

# *Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities*



## *Expanding Opportunities for Providing Services*

A GUIDE FOR MAKING SYSTEM AND PROGRAM LEVEL DECISIONS

2008

Florida Department of Education  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Technical Assistance and Training System Project

This publication is one of many publications available through the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education, designed to assist school districts, state agencies that support educational programs, and parents in the provision of special programs. For additional information on this publication, or for a list of available publications, contact the Clearinghouse Information Center, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education, Room 628, Turlington Building, Tallahassee, Florida, 32399-0400.

Telephone: (850) 245-0477

Fax: (850) 245-0987

SunCom: 205-0477

E-mail: [cicbiscs@FLDOE.org](mailto:cicbiscs@FLDOE.org)

Web site: [www.fldoe.org/ese](http://www.fldoe.org/ese)

**Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities  
Expanding Opportunities for Providing Services**

**A Guide for Making System and Program Level Decisions**

**2008**

Development of the *Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities Expanding Opportunities for Providing Services: A Guide for Making System and Program Level Decisions*, was supported by the Inclusion Workgroup of the Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS) project. The Technical Assistance and Training System project is funded by the State of Florida, Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS), through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B.

Copyright  
State of Florida  
Department of State  
2008

Authorization for reproduction is hereby granted to the State System of Public Education consistent with Section 1006.39(2), Florida Statutes. No authorization is granted for distribution or reproduction outside the State System of public Education without prior approval in writing.

**Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities  
Expanding Opportunities for Providing Services**

**A Guide for Making System and Program Level Decisions**

**2008**

**Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services  
Florida Department of Education**

**Technical Assistance and Training System Project**

# Table of Contents

Preface.....	v
Introduction.....	1
What Does the Research Show? .....	3
Educational Outcomes for Children.....	3
Social Relationships and Patterns of Interaction .....	3
Family Perspectives and Community Inclusion .....	4
System Level Considerations.....	5
Program Level Considerations: Decision-Making Overview.....	7
Appendix A – School District Gathering: Community Baseline Information for Preschool-Age Children.....	11
Appendix B – System Level Guiding Questions .....	13
Appendix C – Program Level Guiding Questions .....	15
Appendix D – Potential Partners for Inclusion.....	17
Appendix E – Program Models for Inclusion.....	19
Appendix F – Early Childhood Program Partner Questionnaire .....	21
Appendix G – Strategic Plan of Action .....	23
Appendix H – Training and Technical Assistance Resources .....	25
Appendix I – References.....	29



## Preface

The purpose of this system guide is to assist school districts in making decisions about inclusive early childhood placements for prekindergarten children with disabilities. This guide addresses system and program decisions that need to be made and is intended for use by district-level administrators and Individual Educational Plan (IEP) teams, including families. It outlines the critical steps to be considered when determining the most appropriate service provision for preschool children with disabilities.

## Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions to this effort:

Susan Benner	TATS	Project Coordinator
Dana Bennett	TATS-FGCU	Regional Facilitator
Anne Cahn	Office of Early Learning, AWI	Early Learning Program Manager
Susan Donovan	TATS	Project Coordinator
Bonnie Duncan	Seminole County School District	Teacher
Beverly Esposito	Florida Children's Forum	VP, Professional Development
Kim Galant	TATS-FSU	Regional Facilitator
Nancy Haynes	Citrus County School District	Pre-K ESE Program Specialist
Paula Kendig	TATS-UWF	Regional Facilitator
Cheryl Liles	Florida Inclusion Network	Director
Lou Ann Long	Central Directory	Director
Amanda Moore	Office of Early Learning, AWI	CCR&R Inclusion Coordinator
Mona Schuster	Pinellas County School Board	Child Development Specialist
Sarah Sprinkle	Orlando YMCA	Vice President, Child Development
Patricia Stickford	Volusia County School District	Pre-K ESE Program Specialist



## Introduction

Since 1975, federal law has required that children with disabilities have access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The newly reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) continues to require school districts (also known as local education agencies, or LEAs) to provide FAPE and LRE to children with disabilities. The IDEA requires each state to develop a State Performance Plan (SPP) that includes measurable and rigorous targets to improve special education services. States use the targets in the SPP to analyze the performance of each LEA in the state and report annually to the public on performance. The targets are aligned with indicators within the plan. Indicator 6 of the SPP addresses educational settings for preschool children identified as having disabilities. Districts have collected data during 2004 through 2005 and reported the percentage of time children spend with peers who are not disabled. Goals have been set to increase this percentage over time. This document can be used as a resource for districts to achieve those goals.

Florida Statute (F.S.) offers language parallel to that in IDEA. This language states: “Segregation of exceptional students shall occur only if the nature or severity of the exceptionality is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.” (Section 1003.57(6), F.S.) The emphasis on participation in the general education curriculum is intended to ensure that accommodations or modifications are made to enable children with disabilities to interact with their typically developing peers. This initiative can mean a broader continuum of services for young children with special needs as they are offered the opportunity to participate in the general education curricula and, whenever possible, in a regular classroom.

Requirements for LRE and the accompanying decision-making process to accomplish this also apply when considering service provisions for prekindergarten children with disabilities. In the K through 12 public school system, classrooms for regular education students may be used as a service provision option for LRE. However, not all school districts operate preschool programs for typically developing young children nor is this a requirement imposed by IDEA. This situation poses a challenge to finding a practical solution to ensuring LRE for this population. For this reason, agencies that serve preschool children with disabilities should take into consideration other early childhood settings as options to increase opportunities for interaction with typically developing peers. Other early childhood settings may include Head Start, Early Head Start, Title I preschool classes, the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, school readiness, and private preschools. Consideration of these options may broaden the scope of service delivery to include other early childhood programs in the school district and the community.

When the individual educational plan (IEP) team determines that service provision with typically developing peers is needed to provide a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, efforts should be made to locate appropriate early childhood settings where the child’s IEP can be implemented with supplementary aids and services, when necessary.

The purpose of this guide is to facilitate school district personnel and families working as a team in the decision-making process to identify potential early childhood settings within their district and community in which children with disabilities can receive services with their typically developing peers. The guide consists of systemic and program considerations (settings, data gathering, partners, models of inclusion, training and technical assistance, and plan of action) that impact the LRE initiative. Supporting documents include a questionnaire for early childhood program partners and a listing of potential preschool partners and models. This guide can also assist districts with planning for systemic evaluation and collaboration with community-based programs.

## **What Does the Research Show?**

The following review of the literature looks at the benefits of inclusive settings with regard to educational outcomes, building social relationships, and family perspectives.

### **Educational Outcomes for Children**

Since at least 1980, research on the outcomes of preschool inclusion has been conducted with the results of this research indicating that children with disabilities enrolled in inclusive settings make at least as much progress on standardized measures of cognitive, language, motor, and social development as children in non-inclusive preschool special education classrooms (Odom et.al., 2004). In addition, across the range of disabilities there is evidence of positive outcomes for children with disabilities.

Roper and Dunst (2003) suggest that a variety of opportunities, as well as the frequency of the opportunities provided to the child with a disability, will promote and sustain language and social competence. Children with disabilities made significant gains in both the area of language development and classification/communication skills when instruction was delivered in an inclusive setting (Klein, Geiss, Kushner, & Hill, 2003).

Children with and without disabilities learn from each other in inclusive settings (Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development, 2000). Positive outcomes accrue for typically developing children who are enrolled in inclusive settings. These outcomes are related to developing a greater understanding of disabilities and an increased sensitivity to individual differences (Odom et al., 2004). There are two factors that appear to influence the performance on standardized developmental measures of children with and without disabilities in inclusive settings. Those two factors are the individual who provides the services to the child with disabilities (Childress, 2004) and the manner in which the curriculum is delivered to children with and without disabilities (Fuchs et.al., 2002; Warger, 1999).

In addition, inclusive preschool programs receive comparable or higher ratings than regular special education (La Paro, Sexton, & Snyder, 1998) when evaluated on environmental ratings scales (e.g., Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale). Similarly, inclusive family child care homes have displayed higher quality ratings in the areas of language and reasoning and social development than family child care homes that do not have children with disabilities (Gamel-McCormick, 2004).

### **Social Relationships and Patterns of Interaction**

Children with disabilities, especially those with moderate and severe disabilities, spend significantly less time in interactions with their peers than do typically developing children (Grubbs & Niemeyer, 1999). This is true even in inclusive settings, but a review of the research (Odom et al., 2004) indicates that the level of interaction and play is more appropriate for children with disabilities when they are in settings with typically developing peers. It also does not appear that inclusive settings have a negative effect on typically developing children. A study by Guralnick and Hammond (1999) found that children with and without mild disabilities exhibited similar sequential social patterns. In addition, the social interactions of typically

developing children were not disrupted by participation in social groups in inclusive settings with children with disabilities.

A primary goal of inclusive preschool programming is to promote the social integration of children with disabilities into peer groups with their socially competent, typically developing peers (Guralnick, 2001; Odom, 2000). These findings have led to the design of classroom procedures to support social integration, promote interactions, and increase social competence among all children.

There has been little systematic research that examines the appropriate ratio of children with disabilities to typically developing children in inclusive classrooms. Odom et.al. (1999) studied 16 inclusive preschool programs and found wide variation in the ratio of children with and without disabilities. However, the most recent data reporting instructions for states developed by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) establishes the criteria that at least 50 percent of the children served in a program must be typically developing in order for that setting to be described as an “early childhood program.” This criteria has important implications for school districts and states in terms of the design of the service delivery models.

### **Family Perspectives and Community Inclusion**

Families of children with and without disabilities enrolled in inclusive settings generally have positive attitudes toward inclusion. Generally, families express positive views of the benefits of inclusion, including promoting acceptance of their children in community settings (Guralnick, 2002). Families often report as a benefit the increased social contact between children with and without disabilities and an increased sensitivity and acceptance of differences by the typically developing children.

When families express concerns, they focus more on teacher qualifications, adequacy of instruction, class size, access to necessary therapies, and social acceptance for their children (Odom et al., 2004). In an article on the cost of inclusive education, Odom, Parrish, and Hikido (2001) state that communities can conserve their early childhood resources and limit the need for segregated, specialized programs if children with disabilities are educated in inclusive settings at the preschool level and continue in regular education placements during their elementary school years.

## System Level Considerations

In order to effectively broaden service delivery options for young children, a systematic approach to change should be created before implementation occurs. As districts examine options for providing services for children in inclusive settings, several things need to occur before making individual placement decisions. Before creating a plan to provide inclusive services, the current status of service delivery for preschool children with disabilities in the district should be examined. Steps to systematic implementation include:

1. Establish baseline data for preschool-age children, ages three through five, throughout the district. (Please see Appendix A – School District Data Gathering.)
2. Determine how many preschool-age children, ages three through five, who are eligible for and receiving ESE services are in the district. Where are they currently located? What types and range of disabilities do they have?
3. Collect information from potential early childhood community and school-based partners to determine quality indicators for the programs and suitability for inclusion opportunities. The Early Learning Coalition operating in the district may be a good source for assistance in identifying early childhood community partners. (Please see Appendix B – System Level Guiding Questions, Appendix D – Potential Partners, Appendix E – Program Models for Inclusion, and Appendix F – Early Childhood Program Partner Questionnaire.) If the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Programs (VPK) are one option being considered, a Florida DOE Technical Assistance Paper (TAP) may be helpful for answering questions about placement of young children with disabilities in VPK classrooms. The TAP *Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Programs (VPK) and Programs for Children with Disabilities* can be viewed at <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-4306/tap07-03att.pdf>.
4. At the program level, evaluate the information collected from the Early Childhood Program Partner Questionnaire to identify:
  - Potential early childhood partners that are able to collaborate at the present time
  - Potential early childhood partners unable to collaborate at this time but who are willing to address the issue in the future
  - Early childhood programs that are unable to collaborate at this time and will most likely not address the issue in the future
5. Programs may use training and technical assistance resources as needed. (Please see Appendix H.)
6. Develop a Strategic Plan of Action to create formal collaborative agreements with those programs identified as Early Childhood Partners (e.g., memorandum of understanding, interagency agreement). (Please see Appendix G – Strategic Plan of Action.)  
Contracts with community-based early education and care programs are an option available to districts to expand opportunities for inclusion. The Florida DOE has developed a TAP that provides districts with information on using contracts. For information on this TAP, please

see Appendix E – Program Models for Inclusion - Full or part-time ESE program provided by school district through contract.

Consider classroom ratios of children with disabilities and typically developing children as well as the total amount of time a child with disabilities is with nondisabled peers. For 2006-2007, the Florida Department of Education (DOE) Automated Student Information System on IDEA Educational Environments defines Early Childhood Program placements as those in which “children with disabilities [are] attending an early childhood program that includes 50 percent or more nondisabled children.” This includes attendance for any portion of the week. Examples of early childhood programs that would qualify include Head Start, private preschools, VPK, and group child care. Attendance at these programs need not be funded by IDEA, Part B funds. For more information, access the database manual at the following Web site:  
[http://www.fldoe.org/eias/dataweb/database\\_0708/st128\\_1.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/eias/dataweb/database_0708/st128_1.pdf)

## Program Level Considerations: Decision-Making Overview

The following prompts are recommended to help guide IEP teams through the critical steps to be considered when determining the most appropriate service provision for preschool children with disabilities.

- First, through the IEP process, determine the child's educational needs and relationship to service provision in the least restrictive environment. It is considered best practice to include in this meeting the community-based provider that is currently serving the child.

When developing the IEP:

- Document the child's present level of academic and functional performance, which includes how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum or how the disability affects the child's participation in activities
  - Identify measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum and meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability
  - Identify the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided (Excerpt in part from Title 34 § 300.320 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) <http://idea.ed.gov/>)
- Next, from the list generated during the system level consideration activity that identified potential early childhood partners, review the settings that are appropriate and available in your district in which the skills can be acquired. Begin with the child's current environment as the first setting consideration.
  - Consider the types of support that may be necessary in order for the child to achieve his/her goals and objectives. Consider the family's needs and priorities also. Use the Guiding Questions to assist with this process. (Please see Appendix C - Program Level Guiding Questions – Child, Family, Curricular, and Support Considerations.)
  - Review each potential setting and determine the type(s) of support the child will need in order to be successful in that environment.
  - Once each setting has been discussed, determine the least restrictive environment in which the district is able to provide, with reasonable effort, the needed supports for the child.
  - Finally, clearly articulate the service provision decision on the IEP document. Summarize the discussion regarding options considered, options rejected, and options recommended.



## **Appendices**



**Appendix A**  
**School District Data Gathering:**  
**Community Baseline Information for Preschool-Age Children**

**Establishing a Baseline** - Where are typically developing children ages 3 to 5 years during the weekday?

1. What is the estimated number of children ages 3 to 5 years in the county? \_\_\_\_\_  
*Where this information may be located: County Health Department live births per year; Early Learning Coalition*
2. What is the estimated number of children who have disabilities, ages 3 to 5 years, in the district? \_\_\_\_\_  
*Where this information may be located: Student Database; Children's Registry and Information System (CHRIS)*
3. How many licensed childcare facilities are located in the district? \_\_\_\_\_  
*Where this information may be located: Department of Children and Families, Child Care Licensing, or local licensing entity, as applicable*
4. How many public school-based early childhood classrooms are located in the district? \_\_\_\_\_  
*Where this information may be located: School district data*
5. How many public school-based early childhood ESE classrooms are located in the district?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Where this information may be located: School district data*
6. How many prekindergarten children with disabilities are currently receiving ESE services in community-based settings? \_\_\_\_\_  
*Where this information may be located: School district data*
7. How many 4 year olds are being served by the VPK program in public school programs?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
In community-based preschools? \_\_\_\_\_  
In licensed family child care homes? \_\_\_\_\_  
*Where this information may be located: School district data and Early Learning Coalition data*

The document was adapted from the Kansas Inservice Training System (KITS), the technical assistance system for the state of Kansas that serves the early intervention networks and early childhood special education program staff.



## **Appendix B**

### **System Level Guiding Questions**

These questions were developed to assist districts (administrative/system level) and IEP teams in the process of making service provision decisions.

#### **Setting/System Level Considerations**

- Is the setting/space physically accessible?
- Are program staff open to collaboration with specialists (special education teacher, therapists, etc.)?
- Has staff been trained to work with young children with special needs? If not, are they open to being trained?
- When was the program most recently reviewed by the Department of Children and Families or the local licensing entity? What was indicated in that report?
- Have the setting or aspects of the program been evaluated? If so, how has this evaluation occurred (e.g., administration of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R), assessment of the early literacy environment or outdoor learning environment) Is it considered a high quality setting?
- Has the program received accreditation? By whom?
- Does the Early Learning Coalition use a “quality rating system”? If so, has this program been evaluated through that process?

#### **Curricular Considerations**

- Are district-wide research-based curricula being used?
- If so, do they offer recommendations for adaptations for children with disabilities?
- Are the VPK Early Learning Standards used to guide the program?
- If so, how are they used?

#### **Support Considerations**

- Does the program implement regular communication between home and school?
- Is the program responsive to the cultural, ethnic, racial, language, and socio-economic characteristics of families?
- Is staff given opportunities to remain current on best practices?
- Do administrators support team-planning and participation in IEP planning and review meetings to support the inclusion of children with disabilities?
- Do administrators support the provision of support services, such as speech, vision, occupational, and physical therapies, in the classroom to facilitate skill use in functional routines and activities?
- Do administrators support and review on-going professional development plans?

(Taken from the State of Florida, Teaching Resources for Florida Exceptional Student Education 2000 Web site, Accommodations and Modifications Project (<http://www.cpt.fsu.edu/ese/>) on April 20, 2006.)



## **Appendix C**

### **Program Level Guiding Questions**

These questions were developed to assist districts at the program level and IEP teams in the process of making service provision decisions.

#### **Child Considerations**

- Where is the child now?
- Has the child experienced success in current/previous environments?
- Has the child experienced challenges in current/previous environments?
- Is there documentation of the current language, motor, cognitive, and social skill levels of the child?
- Does the child have any specific behavior difficulties?
- Are there other children this age in the current environment?
- What behavior/skills are considered developmentally appropriate for this child?

#### **Family Considerations**

- What are the family's priorities and needs? Is there a list of these priorities and needs?
- What are the family's beliefs and values about inclusion and placement for their child?
- Do policies support the family's active participation in all decisions regarding their child?

#### **Curricular Considerations**

- Can the child be as successful in the same activities as his/her peers?
- Can the child participate in the activities if adaptations to the curriculum are made?

#### **Support Considerations**

- What activities can the child participate in without personal assistance?
- What activities in the daily schedule can the child participate in with personal assistance?
- What types of personal assistance would be required?

(Taken from the State of Florida, Teaching Resources for Florida Exceptional Student Education 2000 Web site, Accommodations and Modifications Project (<http://www.cpt.fsu.edu/ese/>) on April 20, 2006.)



## **Appendix D**

### **Potential Partners for Inclusion**

#### **Community Child Care Centers/Preschools**

A community child care center is a facility that provides full- or part-time child care with planned educational activities in a group setting. A licensed child care center must meet the minimum health, safety, and staffing requirements. A religious exempt child care facility is accredited by an organization or a member of an organization that publishes and requires compliance with its standards for health, safety, and sanitation. Additional indicators of quality include national accreditation or Florida's "Gold Seal Quality Care" designation. For more information, access the following Web site: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/>

#### **Head Start**

Head Start is a federally funded comprehensive child development program that serves children from birth to age 5, pregnant women, and their families. The program consists of four components: Head Start (or Preschool Head Start), Migrant Head Start, American Indian Head Start, and Early Head Start. These are child-focused programs and have the overall goal of increasing school readiness of young children in low-income families. In Florida, 42 grantees or sub-grantees serve the 67 counties throughout the state in preschool Head Start. Two Migrant Head Start programs serve 24 counties, and one American Indian Head Start serves the population in one county. Head Start has a small number of income waivers for children with disabilities whose parents' income exceeds the Head Start criteria. For more information, access the following Web site: <http://www.floridaheadstart.org/>

#### **Title I Public School-based Programs**

Title I funds may be used either for targeted or school-wide programs that support prekindergarten services. Title I preschool programs provide young children with the early learning experiences that will enable them to meet academic standards throughout elementary and secondary school. A preschool that is part of a Title I school operating a school-wide program is not required to identify particular children as eligible to participate in the Title I preschool. Rather, all children in the attendance area of that school are eligible for preschool services. To be eligible to attend a Title I preschool program in a targeted assistance school, preschool age children must be most at risk of failing to meet the state's academic achievement standards. [Source: *Serving Preschool Children Under Title I, Non-Regulatory Guidance* published by the U.S. Department of Education]

#### **Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program**

VPK is a program for all four-year-old children in Florida. The program allows a parent to enroll his or her eligible child (four years of age, on or before September 1, and residing in Florida) in a program provided by school districts and community-based providers at no cost to the family. The program is voluntary for children and private providers. Public school districts may offer the school year program if certain criteria are met, but must offer the summer VPK program. For more information, access the following Web site <http://www.floridajobs.org/VPK/FAQs.html#Providers>

**High School/Teen Parent Child Care Programs/For Fee Child Care**

Some child care centers reside in public high schools. Programs at these locations may provide child care services to staff or students and may also be used as vocational training sites. Because these programs operate fiscally within the public school system, they may be available as inclusive placements for some children with disabilities.

## **Appendix E**

### **Program Models for Inclusion**

- 1. Pre-K ESE program collaborates with existing school district early childhood programs using program delivery models**
  - a. Itinerant/Consultative Services in a VPK, Head Start, Title I classroom
    - i. VPK generates VPK funds for 540 hours or other program generates funds as appropriate; school district generates FEFP funds for the amount of time for the specially designed instruction and related services
    - ii. IEP reflects *only* the specially designed instruction and related services for the child with disabilities and indicates VPK/Head Start/etc. as the location of services
  - b. Half-day ESE program and Half-day 540-hour VPK
    - i. School district generates FEFP funds for amount of time the child is enrolled in the ESE program for specially designed instruction and related services; VPK generates VPK funds for 540 hours
    - ii. IEP reflects *only* the specially designed instruction and related services and indicates ESE prekindergarten class as the location of services for the half-day program
  - c. Full-time ESE program blended with VPK, Head Start, Title I, or School Readiness program
    - i. School district generates FEFP funds for the amount of time the IEP indicates the child receives specially designed instruction and related services
    - ii. IEP reflects full-time ESE program and indicates a blended/general education prekindergarten classroom as the location of services
- 2. Full- or part-time ESE program provided by school district through contract with community child care centers/preschools or VPK program (for 4 year olds)**
  - a. School district enters into a contractual agreement in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0361, Florida Administrative Code (FAC.). To access the Florida DOE Technical Assistance Paper on using contracts, use the following link:  
<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/y2006-13.pdf>
  - b. School district generates FEFP funds for the amount of time the IEP indicates the child receives specially designed instruction and related services; contractual agreement stipulates amount of funding that will be provided to the community-based program
  - c. IEP reflects the full- or part-time ESE program and services and indicates the contracted classroom as the location of services
- 3. Assignment of public school staff to community-based child care center/preschool program through a written agreement**
  - a. A program in a community preschool in which an early childhood teacher and a district early childhood special education teacher share teaching responsibilities in an inclusive classroom

- b. School district develops a written agreement in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0311, FAC., and assigns staff to work in community settings
  - c. School generates FEFP funds for the amount of time for the specially designed instruction and related services for the ESE students in accordance with the IEP; funds are used to support staff assigned to community-based preschool programs and to provide needed materials and support services
  - d. IEP reflects the ESE program and services
4. **School district “fee-for-service” inclusive early childhood program**
- a. A school-based inclusive program that serves typically developing peers in a reverse mainstreaming model on a fee-for-service basis
  - b. School district generates FEFP funds for the amount of time for the specially designed instruction and related services for ESE students
  - c. IEP reflects the ESE program and services

## Appendix F

### Early Childhood Program Partner Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been added for reference only. It might be used at the systems level to identify programs in the community with which to partner. At the program level, it could be used with a family of a child identified as having a disability to assist in identifying an appropriate child care environment. This general program questionnaire can be used with the following checklist: Choosing Quality Child Care for Children with Special Needs, which can be downloaded in English and Spanish from Child Care Aware at: <http://www.childcareaware.org/en/resources/pubs.php>.

**Program Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Contact Person:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Enrollment Information

Program's current enrollment: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of vacancies: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of children on waiting list: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of classrooms for:   0-12 months: \_\_\_\_\_   3 year olds: \_\_\_\_\_  
  12-24 months: \_\_\_\_\_   4 year olds: \_\_\_\_\_  
  24-36 months: \_\_\_\_\_   5 year olds: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of children in program receiving special education services from a district program:  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### General Program Information

Days of operation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Length of day: \_\_\_\_\_  
Accessible facilities: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If no, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
VPK provider? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff to Child Ratio:   0-12 months: \_\_\_\_\_   3 year olds: \_\_\_\_\_  
  12-24 months: \_\_\_\_\_   4 year olds: \_\_\_\_\_  
  24-36 months: \_\_\_\_\_   5 year olds: \_\_\_\_\_  
Specify which curricula are used: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Is there a schedule of daily routines? \_\_\_\_\_  
What types of assessments (if any) are used? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
How are families involved in the program? \_\_\_\_\_  
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation:  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Other accreditation: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Please list: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational background of staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual percentage of staff turnover: \_\_\_\_\_

**Collaboration Information** (Adapted from the Kansas Inservice Training System (KITS))  
Please respond to the following questions:

Is there a willingness to collaborate with the district? (If not, give reasons.)

Do staff have experience working with the local education agency?

Is there adequate staff coverage to allow for participation in meetings, planning time, etc.?

Does the program welcome itinerant teachers and therapists into the classrooms?

Are there policies that prohibit collaboration?

What does the program feel is needed for it to be a collaborative partner? (Inservice, screenings, materials, etc.)

Other:

## Appendix G Strategic Plan of Action

(Adapted from National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC))

**District:**

**The Goal:** Increase the number of preschool students served in settings with typically developing peers.

**Primary gaps/barriers to overcome:**

### Proposed Action

**Suggested Outcomes:**

- Increase the percentage of preschool students served in settings with typically developing peers.
- Expand placement options for preschool students with disabilities.
- Increase partnerships with other service providers for preschool students with disabilities.
- Increase provision of support services such as occupational, physical, vision, and speech/language therapies, etc., in the least restrictive environment.

Tasks	Lead & who will help	Timeline	How will we know we accomplished the task?
<b>Resources/TA Needed</b>			



## **Appendix H**

### **Training and Technical Assistance Resources for the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Community-Based Settings**

#### **State Resources**

##### **Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES) Publications Index**

The Publications Index lists Florida Department of Education publications related to Exceptional Student Education, Early Intervention and School Readiness, Intervention and Prevention, Student Support Services, Dropout Prevention, Juvenile Justice Education, and more. For more information, access the following Web site: <http://www.fldoe.org/esc/pub-home.asp>

##### **Central Directory**

The Florida Directory of Early Childhood Services (Central Directory) has provided services to thousands of families and providers seeking advocacy, education, training, resource and referral, and information on disability services available in their communities. The Web site includes materials to download, event listings, a resource database, programs listing, and a forum for feedback. For more information, access the Web site: <http://www.centraldirectory.org/about.cfm>

##### **Florida Inclusion Network**

The Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) provides learning opportunities, consultation, information, and support to educators, families, and community members resulting in the inclusion of all students. The network offers learning opportunities, information, materials, and financial support. For more information, access the following Web site: <http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/>

##### **Early Learning Coalition Warm Line – Inclusion Specialists**

The Warm Line is a toll-free number providing assistance and consultation specifically to child care personnel regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities and special health care needs. It is available to any early care and education provider requesting information relating to the disability and special health care needs/issues of children. Each early learning coalition provides Warm Line services for child care providers on topics including curriculum, strategies, child development, health, environmental adaptations, laws, and regulations (i.e., the Americans with Disabilities Act). For more information, access the following Web site: <http://www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning/Warmlineinclusion.html>

#### **National Resources**

##### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

This federal law contains requirements for ensuring equal opportunity to persons with disabilities in securing employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. ADA also requires the establishment of TDD/telephone relay services for persons with disabilities. The regulations and technical assistance documents for businesses and state and local governments may be downloaded from this Web site: <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>

### **The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (CECP)**

The CECP supports and promotes the development and adjustment of children with or at risk of developing serious emotional disturbance. The center is dedicated to a policy of collaboration at federal, state, and local levels that contributes to and facilitates the production, exchange, and use of knowledge about effective practices. To access the Web site go to <http://www.air.org/cecp>

### **The Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior**

The Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs to raise awareness and implementation of positive, evidence-based practices for young children who have, or are at risk for, problem behavior. Two products developed by the Center include the *Positive Beginning Training Modules* (six on-line modules for in-service and pre-service training in the Positive Behavior Support process) and *Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behaviors* (a kit developed to assist teachers in problem-solving a plan to support young children who are having challenging behaviors). To access the Web site go to: <http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/>

### **The Center for Inclusive Child Care (CICC)**

The Center for Inclusive Child Care is a comprehensive resource network for promoting and supporting inclusive early childhood and school-age programs and providers. This network provides leadership, administrative support, training, and consultation to early care and education providers, school-age care providers, parents, and the professionals who support providers and parents of children with special needs. For more information, access the following Web site: <http://www.inclusivechildcare.org/>

### **The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning**

A national center focused on strengthening the capacity of child care and Head Start programs to improve the social and emotional outcomes of young children. Evidence-based, user-friendly information is available to help early childhood educators meet the needs of children with challenging behaviors and mental health challenges. To access the Web site go to: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/>

### **Child Care Plus**

The mission of the Center on Inclusion in Early Childhood at the University of Montana is to share knowledge, foster skills, and encourage attitudes that promote inclusion as a core component of excellence in early childhood. The center focuses on expanded child care options for children with disabilities and their families, and provides training and technical assistance for child care providers and other early childhood professionals (including specialists in early intervention and special education). Two of the products of the Center are a curriculum on inclusion and the Keeping Everyone in Early Childhood Programs (KEEP) program, which helps maintain inclusive placements for children with challenging behaviors. For more information, access the following Web site: <http://www.ccplus.org/>

### **Circle of Inclusion**

The Circle of Inclusion Web site is for early childhood service providers and families of young children and includes various resources related to inclusion for young children (to

age 8). Materials are available in Spanish, Korean, and Japanese in addition to English. This resource includes articles, adaptation and modification ideas, children's literature relating to disabilities, ideas for inclusive classrooms, and links. For more information, access the following Web site: <http://www.circleofinclusion.org/>

### **Disability is Natural**

The Disability is Natural Web site was developed by Kathie Snow, the parent of a child with disabilities. The mission of this Web site is to encourage new ways of thinking about disability and to help create a society in which all people are valued and included. For more information, access the following Web site: <http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/index.htm>

### **Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion**

This is a national research project funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, to study the inclusion of preschool children with disabilities in typical preschool, child care, and community settings. For more information, access the following Web site: <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecri/>

### **Everyday Children's Learning Opportunities Institute**

Information on the Web site includes a broad range of topics on young children's everyday learning opportunities and natural learning environments. Web site content is based on more than 15 years of research and practice on the characteristics and consequences of everyday learning of children from birth to 6 years of age. For more information, access the Web site: <http://everydaylearning.info/index.php>

### **Exemplary Models of Services and Best Practices**

The following Web site includes descriptions of several exemplary models of services and best practices from the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion at the University of Vermont: <http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/>

### **IDEA Website**

The IDEA law and its associated regulations are available in several different formats, including enhanced versions that take full advantage of the linking capabilities of the Web. New information on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) is posted on the following Web site: <http://idea.ed.gov/>

### **Inclusive Education**

The Inclusive Education Web site is designed for general and special education teachers, parents, and school staff to help provide some answers about how inclusive education can be accomplished. Resources for making accommodations are included as well as links to other Web sites and resource lists for learning more about inclusive education. For more information, access the Web site: <http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/>

### **Kids Together, Inc.**

Kids Together, Inc., a nonprofit organization co-founded by parents and organized by volunteers, is designed to promote inclusive communities where all people belong. This

site contains a variety of helpful information and resources for inclusion, including sections for individuals with disabilities, parents, siblings, educators, businesses, and communities. For more information, access the Web site: <http://www.kidstogether.org/>

### **National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC)**

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) is a project funded federally by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, and based at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. NECTAC supports the national implementation of the early childhood provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). NECTAC strengthens systems at all levels to ensure that children (birth through 5 years old) with disabilities and their families receive and benefit from high quality, culturally appropriate and family centered supports and services. For more information, access the Web site: <http://www.nectac.org/>

### **The National Individualizing Preschool Inclusion Project (NIPIP)**

NIPIP supports programs looking for options in providing inclusive settings. Funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, this grant has developed “Individualizing Inclusion” to support young children with disabilities in inclusive settings. The approach contains three components: functional intervention planning, integrated therapy, and embedded intervention. Programs can use various tools and checklists provided by NIPIP as they implement these three components. For more information, access the Web site: <http://www.individualizinginclusion.us/>

### **Preschool LRE-Part B/619 Community of Practice**

This resource is sponsored by the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) and Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center. Their goal is to bring interested individuals together to address issues of common interest and need regarding the inclusion of young children and their families in their communities. For more information, access the following Web site: <http://www.tacomunities.org/>

### **Setting the Stage: Including Children with Disabilities in Head Start Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community**

This national training guide for parents, staff, and consultants - developed by Education Development Center, Inc., under contract from Head Start - supports efforts to include children with disabilities in Head Start programs. The guide consists of 3 modules, a section on professional development that offers strategies for supervisors to use to help staff apply new skills, and resource lists of supporting material. For more information, access the following Web site:

[http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/including\\_children/index.htm](http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/including_children/index.htm)

## Appendix I

### References

- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). (1990). Public Law 101-336 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 12101 *et seq.*) Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Childress, D. (2004). Special instruction and natural environments: Best practices in early intervention. *Infants and Young Children, 17*(2), 162–170.
- Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Developing Quality Individual Educational Plans: A Guide for Instructional Personnel and Families*. (2000). Florida Department of Education.
- Florida Rule 6A-6.03411 Florida Administrative Code (FAC) Policy and Procedures for the Provision of Specially Designed Instruction and Related Services for Exceptional Students.
- Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L., Thompson, A., Al Otaiba, S., Yen, L., Yang, N., et al. (2002). Exploring the importance of reading programs for kindergartners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. *Exceptional Children, 68*(3), 295–311.
- Gamel-McCormick, M. (2004). Family Child Care Quality: Implications for Children with Disabilities. Center for Disabilities Studies: Newark, Delaware.
- Grubbs, P. R., & Niemeyer, J. A. (1999). Promoting reciprocal social interactions in inclusive classrooms for young children. *Infants and Young Children, 11*(3), 9–18.
- Guralnick, M. J. (2001). Social competence with peers and early childhood inclusion: Need for alternative approaches, in M. Guralnick (ed.), *Early childhood inclusion: Focus on change* (pp. 531–542). Baltimore: Brookes Publishing Co.
- Guralnick, M. J. (2002). Involvement with peers: Comparisons between young children with and without Down syndrome. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research, 46*, 379–394.
- Guralnick, M. J., & Hammond, M. A. (1999). Sequential analysis of the social play of young children with mild developmental delays. *Journal of Early Intervention, 22*, 243–256.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). (2004) Public Law 108-466. Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Kansas Inservice Training System (KITS). Parsons, KS: Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities.

- Klein, E. R., Geiss, D., Kushner, R., & Hill, D. (2003, April). *The early childhood support program: Incorporating discreet skills into comprehensive units for learning*. Paper presented at the 2003 American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- La Paro, K. M., Sexton, D. & Snyder, P. (1998). Program quality characteristics in segregated and inclusive early childhood settings. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 13*, 151–168.
- Odom, S. L. (2000). Preschool inclusion: What we know and where we go from here. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 20*, 20–27.
- Odom, S. L., Horn, E. M., Marquare, J., Hanson, M. J., Wolfberg, P., Beckman, P., et al. (1999). On the forms of inclusion: Organizational context and service delivery models. *Journal of Early Intervention, 22*, 185–199.
- Odom, S. L., Parrish, T. B., & Hikido, C. (2001). The cost of inclusive and traditional special education preschool services. *Journal of Special Education Leadership, 14*, 33–41.
- Odom, S. L., Vitztum, J., Wolery, R., Lieber, J., Sandall, S., Hanson, M.J., et al. (2004). Preschool inclusion in the United States: A review of research from an ecological systems perspective. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 4*(1), 17–49.
- Serving Preschool Children Under Title I, Non-Regulatory Guidance*. (2004). Washington DC:U.S. Department of Education.
- State of Florida, Teaching Resources for Florida Exceptional Student Education 2000 Web site, Accommodations and Modifications Project (<http://www.cpt.fsu.edu/ese/>) on April 20, 2006.
- Roper, N. & Dunst, C. J. (2003). Communication intervention in natural learning environments. *Infants and Young Children, 10*(3), 215–226.
- Warger, C. (1999). *Early childhood instruction in the natural environment*. Reston, VA: ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education.



*Florida Department of Education  
Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner*

*ESE 312942*