needs to communicate, as examples, forget silverware for a meal; place objects out of reach and ask the children to get the objects • Create situations that would encourage a child to talk; as examples, offer a new toy, a new learning center, or a new poster • Count a set of objects together, out loud, and name the objects • Give simple directions – start with one step at a time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing • Read to the group • Use rhymes – pausing before saying a word to let the children shout it out • Repeat sounds in a game-like fashion, imitating each other • Play “What’s this?” with pictures • Use picture cards • “Feed the dog” by pretending to feed a stuffed animal picture cards of the alphabet, numbers, colors, pictures of common objects. • Do simple puzzles – supply words for colors, shapes, direction • Plan time each day for each child to talk with you and with other children • Plan for “show and tell” – at first, a child may just nod, “yes” or “no” to statements you provide. As a child feels more comfortable, they will start to add words • Let other children ask questions about the “show and tell” item

These are only a few suggestions of activities for children with speech delays. More in depth information can be found in the Resource Section.

To support children with developmental delays:	
Suggestions:	Activity ideas to help with developmental delays:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow routines • Be consistent, do the same routine every day • Tell child one direction at a time • Plan new activities for a short amount of time and gradually increase the time spent on the activity each day • Practice skills over and over • Limit choices to avoid confusion • Give information in a variety of ways – speech, gestures, pictures • Use activities that involve the interests of the children; for example, dinosaurs, cars, sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop any type of obstacle course to encourage crawling, pedaling • Scavenger hunt for items with characteristics such as plastic eggs to hunt for colors or objects to hunt for shapes • Give small food pieces like cereal to pick up with fingers • Sort and make patterns with colored blocks, beads • Prepare food or snacks – naming food items; counting and measuring; physically mixing, rolling, and stirring during the food preparation • Create areas within the program for children to pretend such as grocery store, doctor’s office, restaurant, beach, or farm. These theme areas allow children to interact at all different levels

To support children with hearing loss:	
Suggestions:	Activity ideas to help with hearing loss:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak or gesture directly to the child • Wait for children to watch you. This indicates they are ready to pay attention • Eliminate background noises that may be distracting • Help children use simple signs that the entire group can practice at circle time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use simple music activities – shaking rattles to music or rhythm • Play matching games – taking time to identify the picture and look at it • Exercise with picture directions or video • Cook with picture cards • Sing songs with actions such as “If you’re happy” and “Hokey Pokey” • Everyone learn simple signs to use at mealtime or snack time • Have children use picture cards to express what they want

To support children with physical disabilities:	
Suggestions:	Activity ideas to help with physical disabilities:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure the furniture arrangement can adjust for special equipment • Adapt activities so that all children can participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blow bubbles • Use puzzles with knobs on them • Animal walk • Scarf dance to music • Use group exercises – Use a “Follow the leader” approach. Consider playing “Follow the leader” in different positions—lying, standing, sitting—so that all can participate • Toss bean bags • Play obstacle course – Set up the course in a way that all children can participate, perhaps having children crawl on the floor or using “wheeled” transportation • Do art projects – Create group murals or collages while laying on the floor or sitting at a table • Lace cardboard cards • Use Velcro® wall boards that children can use either from a standing or sitting position

To support children with social and/or behavior issues:	
Suggestions:	Activity ideas to help with social and/or behavior issues:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use routine, consistency and structure to offer comfort and predictability • Use activities appropriate for age or ability • Provide safe, risk-free environment for children to try new activities without feeling that they might fail. Focus on their willingness to try something new • Watch for frustration, talk through possible ways to solve problems • Do new activities or teach a new skill when children are rested or relaxed • Balance physically demanding activities with less active or quiet activities, as an example, plan a quiet activity before nap time • Remember that some children may need to “watch” before participating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a “Show and Tell” during circle time • Use play dough • Have a music center • Play marching band with simple homemade instruments • Play game of “Red Light, Green Light” or “Stop/Go.” <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 20px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>There are more suggestions of activities appropriate for children with many types of developmental delays that can be found in the Resource Section.</i></p> </div>

High quality inclusion of children with disabilities has a strong foundation.

The strong foundation includes being able to provide specialized services for children with disabilities, providing ongoing professional development about creating inclusive opportunities, and well-defined processes and procedures to be able to work collaboratively amongst the family, therapists, and program staff, all stakeholders supporting children with disabilities.

Talk with the program director and curriculum coordinator to answer questions you may have about a specific child who you are concerned is not making the developmental progress expected and keep them informed of the progress being made by a child with a disability.

Programs which seek to offer high quality early childhood opportunities for all children have program guidelines and information in their program handbook that clearly describes their commitment to inclusion and helping all children reach their full potential. Early Childhood teachers are frequently involved in the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) prepared for infants and toddlers with disabilities or the Individual Education Plan (IEP) prepared for three to five year old children with disabilities. Teachers may meet with the team supporting a child with a disability, provide information about the child's capabilities, and be involved in implementing some strategies day-to-day to support the child's development.

Programs serving children with disabilities usually have meetings of the teachers, therapists, and family to discuss the progress being made by children and to set new goals for supporting children's development.

Staff are encouraged to continue to learn how to meet the needs of all children.

Professional development about children with disabilities is available. Colleges and universities in Delaware offer courses on exceptional children and children with disabilities. Community-based professional development is offered by Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood. By taking a series of these professional development courses, teachers can earn the Early Childhood Inclusion Credential. More information about the Early Childhood Inclusion Credential can be found at the Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood's website. (<http://dieec.udel.edu/node/73>).

Carmen, three, sits with the other children at the lunch table. Every day, her teacher notices that she refuses to eat her lunch. In observing Carmen, the teacher notices that she slouches in her chair as if she cannot stay in her chair. The utensils rarely are in her hands and she mostly pushes them onto the floor... Carmen's muscles are weak. Upon talking to her mother, Carmen's teacher learns she has a mild form of cerebral palsy. CP is noted by differences in muscle strength and coordination. The teacher learns that placing a small block under her feet while at the table, allows Carmen to gain the support she needs to sit up. It helps her to hold her utensils and eat with the others with only slight changes in seating. Carmen now smiles coming to table time eager to join the group.

Resources if you are concerned about a child's development

Useful information for early childhood professionals

Growing Together Calendar for Parents can be found at the **Birth to Three Early Intervention** website within the **State of Delaware's Department of Health and Social Services** website: <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dms/birth3pubs.html>

The calendar was designed to help parents understand how children grow and develop and to provide them with activities to help their children learn.

Delaware Early Learning Foundations can be found on the website for the **Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood**. The web address is dieec.udel.edu. Look at the tab for **Early Childhood Professionals** and find "**Early Learning Foundations**" in the list.

The **Early Learning Foundations** are curriculum guides for providing quality opportunities for children to learn.

If you are concerned about a child's development, observe and prepare to describe your concerns to others.

One of the roles that you, as an early childhood professional, will face is identifying children who might be experiencing a developmental delay or challenge. This is a difficult yet important role in supporting the growth and development of children in your program. The earlier children are identified with a need, the earlier they can begin to have the supports that will help them grow and learn with their peers.

As you watch children, you may have concerns about how a child is developing.

Compare what the child is doing with a list of developmental milestones for the age of the child. The *Growing Together Calendar for Parents*, the *Delaware Early Learning Foundations: Infant and Toddler*, and *Delaware Early Learning Foundations: Preschool* are materials that describe what children should be able to do as infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Make some notes about what the child is doing. Wait 2 or 3 weeks and then compare the child's skills with the list in the *Growing Together Calendar* and the *Early Learning Foundations*. Is the child better at some of the skills than they were when you first took notes? Is the child still at the same level as before? How does the child's skills compare with the information in the *Calendar* and the *Early Learning Foundations*?

Children do grow and learn new skills at different times from each other. Some children take longer to learn new skills than others. Some children will be quick to develop in one area of development and slower to learn the skills in another area of development. For instance, a child may quickly learn to move around and walk, yet take longer to learn language skills. This is normal.

Plan activities that will help the child develop the skills that cause you to be concerned about the child's development.

For ideas of activities, use the *Growing Together Calendar* and the *Delaware Early Learning Foundations*.



Share your observations with others.

If, after observation and after trying to work with the child on developing the new skills, you see a child is not doing some of the activities that most children are able to do at their age, discuss your observations and your notes with the program director and/or the curriculum coordinator of your early childhood program. If you are a family child care provider, discuss your concerns directly with the family.

It is important to involve the family.

Parents are the ones who will need to take action. Parents may be seeing the same behavior, yet not know how to discuss it with someone else. Sometimes, we would prefer to avoid or delay these discussions hoping that the child will grow out of it. Remember that helping the child and family find the resources they need in a timely way is an important goal.

Be prepared for the discussion.

- Ask to talk with the parent at a convenient time for both you and the parent.
- Ask parents questions about what their child is doing at home and what they notice about their child. They may notice, but are hoping that the behavior will change.
- Have some notes, based on your observations, ready to describe the child's abilities and your concerns.
- Consider using the *Growing Together Calendar* or the *Early Learning Foundations* to focus the discussion about the child's abilities. Talk to one another about what you each see the child doing. Ask some questions.
 - “Do you see that the child is able to do the same activities or different activities?”
 - “Do you see that your child is doing activities that are appropriate for the age of the child?”
- Avoid talking about what other children do, because each child is different. Using a developmental checklist, like the *Growing Together Calendar* or the *Early Learning Foundations*, keeps the discussion focused on their child and what is expected of children at this age.

If a child is not able to do skills expected of most children their age, then it is time to discuss concerns with the child's parents. Parents can contact their primary health care physician or call one of the agencies below:

If a child is younger than 3 years old, call Child Development Watch.

If a child is 3 years old or older, call the School District's Child Find Coordinator or Special Education Supervisor for the school district the child will attend.

See page 20 for the phone numbers for Child Development Watch and each School District's Child Find Coordinator.

It is important to have a good relationship with families BEFORE a difficult discussion is ever needed.

If you are concerned about a child's development



Be sensitive to a family's feelings.

- Realize that having a discussion about your observations may be hard for parents to hear, understand, and accept.
- Give parents time to talk about their experiences, concerns, and feelings. Remember that parents have special knowledge and a special relationship with their children.
- Support parents as they contact health care providers, Child Development Watch, Child Find in their school district, and others to have the developmental concerns assessed. Offer to share your observations of the child on any questionnaires that the parent may need to complete.
- Be prepared for parents to disagree and to deny your concern for their child. It may take several discussions with the family to help them see what you are observing.
- At the end of each conversation, have the family make a plan to do something that helps them better understand your concern for the child or begins the process for the child to be assessed for a developmental delay. A family could be asked to:
 - watch what a child does in a certain situation and compare it to what a child of his or her age usually does. This helps parents to realize that the child is not doing the activities one would expect of a child this age.
 - practice a skill with a child by playing with them. This helps the family provide opportunities for skills to be developed.
 - make an appointment to discuss concerns with the child's health care provider, or Child Development Watch, if the child is younger than 3 years old. The school district's Child Find Coordinator or Special Education Supervisor is the contact if the child is 3 years or older. This supports the family to make the first step in assessing their child's abilities.

Supporting the Family.

This is a stressful time in the family..

No parent wants to hear that things are not quite right with their child. Parents often fear the worst when they hear concerns. When a family is concerned or when someone suggests that their child has a disability or developmental delay, families may become angry, defensive, or may not realize the extent of their child's needs. This is normal and should be expected. Do not take their concerns and anger personally.

When a parent takes the steps to have their child screened to determine if there is a developmental delay, they are beginning a very difficult journey. There are appointments to be scheduled and arrangements to be made. The support and encouragement of the early childhood professional is very important to keeping a parent moving through the process. Remind the family that the sooner the child is assessed and involved in the program if he or she is eligible, the easier it will be for the child to be the best that he or she can be. Waiting to see if the child does make progress without the program may waste valuable time in these early years.

Because you are a person who the parent sees every day, you may take some of the "blame" for the child's difficulty.

Realize that parents may blame you as part of the reaction to deny that this is happening to their child. Let parents know about the child's abilities and special qualities so that they realize that you do see the positives in their child. While you may have been doing this before, this is a time to be sure to say something positive about their child every day.

Treat this family as you do other families who are going through stressful times, such as a divorce, new baby in the family, or a death in the family. The child usually needs a great deal of attention and comfort. Parents need support, encouragement, and patience.

Language, the words we use to describe the situation, can help.

Be aware of what you are saying and practice using "people first language." The children in your care are children, first, who can be described in many different ways. Describe the child by what the child can do rather than what they can't do or the disability. For example, the boy who smiles or the girl who sings. Describe the person first and then the characteristic about them.

By talking about the person first, the focus is first on the person, not the disability. By using "people first language," people become more comfortable talking about people and their unique needs.

Geo, an only child, plays well at home on the farm. He enjoys chasing his dogs and climbing fences. At child care, he is a different.

When Geo is with other two-year-olds, he keeps his head down and saliva pours from his mouth. He tends to play alone, even though there are 11 children and 2 teachers. He rarely responds to his name. He wanders the room finding it hard to join or enjoy activities. When mom picks him up, Ms. Amy shares daily activities, knowing that Geo is more successful at home. Ms. Amy asks mom if they can meet to learn how child care could help Geo join his friends in play and discuss strategies to address Geo's drooling. Ms. Amy shares *The Early Learning Foundations* with the family and notes that typically, play, like: pushing carts, carrying weighted items or digging, might be a way to help Geo organize his senses and "tune in" when he is in more crowded and noisy places. Mom and Dad agree that Goe already does these activities on the farm, probably making Geo successful. Dad suggests that Ms. Amy encourage Geo to pretend he was on the farm. Dad feels that directing Geo's attention to a specific activity and making it predictable may be an easy support to help Geo have more fun with his friends.

Resources if you are concerned about a child's development

Share resources with the family.

Help parents realize that there are resources and services to help them and their child. With help, many children are able to develop their skills and abilities. Getting help early allows a child to learn ways to be successful.

The telephone numbers to the right are for the agencies which will evaluate a child if there is a concern that the child may have a developmental delay or developmental challenge.

Child Development Watch

Child Development Watch is the statewide early intervention program for children ages birth to age 3. The program's mission is to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities or developmental delays and to enhance the capacity of their families to meet the needs of their young children.

Parents with children ages birth to age 3 can call Child Development Watch at:

New Castle County Referral Line	(302) 283-7140
All other inquiries, call:	(302) 283-7240
or Toll-free:	(800) 671-0050
Kent and Sussex Counties:	(302) 424-7300
or Toll-free:	(800) 752-9393

Child Find

At the age of three and older, the responsibility for identifying children with developmental delays and providing services to children with special needs is with each of the public school districts. To ask questions about your child's development and how to have your child evaluated, contact your local school district. The telephone numbers for Child Find Services in each school district are listed at right.

School District	Child Find Contact Number
Appoquinimink	(302) 376-4404
Brandywine	(302) 479-2618
Cape Henlopen	(302) 645-6686
Caesar Rodney	(302) 697-2173
Capital	(302) 672-1934 or (302) 672-1935
Christina	(302) 454-2047
Colonial	(302) 323-2951
Delmar	(302) 846-9544
Indian River	(302) 436-1000 ext 1117
Lake Forest	(302) 284-3020
Laurel	(302) 875-6105
Milford	(302) 422-1600
Red Clay	(302) 992-5574
Preschool age	(302) 995-8568
School age	(302) 995-8793
Seaford	(302) 629-4587 ext 209
Smyrna	(302) 659-6291 or (302) 653-8585
Woodbridge	(302) 349-4539 ext 156

Local resources

Related to services for children with disabilities

For children birth to three years old:

Part C Coordinator
 Birth to Three Early Intervention System
 Division of Management Services (DMS)
 Delaware Department of Health and Social Services
 (302) 255-9134
<http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dms/epqc/birth3/directry.html>

For children three years and older:

Part B 619 Coordinator
 Early Development and Learning Resources
 Delaware Department of Education
 (302) 735-4295
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/students_family/earlychildhood/default.shtml

For children who could be eligible for Head Start

Delaware Head Start Collaboration Director
 Early Development and Learning Resources
 Delaware Department of Education
 (302) 735-4295
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/students_family/hs/about.shtml

Related to Supports to Families

Family to Family Health Information Center
www.delawarefamilytofamily.org (877) 235-3588

Parent Information Center of Delaware
www.picofdel.org
 New Castle County: (302) 999-7394
 Kent and Sussex Counties: (302) 856-9880
 Statewide toll-free: (888) 547-4412

Parents as Teachers
www.parentsasteachers.org
 New Castle County: (302) 454-5955
 Kent and Sussex Counties: (302) 398-8945 x151

Related to Professional Development for Staff on Inclusion

Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood
dieec.udel.edu (302) 831-3239

Training is available to help providers serve children with special needs.

Contact the



for a list of upcoming training sessions.

**302-831-3239
www.dieec.udel.edu**

Inclusive Early Childhood Programs



Here are the same questions as presented on page 8 to ask about early childhood classrooms. Here are the answers to these questions designed to show how well a classroom can support children with special needs.

Inclusion Quiz for Early Childhood Programs

1. Children with special needs can easily access any classroom.
TRUE All children should have access to a program
2. Children with special needs can access many classroom areas independently.
TRUE For effective inclusion, children with special needs should be able to do activities on their own in many of the classroom's activity areas.
3. There are many materials and equipment that children can access and use independently.
TRUE Materials should be available that can be used independently by all children.
4. Adults monitor how children use materials and equipment and provide the necessary support for children who have difficulty using the materials.
TRUE Adults support all children in their growth and development, teaching them how to use the materials and equipment for an activity.
5. Adults organize the space and activities to encourage peer interaction.
TRUE Children's social development is very important. High quality programs support the social development of children as well as their physical and intellectual development.
6. Adults in the classroom support children in having conversations with other children.
TRUE Conversations help children develop language skills, friendships, and teamwork skills.
7. Classrooms have a great variety of recommended toys, materials, and equipment selected to meet individual needs and to promote the participation of all children.
TRUE A classroom should have enough materials for every child to be using at least one item at a time. The materials should also expand children's skills.
8. Inclusion looks the same for every child.
FALSE Because every child is unique, inclusion looks different for each child.
9. Parents are the best expert of what would best meet the needs of their child.
TRUE and FALSE Parents know their children well and have insights on how to best meet their needs. Parents, educators, and therapists sharing what each knows really helps a child grow.
10. Classroom teachers reflect on their own personal philosophy of serving a diverse set of children.
TRUE Teachers who reflect on their own personal philosophy of serving a diverse set of children will identify how they need to adjust their activities, materials, and environment to meet the needs of all children.

Items 1-6 based on: Soucacou, E.P. (2010). Inclusive Classroom Profile. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*

Available at: <http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/sites/npdci.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/ICP-handout.pdf>

Internet resources on inclusion:

<http://specialquest.org>

The Special Quest Multimedia Resource Library: Including Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers with Disabilities. Multiple videos and training modules related to inclusion, family involvement, and collaboration.

<http://www.inclusivechildcare.org/>

Center for Inclusive Child Care. Resources, technical assistance, professional development opportunities, and online training through their website.

<http://depts.washington.edu/hscenter/>

Head Start Center for Inclusion. Information, professional development, materials, and other resources to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in Head Start programs.

<http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/>

National Professional Development Center on Inclusion. Research, planning guides, measures, wikis, blogs, discussions, and other resources to support quality inclusive practices. Free electronic newsletter available.

<http://www.nectac.org/topics/inclusion/default.asp>

Resources on policies related to inclusion and strategies for implementing policies.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>

The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center supporting Head Start programs with evidence-based practices for all children including specific information with children with disabilities

Samantha, a child with Down Syndrome, has been in a child care program since 18 months old. Her family wants a program that challenges her at her own pace. Her teacher describes her as a “dancer” and having the best hugs in the world. Children of the class describe her as their friend.

For the morning opening, her teacher of 4-year-olds, uses pictures of each child labeled with the child’s name as a way to take attendance. As children come in, they each put their picture on the attendance board. The teacher also uses pictures of activities as a way to show children what the schedule of the day includes.

To see more about Samantha and her child care, view the video about her at SpecialQuest.org and search in the Training Library for “Preschool Inclusion: Samantha.”



Internet Resources for Professional Development:

<http://www.inclusivechildcare.org/>

Center for Inclusive Child Care offers professional development opportunities, and online training.

http://www.dec-sped.org/About_DEC/

This site of the Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children has several position statements on a variety of topics including inclusion, personnel standards, and recommended practices.

<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/>

Web-based instructional resources to support the use of evidence-based practices in working with young children (0-5) and their families.

<http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/cape>

Offers the position statements from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Includes statements on “Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation” and “Promoting Positive Outcomes for Children with Disabilities: Recommendations for Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation.

<http://www.nectac.org/topics/earlyid/screeneval.asp>

Links to online resources on screening, evaluation, and assessment, including resources for early identification of specific disabilities.

Other internet resources of suggestions and activities:

<http://www.zerotothree.org>

This user friendly site provides early childhood professionals information and resources about child development from birth through age three.

<http://researchtopractice.info/productSolutions.php>

Free download of toolkits – easy to use resources that are practice guides that give activity suggestions and ways to identify if solutions are working.

<http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org>

Evidence-based early literacy learning practices to support the learning of young children, birth to five, who have or are at risk for disabilities and delays.

<http://ecmhc.org/advisors.html>

Strategies for strong mental health foundation for children, families, and early childhood professionals.

<http://fpg.unc.edu/resources/snapshot-55>

Making Friends: Assisting Children’s Early Relationships.

Internet Resources for Parents:

<http://www.supportforfamilies.org>

Click on Resources on the left; then on Internet Resources for Families of Children with Disabilities.

<http://www.beachcenter.org>

The Beach Center on Disability at the University of Kansas. Look for materials on Family Support in Early Intervention.

<http://www.cfw.tufts.edu>

Child and Family Health Guide supported by Tufts University.

http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=1960 - -

The University of Iowa's Cooperative Extension brochure on "Family Centered Services: Guiding Principles and Practices for Delivery of Family Centered Services."

<http://fathersnetwork.org>

Washington State's Fathers Network for fathers of children with special health care needs and developmental disabilities.

<http://fcsn.org>

Federation for Children with Special Needs.

<http://www.kidstogether.org>

Kids Together, Inc. provides information and resources for children and adults with disabilities. Their mission is to promote inclusive communities.

<http://www.nichey.org>

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities which serves as a source of information on children with disabilities.

<http://our-kids.org>

An organization of parents, Our-Kids: Devoted to Raising Special Kids with Special Needs.

Books on Inclusion:

An Activity-Based Approach to Early Intervention by Diane Bricker with Kristie Pretti-Frontczak, Ph.D, and Natalya McComas, MS., Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore 2004.

Includes forms, discussion of specific disabilities and activities

An Administrator's Guide to Preschool Inclusion by Woolery and Odom, FPG Child Development Center Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2000.

Practical strategies for addressing common administrative barriers and challenges to inclusion.

Blended Practices for Teaching Young Children in Inclusive Settings by Grisham-Brown J., Hemmeter, M.L., & Pretti-Frontczak, K., Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore 2005.

Book for child care teachers encouraging blending special and general education so that all children have positive outcomes.

Taj, two years old, attends a local playgroup. He was a delayed talker. Most times in a group setting, Taj isolates himself and does not join the group activities. He is fine playing alone in the group.

The leader of the group talked to his mother about encouraging some play with other children. She shows mom how to help Taj take two toys and offer one to another child. The teacher practices this skill with all the children and before she knows it, Taj joins the group and uses his new social skills.

Resources



Books on Inclusion, continued:

Building Blocks for teaching preschoolers with special needs by S.R. Sandall and I. S. Schwartz, Paul Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore 2008.

Practical, research-based inclusion strategies that promote progress in the areas of behavior, emergent literacy, and peer relationships.

CARA's Kit: Creating Adaptations for Routines and Activities by Suzanne Milbourne and Pip Campbell. Missoula, MT: DEC. 2007.

<http://www.dec-sped.org>

Adaptations that can support each child's full participation.

Creative Play Activities for Children with Disabilities by Lisa R. Morris & Linda Schulz. Human Kinetics Books, Champaign, IL, 1989.

250 games and activities designed to help infants to 8-year-olds with all types of disabilities grow through play. Many activities describe specific, easy-to-implement adaptations for children with special needs, including visual, hearing, physical, emotional and cognitive impairments and challenges.

Engagement of every child in the preschool classroom by R.A. McWilliam and A.M. Casey. Paul Brookes Publishing, Baltimore, MD. 2008
Strategies for creating an inclusive classroom.

The Inclusive Learning Center Book by Christy Isbell and Rebecca Isbell, Gryphon House, Beltsville, Maryland 2005.

Activities and centers with adaptations for specific disabilities.

Let's be friends: Peer competence and social inclusion in early childhood programs by K.M. Kemple. Teachers College Press New York: 2004.

Preschool Inclusion by Claire Cavallaro and Michele Haney, Baltimore, MD 1999. www.brookespublishing.com

Activity planning, positive behavior support, photocopiable forms and case studies. Also includes suggestions for family involvement information.

The Intentional Teacher: Choosing the best strategies for young children's learning by A.S. Epstein. NAEYC: Washington, DC 2007.

Books for Children:

Let's Talk About It: Extraordinary Friends by Fred Rogers. Penguin Putnam, Inc., New York, NY 2000.

A book by Fred Rogers for children without special needs; addressing questions and issues about individual differences.

Susan Laughs by Jeanne Willis. Henry Holt and Company New York, NY 2000.

Children's story about a day in Susan's life that is very typical of all children until the ending where you see Susan in a wheelchair.

Different Just Like Me by Lori Mitchell. Charlesbridge Publishing, Watertown, MA 2001.

Children's story about how alike and how different people and flowers can be.

*Mama Zooms** by Jane Cowen-Fletcher. Scholastic Press, Inc., Jefferson City, MO 1996.

Children's story about child sitting on mom's lap in wheelchair and going places.

Friends in the Park by Rochelle Bunnett. Checkerboard Press, Inc., New York, NY 1993.

Children's story about a group of children (some with disabilities) spending a day together in the park.

Books on Effective Practice:

Learning language and loving it: A guide to promoting children's social and language development in early childhood settings by E. Weitzman and J. Greenberg. The Hanen Center, Toronto, Canada (2002).

Videos and DVDs:

I'm Tyler by Tyler Green. Ability Awareness, Waterloo, IA, 2006.

<http://www.imtyler.org>

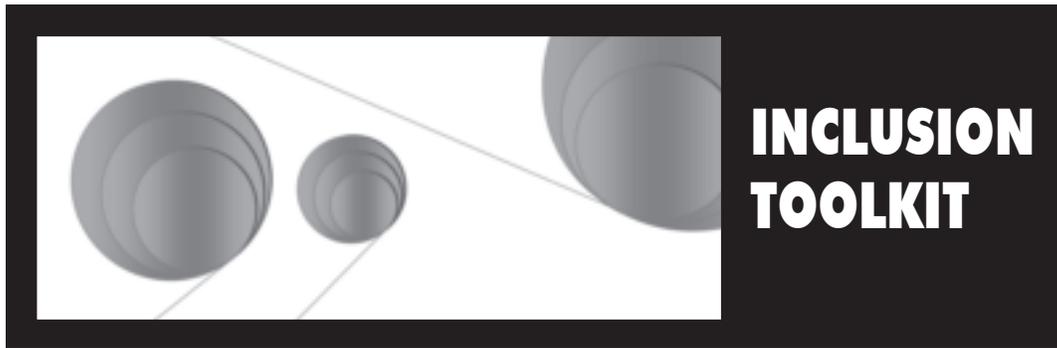
A young man's account of how "ability awareness" has led to opportunities to be included in school, sports, and community experiences.

Including Samuel by Dan Habib, D. Author, Concord, NH, 2007.

<http://www.includingsamuel.com>

This award winning film describes a family's journey of supporting their child in inclusive settings.

**Delaware Libraries
carry
Grow with Books,
a collection
of books for
families about
raising children,
particularly
addressing the
needs of children
with disabilities.**



Delaware's Birth to Three Early Intervention System

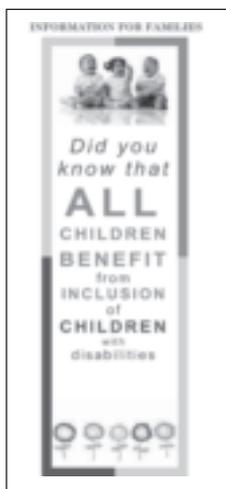
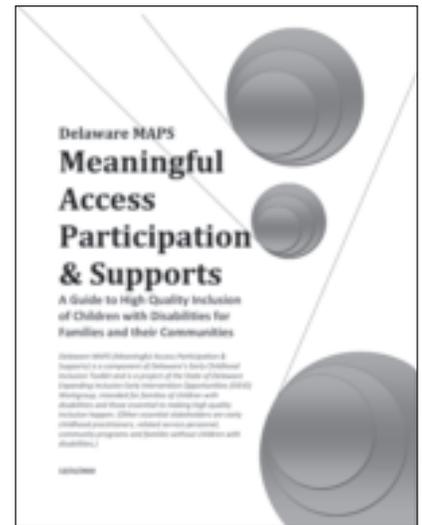
Delaware MAPS: Meaningful Access Participation Supports

A Guide to High Quality Inclusion of Children with Disabilities for Families and their Communities

This handbook is designed to be a resource to those who want to know about and make certain of high quality environments and experiences that meaningfully include children with disabilities.

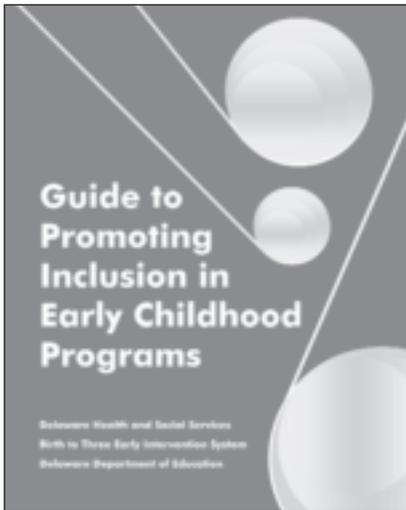
Delaware MAPS:

- Is intended as a starting place for the journey of inclusion
- Contains the definition of inclusion
- Has information beneficial for:
 - Families of children with disabilities
 - Families of children WITHOUT disabilities
 - Practitioners in community programs and educational settings
 - Related services providers who support the individual needs of children with disabilities
- Relies on experts' research and evidence-based information
- Shares guideposts for the journey of including children with disabilities geared specifically toward families
- Provides a worksheet for families to complete to aid in their search for a good fit for their child



Guide to Promoting Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs

This brochure for families explains the benefits for ALL children of having children with disabilities in early childhood programs.



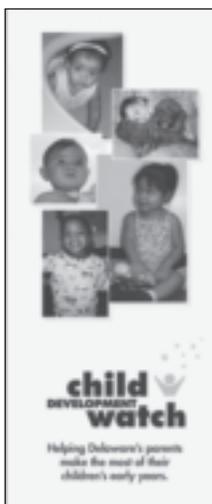
Guide to Promoting Inclusion in Early Care and Education

This booklet, designed for early childhood professionals, provides strategies for talking with families if concerned about a child's development, meeting with families of a child with special needs who is looking for an early childhood program, and providing inclusive educational opportunities to meet the needs of a child with a disability.

Other Materials for Families of Young Children

Growing Together Calendar for Parents

The calendar provides families with health and safety information, as well as developmental milestones and ideas for supporting their child's development from infancy through age 5. Community resources are listed if parents are concerned about their child's development, need help seeking child care, and finding other services in the state.



Helping Delaware's Parents Make the Most of their Children's Early Years

This brochure designed for parents briefly describes what to do if concerned about a child's development and how to contact Child Development Watch.



Copies of these publications can be obtained by calling Birth to Three at (302) 255-9134
They can also be found on the Birth to Three Early Intervention System's website:
<http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dms/birth3pubs.html>



Helpful Phone Numbers

For referrals to services, agencies, and programs

Delaware Helpline can provide information about parenting programs, subsidized childcare, and services, such as AFDC and Medicaid, in Delaware.

7:30am to 8pm - Monday - Friday
(800) 464-4357 or 211

For support and information about parenting challenges

Child, Inc. provides direct services such as shelters, domestic violence treatment programs, and specialized foster care, prevention programs such as parenting classes and assistance, and community advocacy for children and their families.

Statewide (800) 874-2070
New Castle County - (302) 762-8989

8:30am to 8pm - Monday - Wednesday
8:30am to 7pm - Thursday
8:30am to 5pm - Friday

Domestic Violence Hotline (302) 762-6110
Runaway Youth Hotline (302) 762-6373

Contact - 24-hour helpline for anyone under stress. Trained listeners can offer support and make referrals to community agencies.

New Castle County (302) 761-9100
Kent and Sussex Counties (800) 262-9800

For legal assistance

Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. provides free legal assistance to disabled, low-income, and elderly citizens in civil areas of law. Voice/TTY available in each office.

New Castle County (302) 575-0660
Kent County (302) 674-8500
Sussex County (302) 856-0038

For information about the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program

WIC Nutrition Program provides participants with nutritious foods and nutrition education. Pregnant, post-partum and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to their fifth birthday are eligible if they qualify.

New Castle County (302) 283-7570
Toll Free (800) 222-2189

For information about the services available for children with developmental delays and disabilities

Parent Information Center of Delaware has staff to identify community services, help families solve problems, and offer emotional support. They also have a library of books, videos, and catalogs, and offer informational workshops for families with children having a developmental delay or disability.

New Castle County (302) 999-7394
Toll Free (888) 547-4412

Delaware Family Voices Family to Family Health Information Center aims to achieve family-centered care for all children and youth with special health care needs and/or disabilities. Through the national network, families are given the tools to make informed decisions, advocate for improved public and private policies, build partnerships among professionals and families, and serve as a trusted resource on health care.

Local (302) 221-5360
Toll-Free: (877) 235-3588

For information about immunizations records (800) 282-8672

For information about breastfeeding

LaLeche League (877) 452-5324
Nursing Mothers (302) 733-0973

For help in finding a doctor

Medical Society of Delaware (302) 366-1400

Child Development Watch

New Castle County Referral Line:
(302) 283-7140

All other inquiries, call: (302) 283-7240
or Toll-free: (800) 671-0050

Kent and Sussex Counties: (302) 424-7300
or Toll-free (800) 752-9393

Child Find in each School District: see page 20