



INCLUDING ALL KIDS: Am I, Should I, Can I?

I KNOW IT'S INCLUSION WHEN...

- ◆ **Everybody play, learns and grows...together**
- ◆ **Each child is included in every activity, routine and learning opportunity**
- ◆ **Teachers and caregivers plan activities appropriate for both the developmental abilities and interests level of each of the children**
- ◆ **Parents value diversity and the powerful way children learn from each other**
- ◆ **Each child has opportunities to enjoy typical every-day-little-kid experiences**

(Adapted from *Child Care Plus +*, Volume 5, No. 1)

The above picture is the logo from the *Circle of Inclusion* Home Page (<http://www.circleofinclusion.org/>)

WHY SHOULD WE INCLUDE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES?

It is the law... What the Americans with Disabilities Act says:

- **We can't use eligibility standards, which screen out children with disabilities**
- **We are required to identify and remove barriers to a child's participation**
- **That costly structural changes are NOT required--think of affordable alternatives**

We cannot:

- **Exclude a child because we lack specialized skills**
- **Exclude a child because of intolerance**
- **Refuse to accept a child because of insurance rate increases**
- **Charge extra for a child with a disability**



- ➔ **Because children deserve respect for who they are**
- ➔ **Because it makes early childhood professionals better at what we do**
- ➔ **Because peers learn that differences are celebrated, not made fun of**
- ➔ **Because children with disabilities will be members of our communities for the rest of their lives...the best time to start is right at the beginning!**

BENEFITS OF INCLUSION



For the child with a disability:

- ⇒better developmental outcomes for the child with a disability
- ⇒social competence and communication skills improve in inclusive settings
- ⇒provided with excellent peer models to learn new skills
- ⇒an opportunity for social interactions among all kinds of kids
- ⇒a knowledge that they are part of the community
- ⇒skills are learned in a natural environment-better generalization

For all children:

- ⇒modifications for the included child frequently result in better programming for all
- ⇒reinforces the best practice notion of building activities based on the individual interests, and strengths and needs of each child
- ⇒develop an acceptance of differences
- ⇒diversity of friendships
- ⇒ability to problem solve creatively



For providers:

- ⇒providers have an opportunity to develop leadership skills
- ⇒providers learn to be a crucial member of a team
- ⇒providers learn where to gather the wealth of information and support that is available
- ⇒providers develop a solid understanding of early childhood development

For parents:

- ⇒awareness of disabilities
- ⇒recognition that all families are part of the community
- ⇒chance to teach their children about acceptance and celebration of differences
- ⇒creates an avenue for support and information

For the community:

- ⇒provides a model for building on the strengths of all community members
- ⇒lets communities best allocate early childhood resources by limiting the need segregated programs
- ⇒creates the foundation for included school aged programming



For all:

- ⇒everyone has an opportunity to learn something new
- ⇒everyone gets to teach something
- ⇒everyone has a chance to problem solve
- ⇒everyone gets to be an observer of the power of inclusion

Remember...

Think of parents as a primary resource for support in including their child



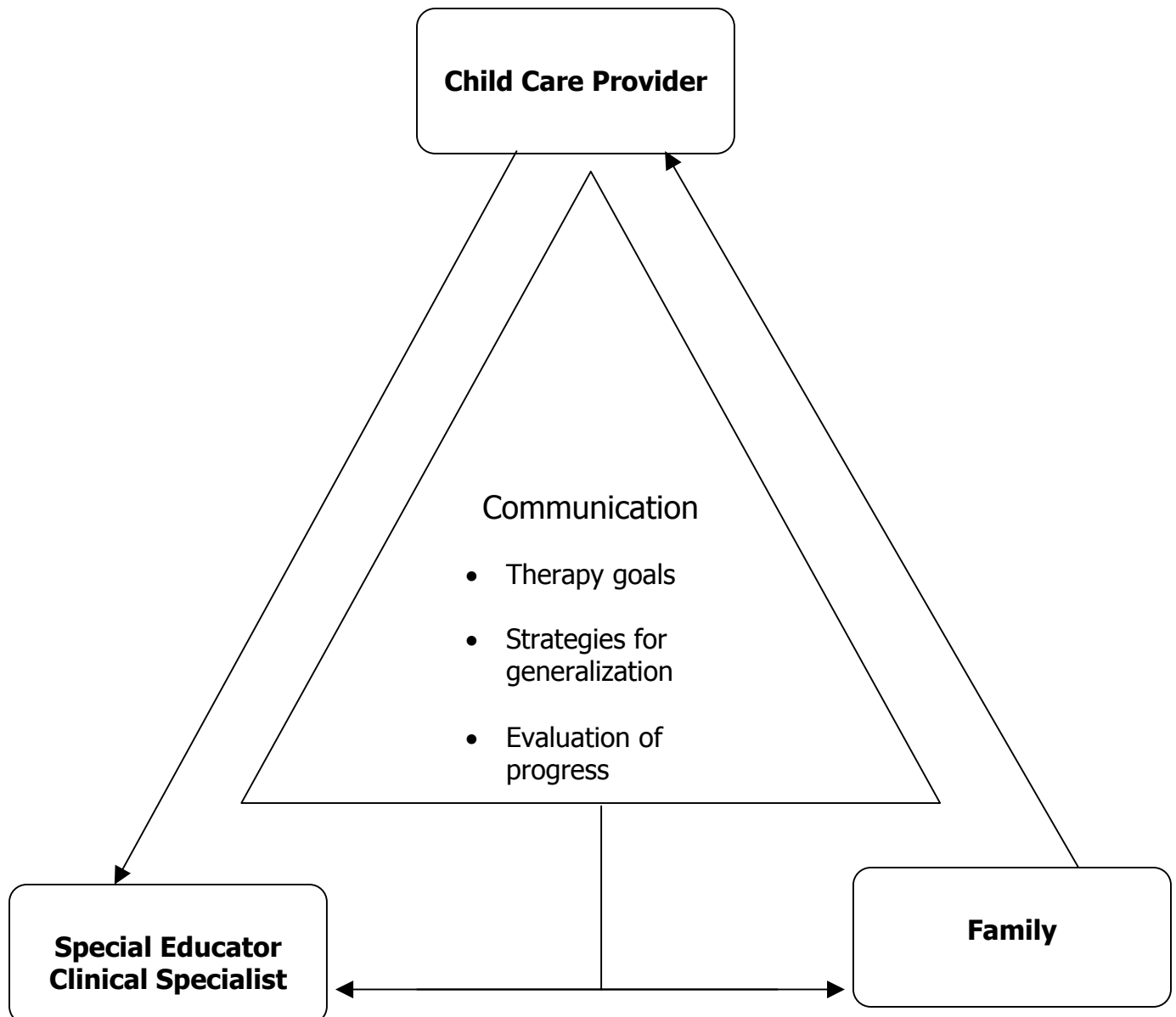
Use:

- ❖ joint problem solving
- ❖ joint evaluation of progress

INCLUDING CHILDREN IN YOUR CHILD CARE SETTING: WHAT WORKS



- ◎Using parents as primary partners
- ◎Knowing your resources
- ◎Expecting a professional relationship with providers of specialized services
- ◎Attending Team Meetings
- ◎Thinking of the child as a teacher
- ◎Recognizing the similarities among children while respecting and planning for the differences
- ◎Celebrating the powerful role you have as a central communicator

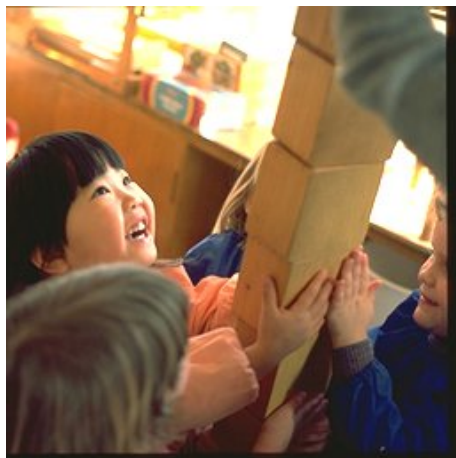


Thinking of Inclusion Where I am... Where I am Going?

When I think about including a child with a disability I:

Including children with disabilities is so important that I will:

Thank you for your dedication to young children



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