

Expanding Opportunities for Inclusion

Children Birth to Five

All young children need meaningful opportunities to develop skills, establish a sense of self, and lay a foundation for life-long learning. Access to, and participation in, early learning and development programs and services provide such opportunities for children's overall development, improving their chances of leading healthy, productive lives.



Benefits of Inclusion for All Children:

- Learn new skills by watching and playing with other children
- Develop friendships
- Develop a positive self-image
- Develop a healthy attitude about the uniqueness of others
- Develop skills to be resourceful, creative, and cooperate with others

Benefits of Inclusion for All Families:

- Increase access to quality child care
- Provide opportunities to make friends with diverse groups of families
- Share concerns, needs, hopes and desires for their children with other parents
- Learn about child development

Benefits of Inclusion for Professionals:

- Work together as a team to support children and families
- Develop broader perspectives on how children grow and learn
- Develop partnerships with community resources and agencies
- Build strong relationships through communication with parents and others
- Work together to provide quality programs and services

Benefits of Inclusion for Communities:

- Provide a foundation for life skills from birth through adulthood
- Strengthen opportunities to support a more diverse community
- Develop acceptance of all people

Why? Because it's good for everyone!



Expanding Opportunities for Early Childhood Inclusion

What Is Early Childhood Inclusion?

"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 Division of Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) developed this joint position statement on early childhood inclusion in April 2009, offering a definition of inclusion to be used nationwide.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Florida Directory of
Early Childhood Services

www.centraldirectory.org

Call Toll Free: (800) 654-4440

Developed by the Florida Expanding Opportunities For Early Childhood Inclusion in Florida, a cross agency initiative promoting inclusive options for young children with disabilities and their families, representing the Florida Department of Education, The Children's Forum, the Agency for Workforce Innovation, Florida Department of Health Children's Medical Services Early Steps, Florida Head Start State Collaboration Office, Parent/Family Organizations, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, institutions of higher education, family members, and representatives from local programs.

July 2010