

FOSTERING INCLUSION

The purpose of this tip sheet is to support the teaching team in fostering inclusion. Inclusion is an attitude and approach that values all uniqueness and embraces diversity. It promotes a sense of belonging and provides equitable opportunities for all children, all families and all members of the teaching team.

BENEFITS OF INCLUSION

All children	All families	All members of the teaching team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialize and learn with peers • Develop friendships and relationships • Build self-esteem • Experience and embrace diversity • Learn social skills and engage with children with varying abilities • Accept all differences • Develop empathy, understanding and cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel welcome and valued • Develop empathy and understanding • Feel a sense of belonging and a part of a community • Connect to other families and reduce isolation • Build on knowledge and acceptance of differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate and value the worth and dignity of all children and families • Feel inspired to see all children succeed • Develop the ability to understand, adapt and respond to all children's strengths and needs • Seize opportunities to develop individual growth • Create partnerships with community supports

IMPLEMENTATION

The teaching team will:

- Be aware of their program's philosophy and values
- Review the intake process
- Meet with families and share values of an inclusive setting:
 - Each child belongs and has the ability to learn
 - All children's strengths, challenges and needs will be acknowledged and valued
 - The teaching team will respect confidentiality

- Teaching team understands that children's behaviours are part of a child's development
- The programs environment reflects various needs (physical space may have visuals and a variety of equipment to support children)
- Teaching team will access resources and support from community partners
- Plan the environment in order to:
 - Include visuals and play materials that represent children of varying abilities (e.g. books, pictures, a doll with a wheelchair, braille books)
 - Provide a range of developmentally appropriate materials and equipment that are available and accessible (e.g. spring loaded scissors, variety of puzzles, chairs are the appropriate height)
 - Adapt the sensory impact of the environment (e.g. lighting, temperature, noise level, visual stimulation)
- Adapt the curriculum in order to:
 - Use a strength based approach
 - Identify each child's individual interests, strengths and needs
 - Use a total communication approach (visuals, sign language, pictures, verbal) throughout the day
 - Plan activities to ensure that all children can participate based on their abilities
 - Plan for routines and activities to meet children's physical, sensory and medical needs (e.g. mealtimes, sleep time, toileting, dressing)
- Create and maintain partnerships with families:
 - Provide parent information sessions and resources on various topics (behaviours, parenting, etc).
 - Include parents in program events
 - Encourage parents to share information about traditions, celebrations, languages, practices, food etc.