

A LRE Toolkit for Families of Young Children

International Early Childhood Inclusion Institute
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The **Early CHOICES** inclusion initiative promotes increasing high quality inclusive early care and education for each and every child birth to age 5. Our goal is to increase the number of children with disabilities receiving specialized services in regular early care and education settings.

Illinois STAR NET envisions a future where early childhood professionals and families have the supports needed to provide all children with a high quality, equitable education in inclusive environments.

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Collaborations



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Family Story

Have you ever wondered when and how the idea of separating children with disabilities becomes the expected path for families?



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Early Childhood Inclusion

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Resources for Families in Illinois



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Advancing Preschool Inclusion

Advancing Preschool Inclusion in Community-Based Early Childhood Education Programs

Illinois State Board of Education

December 2022



Family Engagement Recommendations

7.1 Develop clear materials on inclusion for parents

7.2 Develop materials and training for early intervention service coordinators

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**From the 2023 Federal Policy Statement on Inclusion:
Raise Public Awareness**

Ongoing cross-sector public awareness plan to shift attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of inclusion and expectations for children with disabilities

- Partner with community leaders and families
- Communicate benefits of inclusion
- Highlight laws and research
- Highlight need for more inclusive programs

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Resources









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EC LRE Stakeholders Family Engagement Workgroup

- Met regularly
- Created a survey and asked families to review and rate items
- Translated survey into Spanish with Spanish resources
- Gathered data
- Compiled resources
- Created Toolkit
- Created videos with families
- Created Public Awareness activities

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Parent/Caregiver Feedback

Thank you for being a part of our parent/caregiver focus group on Inclusion within Early Childhood. Below you will see links to documents that we hope to use to educate and empower parents/caregivers of children with disabilities about the importance of inclusion in general education settings and how to advocate for inclusion.

Please complete this by June 21, 2024.

For the purposes of this document, inclusion is defined as a child **receives** their needs in their natural environment or general education classroom

For each question, we ask that you do the following:
 1. Click on the link
 2. Read the document
 3. Return the Google form and answer survey questions.
PLEASE CHOOSE AS MANY DESCRIPTIONS THAT APPLY TO THAT DOCUMENT.
 If you choose "other", please provide more information at the bottom of the form.

INCLUSION BROCHURE: Please read document and then choose your answers. *

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Inclusion-Brochure.pdf>

This document is family friendly and does not threaten me.

This document is useful and can support me during my child's education in the early years.

This document is overwhelming and contains too much information.


This document uses words that I do not understand.

This document is difficult to navigate.

Other: _____

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Family Resource Guide



bit.ly/LREfamilyguide

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT: FAMILY RESOURCE GUIDE

How to Use the Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to support families of children with disabilities navigate the early childhood education system to ensure their child is included in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Each resource is accompanied by links and guidance to help you understand and use the information effectively. We encourage you to begin your journey or seeking for specific support. This toolkit will empower you to champion inclusion for your child.

- Definitions of bolded words can be found towards the end of the document under "Glossary"
- All links embedded throughout the document can be found as QR codes at the end of the document

Evidence of Benefits of Inclusion

Inclusion in early childhood settings benefits not only children with disabilities but all children. This section highlights key research showing how meaningful inclusion leads to better social, cognitive, and developmental outcomes. Understanding these benefits can strengthen your advocacy for your child's participation in inclusive settings.

Inclusive Resources

This toolkit provides a curated overview of what inclusion is, it highlights the broad benefits of inclusive education and explains how it supports the development of all children. Families can use this to learn more about the foundations of inclusion and its positive results.

Interpreting Inclusion - On-Demand Learning Modules make Easy CHOICES

This on-demand series includes six lessons, each focused on a different aspect of inclusion. Topics range from the legal foundations of inclusion to the benefits for all children. These modules provide families with essential knowledge to navigate the system and advocate for their child's inclusion.

Inclusive Schools: Strategies & Connect

This toolkit provides five key strategies for working with your school district to advocate for inclusive educational opportunities for your child. Families can also utilize this checklist to prepare for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting or use during the meeting to help guide the conversation on placement and support options.

Federal Guidance for Inclusion


Did you know that the federal government has guidance on how to include children with disabilities in early childhood programs? This guidance, under the [Executive Order on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Education](#), is a powerful tool for families advocating for their child's right to an inclusive early childhood education. This section equips families with knowledge about their child's rights under federal law, empowering them to ensure their child's needs are met in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Summary of Federal Guidance

This on-demand toolkit outlines the federal government's policy on including children with disabilities in early childhood programs. It offers detailed recommendations and resources to help families ensure their child receives an equitable, elementary school and is supported by the latest research. Families can use this document to better understand their child's rights and advocate for their child.

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Guía de Recursos Familiares



bit.ly/LREguia25

ENTORNO MENOS RESTRICTIVO: GUÍA DE RECURSOS FAMILIARES

Cómo Usar esta Guía de Herramientas

Esta guía de herramientas le da recursos para ayudar a los niños con discapacidades a entender y utilizar el sistema de educación de la primera infancia, asegurando que sus hijos sean incluidos en el sistema menos restrictivo (LRE). Cada recurso está acompañado de enlaces y guías para que sea más fácil comprender y pueda utilizarse de manera efectiva. Ya sea que usted esté recién comenzando a buscar un apoyo específico, esta guía de herramientas le proporcionará los recursos necesarios para apoyar por la inclusión de su hijo(a).

- Los **definiciones de las palabras destacadas en negrita** se pueden encontrar al final del documento, en la sección llamada "Glosario".
- Todos los enlaces que aparecen aquí están disponibles como código QR al final del documento.

Evidencia de los Beneficios de la Inclusión

La inclusión en entornos de la primera infancia beneficia no solo a los niños con discapacidades, sino a todos los niños. Esta sección ofrece investigaciones que demuestran cómo la inclusión significa conexiones y mejores resultados sociales, cognitivos y del lenguaje. Comprender estos beneficios puede fortalecer su capacidad para abogar por la participación de su hijo(a) en entornos inclusivos.

FOLLETO SOBRE INCLUSIÓN

Esta guía ofrece una descripción concisa de lo que es la inclusión. Destaca los simples beneficios de la educación inclusiva y explica cómo apoyar el desarrollo de todos los niños. Los folletos pueden utilizarse para conocer más sobre los fundamentos de la inclusión y sus impactos positivos.

ENTENDIENDO LA INCLUSIÓN - MÓDULOS DE APRENDIZAJE BAJO DEMANDA DE EARLY CHOICES

Esta guía de módulos bajo demanda incluye seis lecciones, cada una enfocada en un aspecto diferente de la inclusión. Los temas abarcan desde los fundamentos básicos de la inclusión hasta los beneficios para todos los niños. Estos módulos abordan a las familias los conocimientos esenciales para comprender el sistema y abogar por la inclusión de sus hijos.

ESTRATEGIAS Y LISTA DE VERIFICACION PARA UNA EDUCACION INCLUSIVA

Esta guía presenta cinco estrategias clave para trabajar con su distrito escolar y abogar por oportunidades educativas inclusivas para su hijo(a). Las familias también pueden utilizar www.ils.egat.org para prepararse para una reunión del Programa de Educación Individual (IEP) o cuando surten la solicitud para que se considere sobre opciones de colocación y apoyo.

Guía Federal para la Inclusión

¿Sabía que el gobierno federal ofrece una guía sobre cómo incluir a los niños con discapacidades en los programas de la primera infancia? Esta guía, llamada **Manual de Política Federal sobre la Inclusión de Niños con Discapacidades en Entornos de la Primera Infancia**, es una herramienta poderosa para las familias con apoyo por el derecho de sus hijos a una educación inclusiva en la primera infancia. Esta sección brinda a las familias conocimientos sobre los derechos de sus hijos según la ley federal, estrategias prácticas para garantizar que se satisfagan las necesidades de sus hijos en el sistema menos restrictivo (LRE).

RESUMEN DE LA GUÍA FEDERAL

Esta sección de una página presenta los puntos del gobierno federal sobre la inclusión de niños con discapacidades en programas de la primera infancia. Proporciona recursos y recomendaciones actualizadas para ayudar a las familias a garantizar que sus hijos tengan una transición sin problemas a la escuela primaria, y cuenta con el resultado de las investigaciones más recientes. Los folletos pueden ser una herramienta para comprender mejor los derechos de sus hijos y abogar por ellos.

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家庭资源指南 - 最少条件限制的学习环境



bit.ly/家庭资源指南

家庭资源指南 - 最少条件限制的学习环境

如何使用此工具包

这个工具包旨在为寻找孩子家庭资源的家长提供帮助。帮助您理解了解早期教育体系。这有助于您在最少限制环境 (LRE) 中寻求支持。这里提供各种资源和指南，帮助您为孩子。无论您刚刚开始了解孩子，还是已经有了一些经验，这个工具包都能为您提供实用的信息，帮助您为孩子争取最好的早期教育。

- **加粗的术语** 都有定义和解释的“术语表”里。
- 文档中的所有链接，都可以在最后找到对应的二维码。

全纳教育的益处

在早教环境中，**全纳教育** 不仅能让每个孩子受益，对所有孩子都有好处。这部分介绍了一些研究成果，当您帮助孩子全纳教育时孩子的社交、认知和成长都会受到影响。了解这些好处，会让您更有信心去为孩子争取融合学习的机会。

全纳教育手册

这本手册介绍**全纳教育** 的概念，强调其广泛的益处，您可以通过这本手册快速了解全纳教育的基础，以及它如何帮助每个孩子。

理解全纳教育 - Early CHOICES 连续学习模块

这本手册包含六个学习模块，每个模块介绍**全纳教育** 的不同方面，比如法律指南、对孩子的益处等。通过这些学习模块，您可以更好地理解体系，帮助您为孩子争取**全纳教育** 的支持。

全纳教育学校指南与清单

这本指南提供了五个关键策略，帮助您如何和学校合作，为孩子争取全纳教育的学习机会。您可以通过上列出的清单 (IP) 会议 (**全纳教育计划**)，或者在会议之前参考，以便更好地与学校交流您的方案。

依托于全纳教育的指导方针


你知道吗？联邦政府已经针对如何让每个孩子参与早教项目制定了相关政策。这项政策叫做 **让每个孩子都能获得高质量早期教育法案**，是家长争取孩子全纳教育的重要工具。在这里，您可以了解孩子全纳教育时有哪些权利，以及如何帮助孩子争取**最少限制环境 (LRE)** 中接受教育。

联邦指导方针摘要

这本指南总结了联邦政府关于全纳教育的政策，并提供最新的建议和资源，帮助您的孩子顺利过渡到小学阶段。阅读最新的指导方针，通过这份文件，您可以更好地理解孩子的权利，并为他们争取最佳的学习环境。

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Let's Explore



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Inclusion Brochure



bit.ly/inclusionbrochure



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Understanding Inclusion On-Demand Series




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Understanding Inclusion On-Demand Series Flyer for Families



bit.ly/understanding-inclusion

ON-DEMAND MODULES

Understanding Inclusion

The Understanding Inclusion series covers a range of topics from defining inclusion to understanding the benefits to advocating for inclusion. The series was developed for families with family input. We hope this series supports you on your journey of inclusion and provides you with resources that you can share and build upon.

- 1 Inclusion: A Journey**
This module provides an overview of what inclusion is and why it is important, as well as the defining features of inclusion.
- 2 Least Restrictive Environment**
This module discusses the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), how it relates to inclusion, and what the law says about the LRE for children with a disability.
- 3 Commitment to Inclusive Practices (Law & Policy)**
This module explains the strong preference in the law for inclusion, the federal and state policies, and recommended practices that support inclusion.
- 4 Benefits of Inclusive Practices**
This module explains how inclusion adds value to the preschool setting for all children.
- 5 Inclusive Settings**
This module provides an overview of what an inclusive setting looks like and how we can use an inclusive setting to support inclusion for all children.
- 6 Implementing & Advocating for Inclusion**
This module investigates how inclusive practices can be implemented in an early childhood setting and when to advocate for your child's inclusive education.

MORE INFO Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/understanding-inclusion

Looking for more early childhood inclusion resources? Visit www.ecde.org or follow us @earlychoosers

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Inclusive Placement Strategies



bit.ly/placementstrategies



Achieving Inclusion: 5 Strategies to Ensure an Inclusive Placement for Your Child

Julie Causton, Ph.D.
Katie MacLennan, Ph.D.
Kristie Pretti-Frontzack, Ph.D.
Christi Kasa, Ph.D.



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Checklist of Sample Supports, Aids, & Services



bit.ly/supportchecklist

CHECKLIST OF SAMPLE SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORTS, AIDS, AND SERVICES

Directions: When considering the need for personalized supports, aids, or services for a student, use this checklist to help identify which supports will be the least intrusive, only as special as necessary, and the most natural to the context of the classroom.

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Preferential seating
- Planned seating
- Bus Classroom Lunchroom Auditorium Other
- Alter physical room arrangement (Specify)
- Use study carrels or quiet areas
- Reduce/minimize distractions
- Visual - Spatial - Auditory - Movement
- Teach positive rules for use of space

PACING OF INSTRUCTION

- Extended time requirements
- Vary activity often
- Allow breaks
- Omit assignments requiring copying in timed situations
- Send additional copy of the test home for summer preview
- Provide home set of materials for preview or review

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The Law, the Policies and Guidance from both State and Federal Level

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
January 9, 2017

Dear Colleague:
We are writing to reaffirm the position of the U.S. Department of Education (ED or Department) that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized and age-appropriate instruction and services to meet high expectations. Over the last few years, the Department has been working to expand early learning opportunities for all young children in the States receiving federal public preschool program funding. The Department's focus on early childhood programs, such as the Preschool Development Grants, is a key part of our commitment to ensure that all young children have the opportunity to learn and thrive.

PDG 8-5 Strategic Plan Outline

POLICY STATEMENT ON INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Inclusion of Young Children with Disabilities in Early Care and Education Settings

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Overview of Policy Statement on Inclusion

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

This document provides an overview of the policy statement, released jointly by the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. This policy statement builds upon the earlier 2015 policy statement with renewed commitment and urgency as children with disabilities continue to face significant barriers accessing and participating in inclusive early childhood programs.

Why are the departments releasing a new policy statement?
Children with disabilities continue to face significant barriers to accessing and participating in inclusive early childhood programs. Too many children with disabilities receive special education services in settings separate from their peers without disabilities.

How does this advance the departments' position on inclusion?

- Reiterates the expectation for inclusion in high-quality early childhood programs
- Sets expectation that inclusion continues as children transition into elementary school
- Highlights the latest science that supports inclusion and reinforces the legal foundation for inclusion
- Reiterates and updates recommendations to States and local programs and providers for increasing inclusive early learning opportunities
- Updates resources and examples of inclusion

LEARN MORE Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/inclusion-statement-2023

Looking for more early childhood inclusion resources? Visit www.ed.gov or follow us @earlychildhood

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Rights & Protections Overview

Early Choices

RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS FOR PRESCHOOLERS WITH DISABILITIES AND DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS AND THEIR FAMILIES

DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)?
ARE YOU IN THE PROCESS OF AN EVALUATION OR A REFERRAL FOR AN EVALUATION FOR IEP ELIGIBILITY?
DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE AN INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN (IFSP), AND ARE THEY TURNING THREE SOON?

If you answered YES to either question, read below to learn about how your child can receive the special education and related services and supports that they are legally entitled to while also still participating in the early childhood program that best fits your family's needs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR FAMILIES

- IEP services should come to your child - not the other way around. Traditionally, schools have served children with IEPs who are enrolled in community-based settings by having them leave their regular classroom midday to receive services, but this can be disruptive to children and families.
- Federal law says that your child can be enrolled in child care, Head Start, other publicly-funded early childhood settings (preschool for all) and private early childhood settings and still receive their preschool special education and related services in that setting - depending on what makes the most sense for your family and your child's individual needs.
- If your child is transitioning out of Early Intervention services, you do not need to wait until your child's first IEP meeting to start planning for their preschool enrollment. You can start your search for a preschool program through the [Illinois Care for Kids portal](#) and/or by contacting your local [Child Care Resources & Referral Agency \(CCRRA\)](#).
- Your child is not required to attend a particular early childhood program - including the school district preschool program, if one exists in your community. If your child has a slot at a Head Start or other child care program, they can enroll there.
- There are many reasons why a family may want their child to be enrolled in a particular child care program. These are all important reasons to discuss in your child's IEP meeting.
 - Full-day, full-year services
 - Proximity to work or home
 - Another sibling is enrolled in the same program
- If your child is enrolled in Head Start, your program is required to support you throughout the IEP process, with your permission. The district must include them in your IEP meeting if you choose.
- The school district must also include Early Intervention providers or other professionals that are supporting your family in your IEP meetings if you choose to include them.

bit.ly/rightsprotections

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Bianca's Story
Advocating with
The LRE: Family Resource Guide

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Launch Events & Public Awareness


- Facebook Live Launch
- Conference Presentations
- Social Media Plan



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What now?

- What inspires you?
- What are unique tools or resources in your state or community?
- Who might you enroll in this work?



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Thank you!
follow us for all
things inclusion.
[@earlychoicesorg](https://twitter.com/earlychoicesorg)

www.eclre.org

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