**Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in
Early Childhood Programs:**
A Review of the Federal Policy Statement

Resource Guide

Guiding Documents

➢ **Dear Colleague Letter** http://www.eclre.org/media/109408/preschool-lre-dcl-1-10-17.pdf - *Issued by the U.S. Department of Education in January 2017 to reaffirm their commitment to inclusive preschool education programs for children with disabilities and to reiterate the importance of Least Restrictive Environments (LRE).*

➢ **Full Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs** http://www.eclre.org/media/96025/joint-statement-full-text-1.pdf **-** *The full policy statement which provides 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.*

➢ **Executive Summary of the Policy Statement** http://www.eclre.org/media/96022/joint-statement-executive-summary.pdf - *The summary highlights key features from the policy statement.*

➢ **Division for Early Childhood Recommended Practices** http://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices - *The recommended practices provide guidance for early childhood educators, early interventionists and practitioners as they implement evidence-based practices.*

Section 1: Overview of Inclusion Resources

➢ **IDEA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** https://sites.ed.gov/idea/ - *The U.S. Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) website, which brings together IDEA information and resources from the Department and our grantees. Visit this site to learn more about the basics of IDEA and read the last guidance.*

➢ **ECTA Inclusion** http://ectacenter.org/topics/inclusion/default.asp - *The ECTA Center is a program of the FPG Child Development Institute of the University of North Carolina at Chapel*

Hill. The inclusion page is dedicated to resources for practitioners and administrators. Additional pages for family resources are also available: see Topics A-Z tab.

➤ **Understanding Least Restrictive Environments online training module:**
http://www.eclre.org/good-to-know/understanding-lre.aspx *- This module is designed for families and professionals to learn about Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and inclusion in preschool years. The module covers defining LRE and inclusion and why inclusive education is important for young children. Also discussed is how inclusive services look and how to successfully implement.*

➤ **Results Matter Inclusion Video Library**
https://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/rmvideoseries *- The Results Matter program improves outcomes for Colorado's youngest children by helping teachers, administrators, families, and other education stakeholders use authentic assessment data to inform classroom instruction as well as program and policy decision-making.*

➤ **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** https://www.ada.gov/ *- Information and technical assistance for the Americans with Disabilities Act.*

➤ **Section 504** https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html *- Clarifies the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 504) in the area of public elementary and secondary education.*

➤ **Head Start Act** https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/head-start-act *- Head Start is a program of the United States Department of Health and Human Services that provides comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families. Read more about the requirements and supports here.*

➤ **Child Care and Development Block Grant Act** https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/fact-sheet-occ *- The Office of Child Care (OCC) supports low-income working families by providing access to affordable, high-quality early care and afterschool programs. OCC administers the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and works with state, territory, and tribal governments to provide support for children and their families juggling work schedules and struggling to find child care programs that will fit their needs and that will prepare children to succeed in school.*

Section 2: Overcoming Challenges Resources

➤ **DEC Recommended Practices- Teaming: Assisting one another to grow and learn**
http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PG_TC_TeamMembersAssistOneAnother_prac_print_2017.pdf *- Early childhood intervention teams include practitioners from different disciplines working*

together to provide the most effective interventions to help a child and family. Team members have unique skills, abilities, knowledge, and experiences that when shared among one another make for a stronger whole. There are many opportunities for team members to assist each other to expand their knowledge and learn to use new practices. This practice guide includes different things team members can do to actively and meaningful support other members to grow and learn.

- **What's My Attitude?** http://www.livebinders.com/media/get/MTA1Mzg3MDQ - *This survey includes statements about attitudes and beliefs which affect successful inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood settings and other natural environments. Survey items are designed to raise awareness and help individuals identify personal attitudes and beliefs which can safeguard - or interfere with - the ability to include young children with disabilities in a regular early childhood program.*

- **Team Decisions for Preschool Special Education Services: Guiding Questions** http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/topics/inclusion/team-decisions-guiding-questions.pdf - *This tool is meant to assist programs and teams in understanding the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) requirements and determining appropriate placement. Check it out to see if it would help your team.*

- **DEC Recommended Practices** http://ectacenter.org/decrp/ - *The DEC Recommended Practices are available from Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center and is home to a number of tools that you may choose to explore as you expand your knowledge and skills with regards to the Recommended Practices.*

- **DEC Recommended Practice Guides** http://ectacenter.org/decrp/type-pgpractitioner.asp - *These Practice Guides for Practitioners are intended primarily for practitioners working in group settings and for sharing with other practitioners in community programs. Check out the many guides available in Assessment, Environment, Family, Instruction, Interaction, Teaming & Collaboration and Transition.*

- **Illinois Early Learning Project** http://illinoisearlylearning.org/resources/ - *The Illinois Early Learning Project Web site is a source of evidence-based, reliable information on early care and education for families, caregivers, and teachers of young children in Illinois.*

- **Partner Plan Act** http://partnerplanact.org/ecevideos/ - *The early childhood system is complex – comprising of different programs and funding streams. Sometimes, it may be hard to understand the early childhood system and how to best serve young children and families in Illinois. The videos are intended to help individuals that work with families and young children directly to understand how they can best make referrals and connect them to helpful services.*

Section 3: Building a Culture of Inclusion Resources

- **Early CHOICES** www.eclre.org - *The Early CHOICES Preschool LRE Initiative promotes increasing high quality inclusive education for each and every preschool aged child. This website has a library of resources for families, teachers, and administrators. Also the Events page has upcoming professional development related to inclusive practices.*

- **Illinois STAR NET** www.starnet.org - *Illinois STAR NET provides training and TA on all topics related to serving young children with disabilities which includes inclusive practices. The website has calendars for webinars and professional development opportunities throughout Illinois*

- **Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development and the Early Learning Council** https://www.illinois.gov/gov/OECD/EarlyLearningCouncil/Pages/default.aspx- *The Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development and the Early Learning Council work to strengthen coordinate and expand programs for children ages birth to 5. Visit this site to read the latest news from early childhood in Illinois.*

- **Illinois Each and Every Child Inclusion brochure** *http://www.eclre.org/media/100525/master-2016-inclusion-brochure-427-16print.pdf - The brochure outlines the basics of inclusion and provides information on the definition, key features and models implemented in Illinois. A great resource for all team members.*

- **Inclusive Classroom Profile** *http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/measuring-quality-inclusion-inclusive-classroom-profile - Are you interested in measuring the quality of inclusion at a classroom level? Here are two online modules that provide an introduction to the* Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP).

- **Determining LRE Placements for Preschool Children with Disabilities Reference Points and Discussion Prompts:** http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/topics/inclusion/determining-lre-placements.pdf - *The purpose of this document is to support states and local programs in understanding the Least Restrictive Environments (LRE) provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), making appropriate placements within the required continuum, and providing services and supports to preschool aged children with disabilities.*

- **ISBE LRE page** https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Preschool-Inclusion-LRE.aspx - *ISBE believes that all children have the right to experience settings, relationships and interactions that will support and further their development and learning. Guidance and resources are available here.*

- **The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA)** https://www.inccrra.org/ - *The INCCRRA is a statewide organization which – in partnership with its 16 local Child Care Resources and Referral (CCR&R) agencies – is a recognized*

leader, catalyst and resource for making high quality, affordable early care and education and school-age care options available for children and families in Illinois. The site links to the ExceleRate Illinois our quality rating and improvement system as well as Gateways our professional development site for all early childhood professionals.

➢ **Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning** http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/ - *The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children has developed extensive, user-friendly training materials, videos, and print resources which are available directly from this website to help early care, health and education providers implement this model. The resources found on the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning website you might choose to explore include the following: Decision Making Guidelines, Family tools, Practical Strategies, Training Modules and videos.*

➢ **ISBE Family Engagement** https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Family-Engagement.aspx - *This site is a tool for school districts and schools to use in developing and expanding school-family partnerships to support improved student learning and healthy development outcomes. This resource brings together research, promising practices, and a consolidation of key program requirements to provide districts, schools, and families with tools to assist with the planning, implementation, and evaluation of family engagement practices.*

➢ **Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) guidance from ISBE -** *MOUs is required for all Early Childhood Block grant programs, Preschool For All and Preschool For All Expansion in Illinois. If you'd like more information what is included in the Memorandum of Understanding with community partners visit the following sites as they pertain to your community:*
   ➢ https://www.isbe.net/Documents/pdg-partner-guidance.pdf
   ➢ https://www.isbe.net/Documents/pfa-imp-manual-0216.pdf
   ➢ https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Preschool-For-All.aspx

Closing Summary: Resources

➢ **Joint Position statement from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Council for Exceptional Children's Division for Early Childhood (DEC)** https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/DEC_NAEYC_EC_updatedKS.pdf - The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services policy statement on inclusion of young children with disabilities in high-quality inclusive early childhood programs.

➢ **Division of Early Childhood Special Interest Group (SIG) on Inclusion** https://www.decinclusion.org/ - *The Inclusive Programs and Practices SIG was created to increase the number and quality of early education, intervention, and community programs*

that include young children with disabilities, including those with more significant support needs.

➢ **Professional memberships to CEC/DEC and IDEC** http://www.dec-sped.org/ *- The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is a nonprofit organization advocating for individuals who work with or on behalf of children with special needs, birth through age eight, and their families. Join the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and you will automatically be registered as a member of the Illinois Division for Early Childhood (IDEC)*

➢ **OSEP** https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html - *The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is dedicated to improving results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities ages birth through 21 by providing leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts.*

➢ **Illinois DEC** http://illinois-dec.org/ *- IDEC supports classroom teachers, childcare providers, early interventionists, and higher education professionals/students who work with children with special needs and their families.*

➢ **Disability is Natural** https://www.disabilityisnatural.com/ - *Disability is Natural! Your source for New Ways of Thinking, Life-Changing Strategies, Revolutionary Common Sense, and Moving Beyond the Status Quo! Visit the site to explore articles and read new perspectives from parents and individuals with disabilities.*