

Family Perspectives on Inclusion

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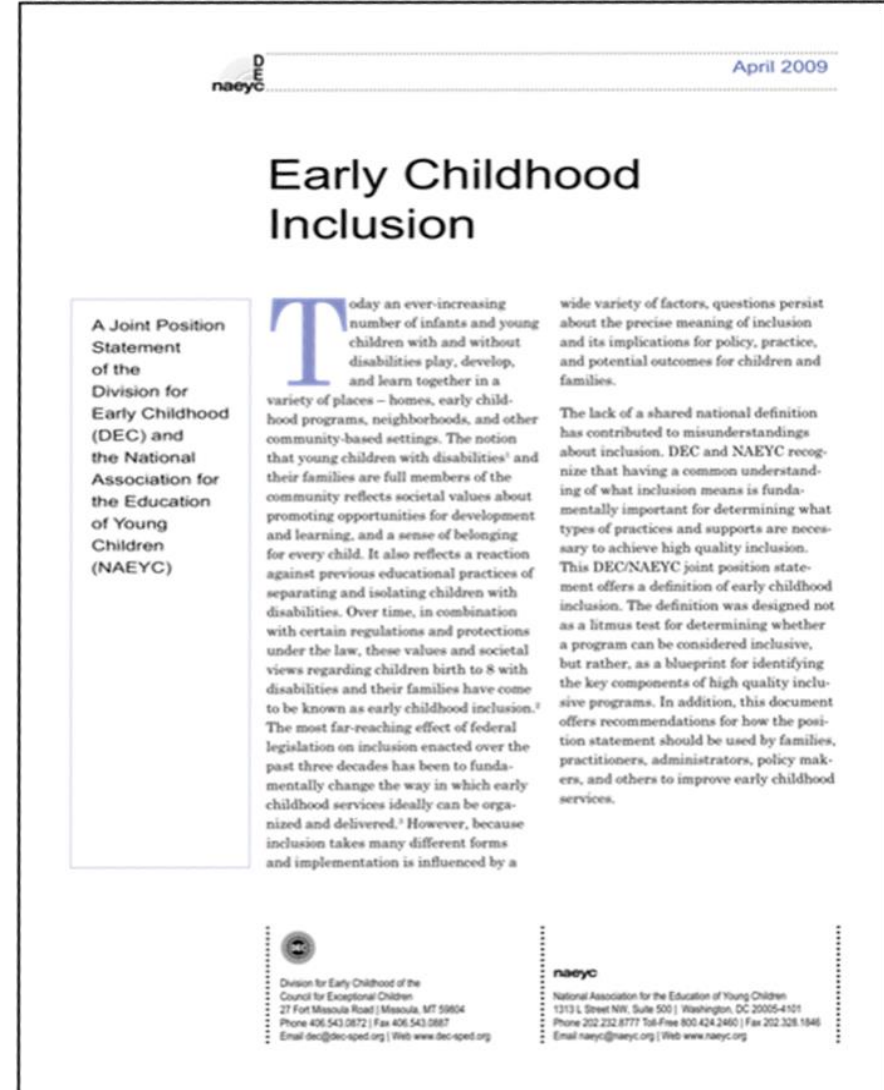



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National Association for the
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(NAEYC)
Joint Position Statement on
Inclusion




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Early Childhood Inclusion

A Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Today an ever-increasing number of infants and young children with and without disabilities play, develop, and learn together in a variety of places – homes, early childhood programs, neighborhoods, and other community-based settings. The notion that young children with disabilities¹ and their families are full members of the community reflects societal values about promoting opportunities for development and learning, and a sense of belonging for every child. It also reflects a reaction against previous educational practices of separating and isolating children with disabilities. Over time, in combination with certain regulations and protections under the law, these values and societal views regarding children birth to 8 with disabilities and their families have come to be known as early childhood inclusion.² The most far-reaching effect of federal legislation on inclusion enacted over the past three decades has been to fundamentally change the way in which early childhood services ideally can be organized and delivered.³ However, because inclusion takes many different forms and implementation is influenced by a wide variety of factors, questions persist about the precise meaning of inclusion and its implications for policy, practice, and potential outcomes for children and families.

The lack of a shared national definition has contributed to misunderstandings about inclusion. DEC and NAEYC recognize that having a common understanding of what inclusion means is fundamentally important for determining what types of practices and supports are necessary to achieve high quality inclusion. This DEC/NAEYC joint position statement offers a definition of early childhood inclusion. The definition was designed not as a litmus test for determining whether a program can be considered inclusive, but rather, as a blueprint for identifying the key components of high quality inclusive programs. In addition, this document offers recommendations for how the position statement should be used by families, practitioners, administrators, policy makers, and others to improve early childhood services.


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Definition of Early Childhood Inclusion

Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the **right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society.** The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a **sense of belonging** and membership, **positive social relationships** and friendships, and development and learning **to reach their full potential.**

Defining Features of Inclusion



Access



Participation



Supports

Access



Providing a wide range of activities and environments for every child by removing physical barriers and offering multiple ways to promote learning and development.

Participation



Using a range of instructional approaches to promote engagement in play and learning activities, and a sense of belonging for every child.

Supports



Refers to broader aspects of the system such as professional development, incentives for inclusion and opportunities for communication and collaboration among families and professionals to assure high quality inclusion.

Family Wishes for Inclusion

Thank you for YOUR contributions to making Pennsylvania Inclusive for Children and their Families!

For any questions/comments, please reach out to

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