



State Initiatives Regarding Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Child Care

States have made a number of efforts to improve the quality of child care and early education for children with special needs. State departments of education and departments of human services are working with child care resource and referral agencies, higher education, special education organizations, professional training organizations such as the Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers, and parents to support State initiatives. These initiatives include preparing trainers to provide additional training, mentoring, and technical assistance to promote appropriate inclusion; developing training materials; and providing materials and access to lending libraries. Funding comes from a variety of sources, including State departments of human services and State departments of education. Two States specifically mention using Child Care and Development Fund monies. Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning receives funds from a State-run lottery. Additional funds come from private donations. The following is a sample of information about individual State initiatives, national organizations with information about inclusion initiatives, a major Canadian organization, and additional publications that describe State policies and resources regarding inclusion.

SELECTED STATE AND LOCAL INITIATIVES

Alaska

■ **Alaska Inclusive Child Care Initiative (Alaska IN!)**

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

World Wide Web: www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/ccare/specneeds.html

Alaska IN! works to expand the availability of quality child care for children with special needs by promoting inclusive practices. Alaska IN! also provides referrals, outreach, and education to parents of children with special needs about child care options; specific training and support to providers who care for children with special needs; and additional funding to providers based on each child's individual needs.

California

■ **Beginning Together**

760-471-3827

Email: beginningtogether@cihs-south.org

World Wide Web: www.cainclusivechildcare.org/bt/index.html

Beginning Together helps ensure that appropriate inclusive practices are promoted in the training and technical assistance provided by the existing cadre of CDE/WestEd certified trainers in the PITC. This is accomplished through a training of trainers institute, regional outreach activities, revision/development of written materials, support to institute graduates, and support of

inclusive practices in other PITC activities, such as demonstration programs. Beginning Together was created for the California Institute on Human Services, Sonoma State University, in collaboration with the Child Development Division, California Department of Education (CDE), and WestEd, Center for Child and Family Studies, as an inclusion support to the Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers (PITC). Beginning Together is supported in part by funds from the Child Care and Development Fund.

■ **California Map to Inclusive Child Care Project**

760-682-0271

Email: map@cihs-south.org

World Wide Web: www.cainclusivechildcare.org/camap/index.html

The California Map to Inclusive Child Care Project seeks to expand opportunities for children with disabilities and other special needs in child care and development programs. Its Web site provides a listing of resources, organizations, and best practices for California's child care programs serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children with disabilities and other special needs. The project works is funded by the California Department of Education's Child Development Division.

■ “School Readiness for ALL Children: Ensuring that Children with Disabilities or Other Special Needs Are Included in California's School Readiness Efforts” (February 2004), in the *First 5 California Implementation Tools for School Readiness Series*, by Linda M. J. Brault, Penny Knapp, and Pamela J. Winton, prepared by the University of California at Los Angeles Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities for the First 5 California School Readiness Initiative, presents definitions and descriptions of children with disabilities and information on how school readiness programs can address children with disabilities and other special needs through the five “Essential and Coordinated Elements.” It also describes how laws, research, information, resources, and best practices for children with disabilities and other special needs fit into this existing model. This brief provides an overview of the many different strategies presented in the literature and service systems focused on young children with disabilities and other special needs and their families. This resource is available on the Web at www.healthychild.ucla.edu/First5CAReadiness/materials/specialNeeds/DisabilitiesBrief.pdf.

Georgia

■ **Inclusion Project**

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

(formerly the Office of School Readiness)

World Wide Web: www.dec.state.ga.us/default.aspx

Bright from the Start is the State agency responsible for overseeing child care and educational services for Georgia's children ages birth through 4 years and their families. Bright from the Start's Inclusion Project uses child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies throughout the State to employ inclusion coordinators who are committed to providing high-quality, inclusive child care for all children. In addition, the CCR&R agencies each have a lending library on site, which is geared toward children with special needs and the people who support them. Additional information is available on the Web at

www.dec.state.ga.us/Documents/PreK/Inclusion_Project.pdf.

Indiana

■ **Early Childhood Center**

Indiana Institute on Disability and Community at Indiana University–Bloomington
812-855-6508

Email: eccenter@indiana.edu

World Wide Web: www.iidc.indiana.edu/ecc/default.htm

The Early Childhood Center works to enhance the quality of care and education for all young children (birth through 5 years), including children with disabilities. Center activities encompass research, training, leadership, and collaboration with families, communities, and early care and education services that touch the lives of young children. Information on publications and ordering information is available on the Web at www.iidc.indiana.edu/ecc/products.htm.

■ **Indiana First Steps**

World Wide Web: www.in.gov/fssa/first_step/index.html

Indiana's First Steps is a family-centered, coordinated system to serve children from birth to age 3 who have disabilities and/or who are developmentally at risk. By coordinating locally available services, First Steps is working to give Indiana's children and their families the widest possible array of early intervention services.

Iowa

■ **Early Childhood Special Education Iowa Department of Education**

Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146
515-281-5294

World Wide Web: www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/643/905/1/3/

Iowa Department of Education has published the following two documents that include guidance for early childhood special education staff working in child care settings and preschool classrooms.

- *Early Childhood Services in AEAs: A Blueprint for the Future* (September 2004), prepared by the Early Childhood Special Education Leadership Network and the Iowa Department of Education, is intended to facilitate discussion among decision-makers at State, regional, and local levels; establish early childhood priorities; and define the Area Education Agencies' (AEA) role in the Statewide efforts to build a strong early care, health, and education system. The outcome of these discussions will be action plans to advance the priorities addressed in this blueprint. This resource is available on the Web at www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=1443.

- *3-4-5 Thrive: A Guide to Providing Educational Opportunities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for Iowa's Preschoolers with Disabilities* (2004), by the Iowa Department of Education, focuses on Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA 97) definition and implementation of LRE and what is needed to ensure that children with disabilities (ages 3–5 years) flourish in the general education environment. This guide addresses developing individualized education programs, seeking appropriate learning environments, obtaining funding, and ensuring implementation. The guide identifies what the law says, explains what the law intends, and highlights best practices. This resource is available on the Web at www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=1442

Minnesota

■ The Center For Inclusive Child Care

School of Human Services
 Concordia University
 275 North Syndicate Street, North
 St. Paul, MN 55104
 651-603-6265

World Wide Web: www.inclusivechildcare.org/index.cfm

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. The Center for Inclusive Child Care is funded by the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

New Jersey

■ New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc.
 35 Hasley Street, 4th floor
 Newark, NJ 07102
 973-642-8100

World Wide Web: <http://spannj.org/njiccp/>

The New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project provides information in English and Spanish about laws affecting inclusion and child care and about available services and resources in New Jersey for children with special needs. It offers workshops in English and Spanish on inclusion awareness and implementation. In addition, it provides free telephone and onsite technical assistance and support to child care providers, including family child care providers and after-school programs, on including children with special needs. It is funded by the Division of Family Development, New Jersey Department of Human Services. Publications from the New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project include the following:

- *Finding Our Way Together: A Resource Guide* (2002) includes resources to support the inclusion of children with special needs in child care centers, family child care, and after-school care. This resource is available on the Web at www.spannj.org/njiccp_resourceguide/.

North Carolina

■ Partnership for Inclusion (PFI)

Email: pfi@mail.fpg.unc.edu.

World Wide Web: www.fpg.unc.edu/~pfi/

PFI is a statewide technical assistance project that provides training and consultation to support the inclusion of young children with disabilities, ages birth through 5, in all aspects of community life. In 2006, PFI held 145 training events involving 3,262 participants in 65 locations across North Carolina. Training content and strategies are designed to meet participants' individual needs. Additional information about training is available on the Web at www.fpg.unc.edu/~pfi/pages/training.cfm.

Pennsylvania

■ Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS)

484-446-3003

Email: ECELS@paaap.org;

World Wide Web: www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org

ECELS provides health professional consultation, training, and technical assistance to improve early childhood education programs in Pennsylvania. It provides updated fact sheets that child care providers can distribute to staff and parents on specific health conditions and infections. ECELS is part of Healthy Child Care Pennsylvania and is supported by State funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Information about their self-administered training on children with special needs is available on the Web at www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org/section.cfm?sectionID=4.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

■ Philadelphia Inclusion Network (PIN)

A program of Child and Family Studies Research Programs at

Thomas Jefferson University

Philadelphia, PA 19107

Email: cfsrp@jefferson.edu

World Wide Web: <http://jeffline.jefferson.edu/cfsrp/programs.html>

PIN offers a series of training programs for child caregivers in family child care and center-based settings and a number of research-based publications about professional development. Information about its publications is available on the Web at <http://jeffline.jefferson.edu/cfsrp/products/materials-pin1.html>.

Wisconsin

■ **Mobilizing Partners Project**

Wisconsin Child Care Resource & Referral Network

5 Odana Court

Madison, WI 53719

608-271-1230

World Wide Web: www.wisconsincrr.org

The Mobilizing Partners Project works intensively in five Wisconsin counties to promote inclusive child care that offers quality services for all children. It identifies key local child care concerns; assists parents looking for child care for children with special needs; develops local teams that include key leaders in inclusive child care services; links agencies and resources at the local level to better meet the needs of child care providers and parents; and offers appropriate training and resources for improving the amount of inclusive child care. The project is managed by the Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project and is funded by the Administration for Developmental Disabilities, Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services. Additional information is available on the Web at www.wisconsincrr.org/inclusiv.htm.

FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECTS

■ **Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center**

785-395-0829

World Wide Web: www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/index.cfm

The ECO Center is a five-year project that was first funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, in October 2003. It is a collaborative effort of SRI International, the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Juniper Gardens Children's Project, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, and the University of Connecticut Health Center. The ECO Center promotes the development and implementation of child and family outcome measures for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities. These measures can be used in local, State, and national accountability systems. ECO Center publications include the following:

- *Issues in Designing State Accountability Systems* (August 2004), by Gloria Harbin, Beth Rous, and Mary McLean, is a working document for State policy-makers and researchers who are interested in collaboratively designing and implementing rigorous and systematic accountability models that yield accurate data about programs for young children with disabilities. This resource is available on the Web at www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/pdfs/Issues_in_Accountability.pdf.
- *Considerations Related to Developing a System for Measuring Outcomes for Young Children With Disabilities and Their Families* (April 2004) includes information about developing an outcomes system to produce data on young children with disabilities and their families. The paper is based on the assumption that the outcomes system will be able to meet the needs of the largest number of potential users if input is collected and incorporated throughout the development process. One of the challenges in soliciting input and reaching consensus about how an outcomes system should be structured is

helping stakeholders understand the perspectives of one another. A second challenge is breaking the work into smaller areas that can be addressed meaningfully while also understanding how a decision in one of these areas affects other decisions. Decisions to be made when developing an outcomes system are classified into four categories: conceptual, measurement, analytical, and logical and infrastructure considerations. This resource is available on the Web at www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/pdfs/considerations.pdf.

■ **IDEAdata.org**

World Wide Web: www.ideadata.org

This Web site presents the most recent State-reported data available that are collected by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, as required under Section 619 of IDEA.

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

Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

University of North Carolina

919-962-2001

World Wide Web: www.nectac.org

NECTAC is a national technical assistance effort that supports programs for young children with special needs and their families under the IDEA. These programs include the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and the Preschool Grants Program. NECTAC also provides services to selected model early childhood projects sponsored by the Office of Special Education, U.S. Department of Education; to the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council; to State-level technical assistance agencies; and to others working to improve services for young children with special needs and their families. The following resources have information about State policies, programs, and practices:

- The Keys to Inclusion Web site is designed for the administrators of State agencies responsible for services to young children and their families, including child care, Head Start, education, and early intervention, who are challenged with developing policies and programs that lead to inclusive, comprehensive, and coordinated services for all young children, ages birth to 8 years, and their families. It includes information on State policies that relate to children from birth to age 3 in Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. It also includes information on State policies that relate to children from 3–6 years of age in Illinois, Iowa, North Dakota, Oregon, and Wisconsin. This Web site is available at www.nectac.org/inclusion/default.asp.
- *Minibibliography: Selected Resources on Financing Early Childhood Systems to Support Inclusive Options for Young Children with Disabilities* (October 2004) presents a bibliography of resources on financing early childhood systems to support inclusive options for young children with disabilities. This resource is available on the Web at www.nectac.org/~pdfs/pubs/financemini.pdf.
- *Section 619 Profile, 13th Edition* (2005) provides updated information on State policies, programs, and practices under the Preschool Grants Program (Section 619 of Part B) of

IDEA. The coordinators of State and jurisdictional Section 619 programs supplied updates on the following content areas: program administration, funding, and education reform; charter and private schools; interagency coordination; personnel; transition; programming; accreditation and monitoring; performance outcomes; public awareness; Individualized Education Programs, Individualized Family Service Plans, and family-centered services; eligibility classification and criteria; State preschool program data; and contact information for State and jurisdictional program coordination. Data from the *Section 619 Profile, 13th Edition* are available on the Web at http://nectac.org/~pdfs/sec619_2005.pdf.

- Personnel Development section of the NECTAC Web site describes State and project models of preparing staff to serve young children with disabilities in child care settings in Alaska, California, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, and North Dakota. This information is available on the Web at www.nectac.org/topics/inclusion/personnel/personnel.asp.

■ **National Professional Development Center on Inclusion: (NPDCI)
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute**

World Wide Web: www.fpg.unc.edu/~npdci/

NPDCI will work with States in identifying and leveraging fiscal, human, and material resources to create a system of high quality, cross-agency, accessible professional development for early childhood personnel in inclusive settings. The project will offer a Web site and other resources to support States' professional development goals. While NPDCI will serve as a resource to all States, it will select eight States for more intensive collaboration. NPDCI is funded by a 5-year grant from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services of the U.S. Department of Education that began on October 1, 2006.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

■ **Child Care Law Center (CCLC)**

415-394-7144

Email: info@childcarelaw.org

World Wide Web: <http://childcarelaw.org/>

CCLC is a national nonprofit legal services organization that uses legal tools to make high-quality, affordable child care available to every child, every family, and every community. CCLC publishes materials for parents and providers explaining the Federal laws—including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—offers training, and serves as a technical resource on disability issues in the context of child care. Information about current work and publications is available on the Web at <http://childcarelaw.org/issues-disabilities.shtml>.

CANADIAN ORGANIZATION

■ **SpeciaLink, the National Centre for Child Care Inclusion**

Email: info@specialinkcanada.org

World Wide Web: www.speciallinkcanada.org

SpeciaLink is a clearinghouse and virtual resource and research center that provides researchers, policy-makers, parents, early childhood educators, and directors with the best inclusive practices in Canadian child care. It provides personalized responses to specific questions, referrals and links to other organizations, and technical assistance that includes curriculum development and program evaluation. Its goal is to expand the quality and quantity of opportunities for inclusion in child care, recreation, education, and other community settings to young Canadian children with special needs and their families.

ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS

■ *Child Care and Development Fund Report of State Plans FY 2006-2007* (2006), by the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has information about steps States have taken to promote inclusion of children with special needs in child care through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) block grant. The following sections have information about State initiatives related to children with special needs:

- 2.1 – Coordination;
- 2.3 – Public-Private Partnerships;
- 3.2 – Payment Rates for the Provision of Child Care;
- 3.4 – Priorities for Children;
- 5.1 – Quality Earmarks;
 - 5.1.4 – Summary of Quality Activities: Activities to Promote Inclusive Child Care; and
 - 5.2.3 – State Plan for Program Coordination.

A copy of the State Plan report is available on the Web at <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/stateplan2006-07/index.html>.

■ *Regional and Local Financing Strategies to Create Inclusive Options for Young Children with Disabilities* (February 9, 2004), prepared by Susan Rohrbough for the Preschool LRE [Least Restrictive Environment] Community of Practice conference, discusses how collaboration and blended funding strategies can be used to maximize funding. This PowerPoint is available on the Web at www1.usu.edu/mprrc/workgroups/ec/CoP/Finance020904.pdf.

■ *Coming Together for Children with Disabilities: State Collaboration to Support Quality, Inclusive Child Care* (December 2003), by Jennifer Mezey, Katherine Beh Neas, and Kate Irish, summarizes a study of policies to provide special education and early intervention services to low-income children with disabilities in child care programs. It presents the results of a survey of State Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA) program administrators. Data indicate that State CCDF and IDEA programs are collaborating at the State and local levels in an effort to provide quality, inclusive child care services for children with disabilities. The *Policy Brief* No. 4 is available on the Web at www.clasp.org/publications/ccdf_idea_brf.pdf. The complete report is available on the Web at www.clasp.org/publications/ccdf_idea_rpt.pdf.1.

■ *Open Hearts, Open Doors: Providing Inclusive Child Care* (June 2003), by the Oregon Inclusive Child Care Project, offers tips and resources to help child care providers care for children with special needs and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The benefits of inclusive child care are listed and steps are offered to help child care providers develop an inclusive child care program. This document is available in English on the Web at www.ocdd.org/pdfs/openheart_eng.pdf. This resource is also available in Spanish [*Corazones Abiertos, Puertas Abiertas: Proporcionando Cuidado de Niños Inclusivo*] at [www.ocdd.org/pdfs/2004-OHOD%20 ForWeb.pdf](http://www.ocdd.org/pdfs/2004-OHOD%20ForWeb.pdf).

The National Child Care Information Center, a service of the Child Care Bureau, does not endorse any organization, publication, or resource. For more information, please contact NCCIC: 10530 Rosehaven Street, Suite 400, Fairfax, Virginia 22030; Ph: 800-616-2242; Fax: 800-716-2242; TTY: 800-516-2242; E-mail: info@nccic.org; Web site: <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.