



"Inclusion hasn't only been helpful for our daughter, it's been equally as beneficial to her classmates who are growing up experiencing unity in diversity. Her classmates have always risen to the occasion ever since she was in kindergarten and I imagine this will be helpful to them for their entire lives". — Jill

Benefits When Young Children are Included:

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

- Develop more friendships and are more socially competent
- Enjoy more language and academic opportunities
- Experience increased independence



CHILDREN WITHOUT DISABILITIES

- Acknowledge and appreciate diversity
- Show greater empathy
- Recognize that there are many different ways to engage in activities



FAMILIES

- Build connections and relationships
- Develop a sense of belonging and empowerment
- Experience opportunities for sharing

FRIENDS and NEIGHBORS

- Learn how to respond, engage and support
- Embrace differences and uniquenesses
- Support higher expectations for all children

ALL young children have the right to participate in settings, relationships and interactions that support and further their development and learning.

Have
ACCESS

- welcomed regardless of ability
- guaranteed a collaborative, open, and supportive climate



Fully
PARTICIPATE

- challenged to reach their potential
- engaged in developmentally appropriate activities

Receive
SUPPORT

- provided accommodations and modifications
- supported by adults who understand their needs

Family Strategies

Take Your Time:

- Consider options and alternatives.
- Don't rush or feel pressured to make decisions.

Ask Probing Questions:

- Ask why?
- What would you do if this was your child?
- Can you help me understand ...?

Take Opportunities To Share And Educate:

- Use narrations such as, "He likes bugs just like you do. His glasses help him to see them better."
- Use compare and contrast such as, "He eats through this tube and you eat with your mouth."
- Describe using specific examples: "He is really excited. I can tell because he is flapping his hands."

"Inclusion is the backbone of everything I do with and for my son (who has Down syndrome). The human existence is about sharing our lives and experiences: laughing with colleagues, family meals, holidays, joy, grief - everything. That starts at day one and continues into early intervention, preschool, grade school and so on. It seems so strange that inclusion isn't a given; that we still have to fight for it." — Erin