

Inclusive Care for Infants and Toddlers

Why?

Inclusive childcare settings benefit children with and without disabilities.

Inclusion positively impacts:

- Infants and toddlers with delays or disabilities and their families
- Infants and toddlers without delays or disabilities and their families
- Caregivers and teachers
- The childcare program itself
- The wider community

Inclusive environments help all children to:

- Learn and grow together during activities, routines, and experiences
- Have a sense of belonging while building friendships
- Strengthen social-emotional development, active discovery, and learning
- Engage in new language and literacy experiences with each other
- Observe and appreciate that we are all unique and have different strengths, interests, and abilities



What?

Early childhood inclusion is defined as,

“the values, policies, and practices that support every infant and young child and his or her family to participate in a variety of activities as members of families, communities, and society.”¹

How?

Children learn best from familiar people in familiar places, during familiar routines. Inclusion works best when early childhood educators and families share children’s interests, strengths, and challenges throughout their daily routines. Providing inclusive care for infants and toddlers includes making changes to activities, the environment, and daily routines. Here are a few examples of small changes that can make a big impact.

¹ NAEYC. (2009, April). Early childhood inclusion. https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/ps_inclusion_dec_naeyc_ec.pdf

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Activities

- Attach hook-and-loop fasteners (Velcro), large knobs, or handles to blocks or puzzles to make it easier for a child with visual or physical-motor needs to use the materials
- Add fabric or tabs to the edges of cardboard book pages to make it easier to turn pages

Environment

- Provide a quiet space for play away from high traffic areas of the room for children who have a sensory processing sensitivity
- Provide extra opportunities to move and climb for children who prefer to engage physically with their environment
- Add an extra light or lamp to a play area for children with low vision
- Arrange the space so infants and toddlers can move around and safely interact with their surroundings

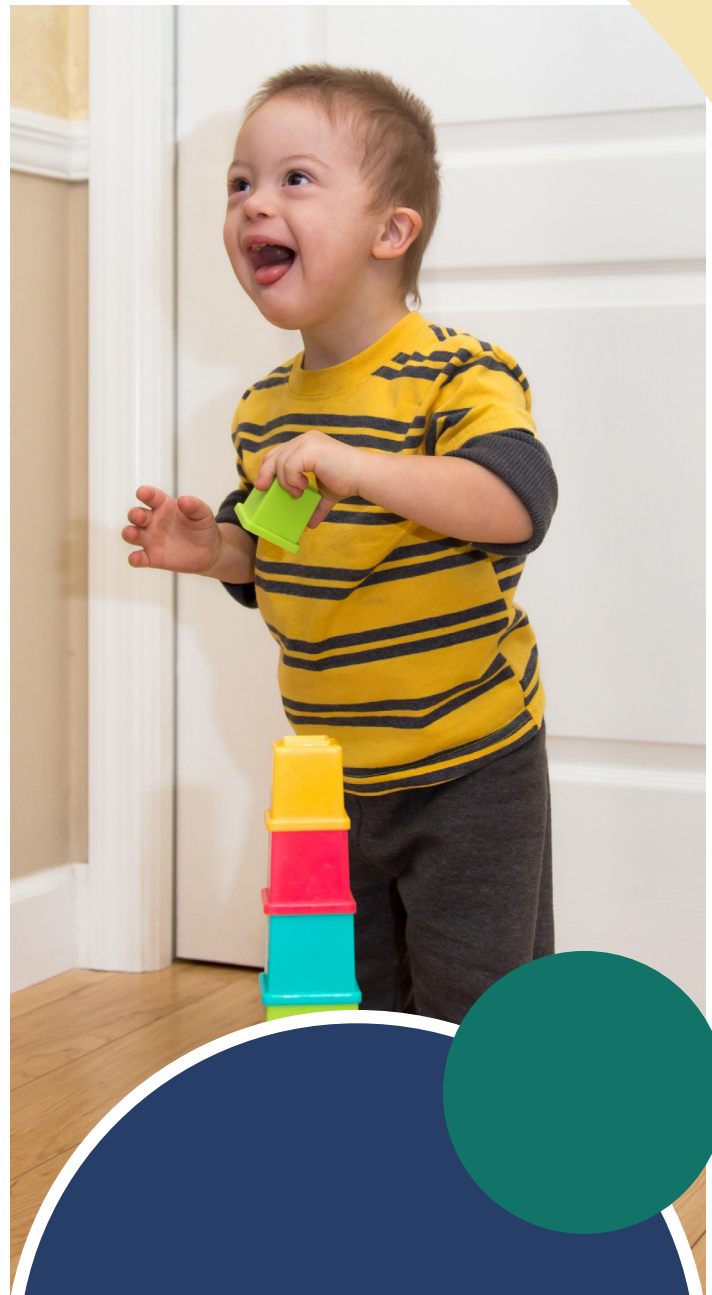
Daily Routines

- Talk with families often to learn about feeding, diapering, and sleeping at home to see what adaptations could be made in your setting
- Embed early intervention strategies for all children throughout routines such as encouraging communication during meal times

Intentional Strategies to Implement Inclusive Care

Along with the adaptations above, the following strategies can be used to promote inclusion, participation, and engagement, while fostering a positive learning experience for all children.

- Talk with families about their hopes and dreams for their child
- Create consistent routines for daily activities
- Use prompting to support or encourage a child during a task
- Plan for meaningful and intentional interactions with children
- Take advantage of embedded learning opportunities in daily routines and activities
- Scaffold learning by providing children with the supports they need to accomplish a task or learn a skill, without doing it for them



For more information:

To learn more about inclusive care for infants and toddlers, visit the [Inclusion Landing Page](#).