Inclusivity in Child Care for Children with Disabilities

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Note to the reader

This publication is intended for general knowledge on inclusivity of children with disabilities in child care settings. We hope that after reading this document, you have developed an understanding for inclusivity of children with disabilities in child care and the importance of it for children's growth as learners and human beings in a child care setting and beyond. Advocating for the youth and children to learn and grow together allows for a fruitful and successful future for them and everyone else.
Contact Us

For more information on background of this topic, laws, and further assistance, please visit the links on the Reference Page or contact us at Support for Families of Children with Disabilities https://www.supportforfamilies.org/

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Understanding Inclusion in Child Care

Inclusion in childcare is a practice that anyone can start and grow to strengthen over time. This practice is the action of fostering and promoting belonging in childcare for all children. This includes involving children with disabilities in settings where there are children with and/or without disabilities. Separation in childcares may decrease the chances for the child and children to grow as learners. Everyone involved benefits from it—families, providers, the child, and their classmates. At Support for Families, we believe that every child deserves an inclusive environment that allows them to grow to their full potential, with added services and instructions when needed.

“It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity, there is beauty, and there is strength.”
- Maya Angelou
Protection

Laws and Acts

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – section 504
A civil rights law that protects the individual from being discriminated against on the basis of their disability. Not to be confused with the ADA, this law only applies to public settings that receive federal funding assistance from the state or federal government, such as public schools. Private institutions are not required to follow this law unless a federally funded programs is active.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
Enacted in 1990, the ADA is a civil rights law that protects people with qualified disabilities from being segregated and discriminated on in public accommodations, including child care. A child cannot be excluded by a child care program or provider unless due to a disability impeding reason.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
The IDEA Act is for anyone with a disability to have access to Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) tailored to their educational learning needs and to create an Individual Educational Program (IEP) for them.
Appropriate education is needed to be tailored for one with a disability as it helps to enhance their academic and results.

**CA anti-bullying laws and regulations**

Almost every state has anti-bullying laws, California included. Anti-bullying laws ensure that every child has equal access to education and fair treatment. Bullying is considered as harassment, discrimination, and non-inclusive behavior towards someone. Bullying can be virtually, or in-person. Anyone that does not honor the Acts in place to protect one from discrimination and non-inclusive environments can be considered bullying. Some schools may have anti-bullying policies in the parent handbook or school policy manual.

**Seth's Law**

Placed to strengthen the already existing anti-bullying law in California, Seth's law requires public schools to update their anti-bullying policies and programs yearly, as well as to post it in all school offices. Seth's law focuses on the protection of sexual orientation, gender identity/ expression, race, disability, and religion bullying. Additionally, school personnel are expected to intervene in any bullying act that they witness.
What We Know

Studies have demonstrated that placing children with disabilities in an inclusive classroom setting can help them progress in subjects at higher rates (International Journal of Special Education, 2010). Statistics show that various studies done on inclusion of children with disabilities in classrooms is beneficial and helps them in excelling academically.

students without disabilities excelled in math and reading
58.8% of children without disabilities placed in inclusive classrooms progressed in math and literature, compared to 39.0% of their peers without disabilities in traditional classrooms (Cole, C. M., Waldron, N., & Majd, M., 2004).

students with disabilities progressed more in math
41.7% of students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom setting and 34% of students with disabilities in a traditional classroom setting performed either comparable or great than their peers without disabilities in math (Cole, C. M., Waldron, N., & Majd, M., 2004).

students with disabilities made more progress in speech development
There was a 40% difference in language score for the Descriptive Pragmatics Profile test between children with disabilities who were placed in classrooms with highly-skilled peers and children with disabilities who were placed in a classroom with low-skilled peers in preschool (Ohio State University, 2014).
# Fostering Inclusivity in Child Care

This tool has been created to assist in the practice of diversity and inclusivity in child care settings and beyond. This inclusivity table is meant for one to examine where they are in practicing their disability inclusion, and assess where they can grow and learn more.

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<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Educators</th>
<th>Both</th>
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<td>Arrange or perform an assessment or screening to discover the areas where the child may need more support</td>
<td>Create a parent handbook and/or policy manual that includes protective acts and policies against bullying and discrimination to post on facilities</td>
<td>Have recurring conversations on the child's specific needs to better support their learning in and out of the classroom</td>
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<td>Look into local organizations and programs that work with the community of people with disabilities</td>
<td>Post local and national resources for parents to access for support, assistance, and tools for their child</td>
<td>Develop a plan for the child to have a smooth transition towards the following school year</td>
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<td>Build deeper relationships with disabled community members</td>
<td>Modify policy to be flexible with disability related appointments while still achieving success in the classroom</td>
<td>Set expectations in and out of the classroom for student success</td>
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<td>Advocate for funding in childcare settings</td>
<td>Reassess the meaning of progress, achievement, intelligence, success, and effort in an anti-ableist way</td>
<td>Collaborate and work together efficiently</td>
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Fostering Inclusivity in Child Care
Actions for the Future

Transitional Kindergarten (TK)– SF
TK is for children between the ages of 4 and 5 to develop the child's already existing social, developmental, and academic skills further. TK is important as it is helpful to prepare the child for school success. TK bridges preschool and kindergarten; one of the most influential academic years of a child.

As of now, it is a choice for parents to enroll their child in TK, and TK is slowly expanding. By 2025–2026, all school districts in CA will have expanded their classrooms for 4 year olds to be eligible for TK.

Universal Child Care and Early Learning Act (H.R.2886)
With Universal Childcare, families with children ages six weeks and up would be able to participate in this program that provides federally funded accessible child care regardless of family income, disability status, citizenship status, or employment of a family member.

As of now, the Universal Childcare and early Learning Act bill has been introduced to the House Committee on Education and Labor in 2021. It is in the process of becoming a law.
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Center for Parent Information and Resources (2012, April). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 https://www.parentcenterhub.org/section504/#:~:text=Section%20504%20of%20the%20Rehabilitation%20Act%20of%201973,%20as%20amended,secondary%20schools%2C%20among%20other%20entities.

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San Francisco Unified School District (2021) TK Eligibility Expansion
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Stopbullying (2021, August 1). California Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies.
https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/laws/california

https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/disability/index.html

https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm