Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs

Successful Strategies from Experienced Early Childhood Educators

Presentation Team

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Webinar Objectives

- **Define inclusion** in ECE settings

- Discuss **benefits and challenges**

- **Learn successful strategies** from state and local educators

POLL

Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Education

September 14, 2015

http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/earlylearning/joint-statement-full-text.pdf

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POLICY STATEMENT ON
INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS
September 14, 2015

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy statement is to set a vision and provide recommendations to States, local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and public and private early childhood programs, from the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) (the Departments), for increasing the inclusion of infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities in high-quality early childhood programs.[1]

It is the Departments' position that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations. This joint ED and HHS policy statement aims to advance this position by:

- Setting an expectation for high-quality inclusion in early childhood programs;
- Increasing public understanding of the science that supports meaningful inclusion of children with disabilities, from the earliest ages, in early childhood programs;
- Highlighting the legal foundations supporting inclusion in high-quality early childhood programs;
- Providing recommendations to States, LEAs, schools, and early childhood programs for increasing inclusive early learning opportunities for all children; and
- Identifying free resources for States, programs, early childhood personnel[2], and families to support high-quality individualized programming and inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs.

Though this policy statement focuses on including young children with disabilities in early childhood programs, it is our shared vision that all people be meaningfully included in all facets of society

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[1] Early childhood programs refer to those that provide early care and education to children birth through age five, where the majority of children in the program are typically developing. These include, but are not limited to, private or publicly funded center or family-based child care, home visiting, Early Head Start, Head Start, private preschool, and public school and community-based pre-kindergarten programs, including those in charter schools.
[2] Early childhood personnel refer to professionals who provide early care and education services to children birth through age five, including public or private preschool teachers, home and center-based child care providers, Head Start and Early Head Start teachers, home visitors, early interventionists, early childhood special educators, and related services personnel.

POLL

DEC/NAEYC Position Statement

Key elements:
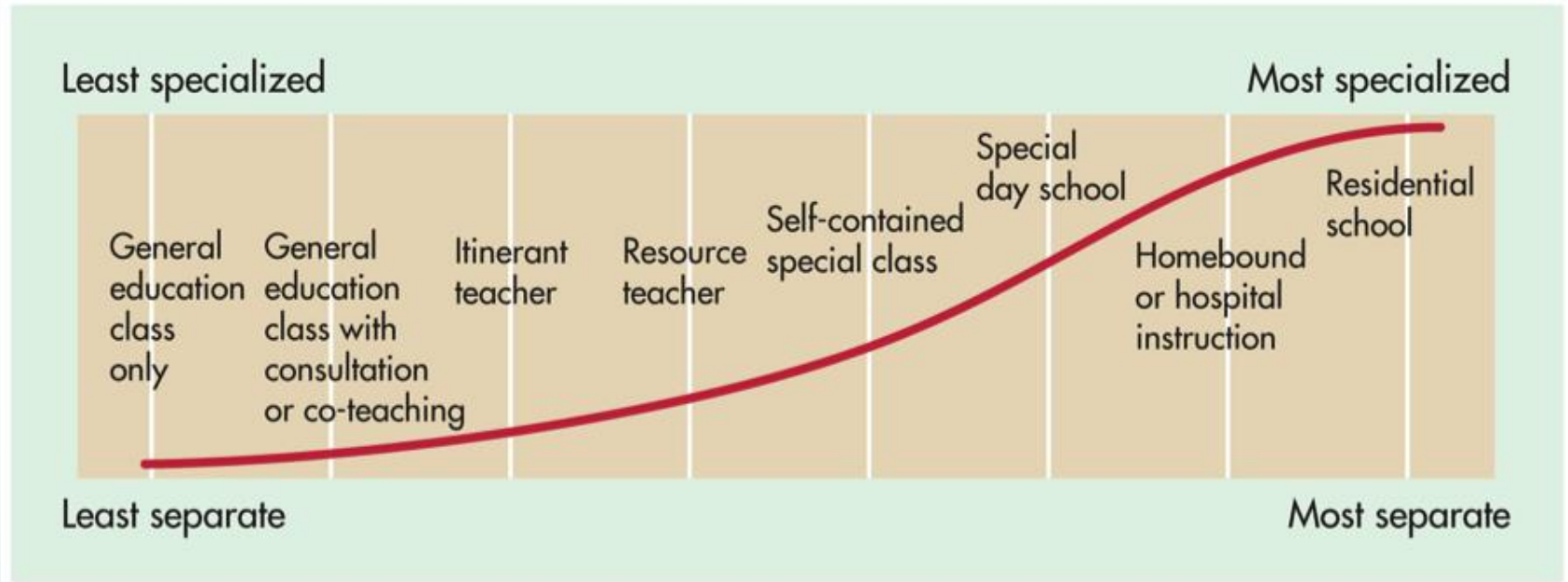
- Access

- Participation

- Support

What is Inclusion?

- "**including** children with disabilities in early childhood programs, together with their peers without disabilities;

- "holding **high expectations** and intentionally **promoting participation** in all learning and social activities, facilitated by **individualized accommodations**; and

- "using **evidence-based services and supports** to foster their
  - development (cognitive, language, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional),
  - friendships with peers, and
  - sense of belonging."

Natural Environments

Least Restrictive Environment

Least specialized   Most specialized

General education class only | General education class with consultation or co-teaching | Itinerant teacher | Resource teacher | Self-contained special class | Special day school | Homebound or hospital instruction | Residential school

Least separate   Most separate

Inclusion for all

"from those with the mildest disabilities to those with the most significant disabilities."

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Benefits

Barriers

Recommendations

For States, Local Programs, Families

- Statewide and local collaboration

Recommendations

For States, Local Programs, Families

- Statewide and local collaboration

- Policies that promote inclusion

Recommendations

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- Statewide and local collaboration

- Policies that promote inclusion

- Resource allocation

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- Data-driven decision-making

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- Professional Development

Recommendations

For States, Local Programs, Families

- Statewide and local collaboration

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- Resource allocation

- Data-driven decision-making

- Professional Development

- Social Emotional and Behavioral Health

Panel Introductions

- Beth Fairchild

  Education Consultant

  Early Intervention Technical Assistance

  Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

- Lisa Parker

  Division Chief for the Office of Child Development and Early Learning/Bureau of Early Intervention Services
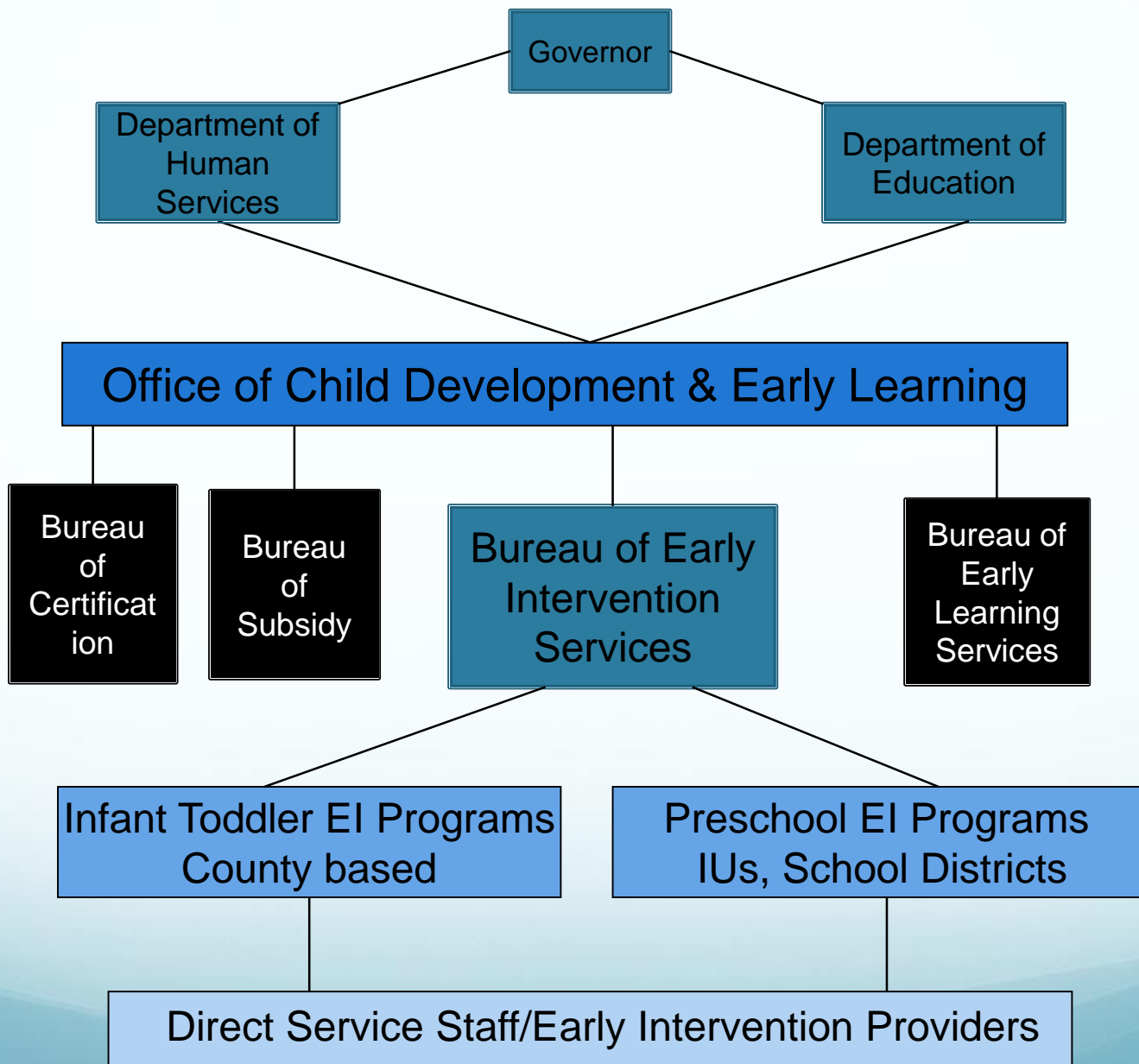
  Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Human Services

- Andi Knowlton

  Director of Early Childhood Services Department

  Napa County Office of Education

Reactions to
the Policy Statement

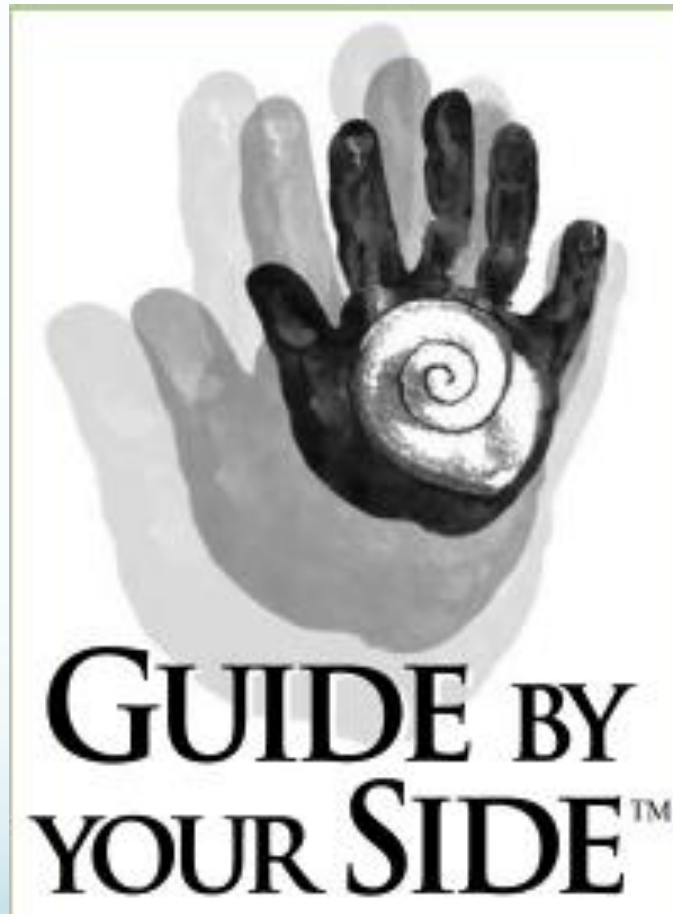# Connections to Current Practices: Organization

Connections to Current Practices: Parent as Partners in Professional Development (P3D)
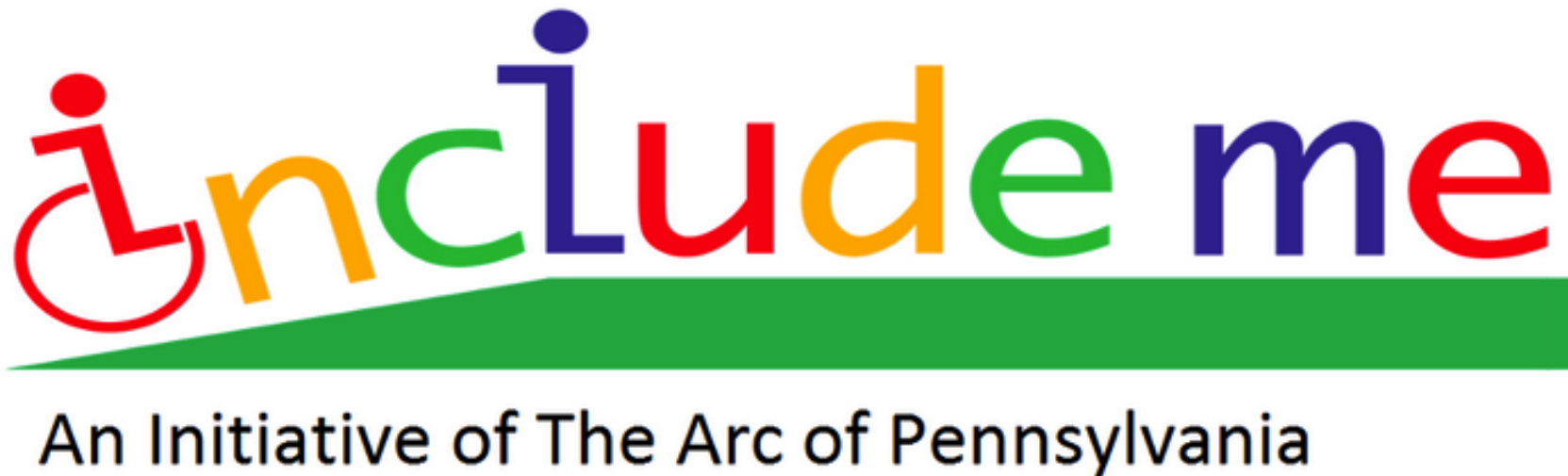
Connections to Current Practices: Competence and Confidence Partners in Policymaking Early Intervention (C2P2EI)

Connections to Current Practices: Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side (GBYS)™ of PA

Connections to Current Practices: Include Me from the Start

include me

An Initiative of The Arc of Pennsylvania

Connections to Current Practices:

- Vision and mission

- Hiring practices

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- Vision and mission

- Hiring practices

- Integrated therapy model

Connections to Current Practices:

- Vision and mission

- Hiring practices

- Integrated therapy model

- Community partnerships

Connections to Current Practices:

- Vision and mission

- Hiring practices

- Integrated therapy model

- Community partnerships

- History of high quality services

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- Parent collaborations

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- Parent collaborations

- Interagency and braided funding

Connections to Current Practices:

- Vision and mission

- Hiring practices

- Integrated therapy model

- Community partnerships

- History of high quality services

- Parent collaborations

- Interagency and braided funding

- Professional development

Strengths of the Statement

- Time

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- Strategic planning

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- Starting smaller and working incrementally

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- Shifting ideas and practices

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- Validating high quality services

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- Validating high quality services

- Sustainable

Strengths of the Statement

- Shifting attitudes

Strengths of the Statement

- Shifting attitudes

- Technical assistance

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- Technical assistance

- Access, participation, and supports

Gaps to Consider

- Funding

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- Ongoing professional development and consultation

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- Funding

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- Different classroom models

Gaps to Consider

- Funding

- Ongoing professional development and consultation

- Different classroom models

- Understanding special education funding
  - Moving away from place-based thinking
  - Thinking about resources differently

Next Steps: Napa

- Statewide policy

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- Statewide policy

- Collaborations across programs

Next Steps: Napa

- Statewide policy

- Collaborations across programs

- Partnerships with families

Next Steps: Napa

- Statewide policy

- Collaborations across programs

- Partnerships with families

- Quality Rating Improvement Scale

Next Steps: Napa

- Classrooms in community schools

Next Steps: Napa

- Classrooms in community schools

- Catalyst for change within school districts

Next Steps: Napa

- Classrooms in community schools

- Catalyst for change within school districts

- Children with autism

Next Steps: Napa

- Classrooms in community schools

- Catalyst for change within school districts

  - Children with autism

  - Support for funding

Next Steps: Pennsylvania

- Statewide policy forum

Next Steps: Pennsylvania

- Statewide policy forum

- Policy regarding suspension and expulsion

Next Steps: Pennsylvania

- Statewide policy forum

- Policy regarding suspension and expulsion

- Regional policy forums

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- Regional policy forums

- Joint meetings with ELC and SICC

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- Inclusion Cohort

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- Statewide policy forum
- Policy regarding suspension and expulsion
- Regional policy forums
- Joint meetings with ELC and SICC
- Inclusion Cohort
- STARS – re-visioning

Additional Resources

- 2016 National Inclusion Webinar Series
  http://ectacenter.org/~calls/2016/nationalinclusion.asp

- A Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) on Early Childhood Inclusion
  https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/DEC_NAEYC_EC_updatedKS.pdf

Children
and Families
are Counting on
YOU

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