Tips for Creating an Inclusive ECE Environment

"Each and every child, birth through age 8, has the right to equitable learning opportunities—in centers, family child care homes, or schools—that fully support their optimal development and learning across all domains and content areas." NAEYC DAP Statement[1]

Below are tips, practices, and tools that support an inclusive and equitable learning environment for ALL children.

Inclusion Benefits All of Us!

- **Children with disabilities or delays benefit from: social interactions, peer models, access to both adapted and age-appropriate materials, and more!**
- **Neurotypical children benefit from: exposure to diversity, increased acceptance, understanding of all individuals, and more!**
- **Teachers benefit from: expanding their skills, connecting meaningfully with all children, and more!**

Scan the QR Code for sources and additional information!

Universal design - Teachers should consider if all children in their classroom can access all materials and/or activities in a meaningful way.

Antecedent strategies - Teachers can implement strategies to prevent concerning behaviors from occurring and set up children for success. Example: A verbal cue and timer can be used to help prepare children for an upcoming transition.

Visual supports - Teachers can use visuals such as picture schedules, picture labels, and common signs to remind young children of classroom expectations and routines.

Calming corner - As space allows, teachers can create an area in the classroom with developmentally appropriate calming and mindfulness tools, such as a bean bag chair, yoga ball, or sensory bottles.

Clear and simple instructions - Instead of telling children what NOT to do, teachers can practice giving clear, simple instructions about what children are expected TO do.

Routines and structure - Teachers can implement consistent daily routines and structure to help young children learn what to expect each day.

Wait time & wait activities - Teachers can do their best to limit wait time, but in a group setting, waiting occurs! When you can't avoid waiting, be prepared with a waiting activity, such as fidget toys, interactive songs, I spy with my little eye, etc.

Incorporate movement breaks - Teachers can limit sit-down time by providing movement breaks throughout the day, such as having children stretch or do a few jumping jacks.

Utilize music - Some young children respond better to musical cues rather than verbal directions. Teachers can use music or songs to signal common routines such as cleaning up or washing hands. Music can also be incorporated with dance and movement activities, such as the "freeze dance" or "the floor is lava."

1. National Association for the Education of Young Children. (April 2020). Position Developmentally Appropriate Practice [Position statement]. lhttps://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resou rces/position-statements/dap-statement_0.pdf