INCLUSION STRATEGIES FOR EVERYONE!
ECMHC WEBINAR

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Agenda
• Learning Objectives
• Rationale & Benefits of Inclusion Practices
• Membership
• Group Friendship Activities
• Strategies to Support Social Interactions
• LEAP Friendship Skills
• Major Message
• References and Additional Resources
• Questions

WHAT IS EARLY CHILDHOOD INCLUSION?
The definition of early childhood inclusion from DEC and NAEYC joint position statement on inclusion is as follows:
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.

Learning Objectives
• Participants will receive the rationale of inclusion practices in early childhood care and education setting.
• Participants will gain strategies how to support peers of children with unique social, emotional, behavioral or developmental needs.
• Participants will learn how to support social interaction children with special needs and their peers in an inclusive early childhood child and education setting.

SpecialQuest Birth-Five Approach
• Emphasis on:
  • Including Young Children with Disabilities
  • Building Relationships with Families
  • Collaboration and Teaming
Characteristics of Inclusion

• Guralnick (1999) distinguishes the major characteristics of social integration as being meaningful positive interactions with peers that occur within classroom activities, the formation of reciprocal relationships, and active acceptance of individual differences.

(Cerros, 2009)

Membership

Membership is defined as a child’s involvement in small group activities, classroom responsibilities, privileges and activities, friendship groups, school-wide activities, and community-based activities.

(Cerros, 2009)

Inclusion: Who is involved?

• Adults
• Children

Benefits of Inclusion for Peers

• A reduced fear of human differences accompanied by increased comfort and awareness (Peck et al., 1992)
• Growth in social cognition (Murray-Seegert, 1989)
• Improvement in self-concept of non-disabled students (Peck et al., 1992)
• Development of personal principles and ability to assume an advocacy role toward their peers and friends with disabilities, warm and caring friendships (Bogdan and Taylor, 1989).

Video: Rolling on the Floor

CONNECT: Module 1 Embedded Instruction
Group Friendship Activities

Group friendship activities represent one strategy used in inclusive early childhood settings to foster social interaction skills among children with disabilities.

(Cerros, 2009)

Rationale for Group Friendship

• Social validity studies of social skills interventions show that classroom membership and friendship formation are regarded by parents and teachers as important outcomes of inclusion practices (Peck, Billingsley, Gallucci, Staub, & White, 1994; Overton & Rausch, 2002).

(Cerros, 2009)

Social Skills Research Findings

• As many as 10% of all children show social skills impairment or delays that could lead to peer rejection. (Ashner, 1990)

• Early peer relationship difficulties predict later disturbances. Specifically, peer rejection, aggression, withdrawal from school, certain forms of criminality, and possible mental health problems. (Kupersmidt, Cole, & Dodge, 1990)

Inclusion: How can you support?

• Develop social stories
• Help teachers create buddy systems and support the proper implementation
• Practice identifying differences in one another
• Read books to children about inclusion
• Teach, facilitate and support friendship skill development
• Reinforce children for playing to children with special needs and peers

Children’s Books: Learning about our Differences

• Just Like You by Robert Kroupa
• And Here’s to You by David Elliott
• Big Al by Andrew Clements
• The Brand New Kid by Katie Couric Chester’s Way by Kevin Henkes
• Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes
• Horace and Morris But Mostly Dolores by James Howe
• I Accept You as You Are! by David Parker
• It’s Okay to Be Different by Todd Parr

LEAP: The Learning Experiences: An Alternative Program for Preschoolers and Parents

LEAP has enhanced evidence-based practices through utilizing strategies originally developed to effectively include children with autism in general education. Strategies include promoting engagement and social emotional skills while reducing challenging behaviors in young children.
LEAP Social Skills Research Findings

- Peers (without disabilities) as young as 36 months can be taught social and communicative initiation strategies
- Peers use of facilitative strategies results in higher interaction rates for children with autism
- LEAP intervention has produced positive effects in the first day of implementation
- Use of peer-mediated strategies with children with autism can lead to social participation rates within the typical range

Specific Behaviors that Often Have a Major Effect

- Greetings ("Hi", Wave, etc.)
- Smiling
- "Hot" Sayings ("Cool", "icky", "Fab")

Strategy:
- Sing "Hello" Songs
- Elect a "Greeter of the Day"

Social and Friendship Skills for Children with Special Needs

Social and Friendship Skills Are...
- commonly the deficits of some children with special needs
- the foundation upon which many other crucial skills are built for all children
- the best prediction of positive, long term outcomes for people with special needs
- often the first priority for families

What is Important to Teach?

- Play Organizing
- Sharing
- Assisting Others
- Giving Compliments
- Reciprocity
- Length of Interaction Occurrences

(Tremblay, Strain, Hendrickson & Shores, 1981)

Peer Mediated Intervention

1. First identify a child who is delayed in social development and at least one peer who is competent in the skill that is being taught to the focus child.
2. The peer who is competent in the skill will receive training and ongoing support for interaction with the focus child.
3. The adult will provide role playing and rehearsal strategies, along with coaching and reinforcement for the peer in order to sustain the peer’s social interactions and engagement with the focus child.

(Dunlap, G., Powell, D. (2009))
Setting the Stage for Friendship

- Inclusive setting
- Cooperative use toys
- Embed opportunities
- Social interaction goals and objectives

Preschool... Peer Mediated Strategies
LEAP’s Social Skills

1. Getting Your Friends Attention
2. Sharing - “Giving Toys”
3. Sharing - “Requesting Toys”
4. Play Organizer
   “You be the Mommy.”
5. Giving a Compliment
   “I like your painting.”

Reinforcement System

1. Timing is crucial
2. Tell children what they will be reinforced for using behavior specific praise
3. Use a fading procedure
4. Watch for natural occurrences of the target behavior.
5. Reinforce with specified reinforcer.
   - Super Friend
   - Super Star
   - Certificates

Posters and Provider’s Script

1. Describe Targeted Skill
2. Demonstrate it the “Right Way”
3. Demonstrate it the “Wrong Way”
4. Child Practices with Adult
5. Child Practice with Child
6. Set up Reinforcement System

Major Message

- Understanding the rationale and importance of effective inclusion practices for all children.
- Creating and maintaining a membership of the class.
- Target what and how you are going to teach the new social or friendship skill.
- Determine when and how you are going to reinforce the children when they use the new skill.
References

- Strain, P. S. (2002). Nurturing Social Skills in the Inclusive Classroom. Tualatin, OR: Teacher’s Toolbox

Additional Resources

- Disabilities List: http://depts.washington.edu/hscenter/children-special-needs
- Head Start Center for Inclusion: Teacher Tools http://depts.washington.edu/hscenter/teacher-tools#certificates

Contact Us

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