

County of Los Angeles
Office of Child Care



**Strategies for
Identification and
Inclusion of Children with
Disabilities and Other
Special Needs**



*STEP is a project of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care
October 2008*

Steps to Excellence Project

Strategies for Identification and Inclusion of Children with Disabilities and Other Special Needs



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Introduction

The Office of Child Care is pleased to offer as a resource, *Strategies for Identification and Inclusion of Children with Disabilities and Other Special Needs*. Developed by the Los Angeles County Child Care Planning Committee, Inclusion Work Group, this document outlines strategies to serve as guides for programs working towards enhancing the quality of their program services to support the growth and development of all children, including children with disabilities and other special needs. The strategies are organized to match criteria for STEP levels 3, 4 and 5.

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STEP Area 3

Strategies	Materials, Staff, and/or Other
<i>Initial screening of all children</i>	
<p>Conducted on each child within 90 days of entering program.</p> <p>Steps to implementation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional staff (director/specialized teacher/classroom teachers) establish system for individualizing all children's needs, implementing accommodations and modifications for each child, as appropriate, and providing referrals for further assessment, as needed. 2. Parents receive information on developmental and mental health screening process at orientation to center and at enrollment. Director or teacher with specialization addresses this component during orientation. 3. Parent completes developmental screening tool. Teacher in consultation with specialized teacher facilitates completion of tool, including helping parents' complete questionnaires, as needed. 4. Classroom teacher scores questionnaires for each child. 5. Results shared with parents by teacher (and teacher with specialized training as needed) as integral part of parent/teacher conference. 6. Accommodations and modifications implemented, as needed, for each child. 7. Parents provided with referrals, as needed. <p>Recommended tools: Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) plus Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional (ASQ:SE)¹ or Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) Tools.</p>	<p><u>Materials:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Screening tool administration and scoring guides ▪ Screening tools/questionnaires ▪ Scoring pads ▪ Parent Handbook includes information on center's process for early identification and intervention of children with special needs. <p><u>Staff:</u> Director Specialized teacher² Classroom teacher Administrative support</p> <p><u>Other:</u> If child has received a qualifying developmental screening from another entity, (i.e. as part of a CHDP [Child Health and Disability Prevention]) screening or already has an IFSP or IEP, efforts should be made to gain parent's consent to obtain the results rather than conducting another screening.</p>
<i>Parent involvement; sharing results</i>	
<p>Parents may complete tool at home or at the center (need quiet space that allows for privacy). Parents review the results with their child's teacher during parent/teacher conference (and with specialized teacher, as needed). Discussion encompasses the parents' identification of their child's strengths and concerns and discussing options for addressing concerns.</p>	<p><u>Staff:</u> Classroom teacher Specialized teacher, as needed</p>
<i>Screenings are used to individualize all children's needs and site level modifications and accommodations are implemented, as appropriate.</i>	
<p>Head teacher in consultation with specialized teacher develops program activities to accommodate each child, as needed.</p>	

¹ ASQ is a tool designed to screen infants and young children for developmental delays during the first five years of life.

² Duties of teacher with specialized training are written into scope of work, including a percentage of time to serve as consultant with other teachers to identify and address the needs of children with special needs and their families.

Strategies	Materials, Staff, and/or Other
<i>Ability to refer families to appropriate services</i>	
<p>Professional staff establish policy for providing referrals to families for children requiring further assessments and referrals to other social services.</p> <p>With parents, staff identify appropriate referrals to address concerns, as needed, including information about eligibility and procedures for accessing services.</p>	<p><u>Materials:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact information for local regional center and the school district office that coordinates the process for the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP). ▪ Resources for other community-based organizations to address variety of needs, i.e. physical, dental, and mental health, human and social services, housing, legal, government benefits, etc. <p><u>Staff:</u> Teacher with specialized training</p> <p>Director and teachers also encouraged to contribute updated and new information on community resources with contact information.</p>
<i>Activities, etc. structured to address IFSP or IEP</i>	
<p>Head teacher in consultation with specialized teacher develops program activities to ensure full inclusion of child(ren) with IFSP/IEP.</p>	<p><u>Materials:</u> Adaptive play equipment as appropriate to serve children as needed.³</p>
<i>At least one staff person has training in working with children with special needs, including screening, and can assist other staff</i>	
<p>One head teacher has successfully earned college units and/or professional development in early childhood that has incorporated working with children with special needs into its curriculum.</p> <p>Teacher with specialized training is trained on using the developmental screening tool.</p> <p>(Note: Existing classes that have incorporated into curriculum working with children with special needs include practicum, infant/toddler coursework, observation class, coursework on children with special needs, development theory class; California State University (CSU) Northridge and CSU Dominguez Hills offer early special ed credential.)</p>	<p><u>Staff:</u> Staff training on using the developmental screening tool (specialized teacher)</p> <p>Specialized staff</p>

³ When purchasing play equipment and other supplies, special consideration should be given to children with a range of special needs as well as the cultural and linguistic diversity of the communities in which families live. The Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and Family Resource Centers support lending libraries that include adaptive play equipment, which may be borrowed at no cost.

STEP Area 4

Strategies	Materials, Staff, and/or Other
<i>Annual screening of all children</i>	
<p>All children are screened annually.</p> <p>Steps to implementation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional staff (director/classroom teachers) establish system for individualizing all children's needs, implementing accommodations and modifications for each child, as appropriate, and providing referrals for further assessment, as needed. 2. Directory of resources for children with special needs and their families is developed and maintained. 3. Parents receive information on developmental and mental health screening process at orientation to center and at enrollment. Director or teacher with specialization addresses this component during orientation. 4. Parent completes developmental screening tool. Teacher in consultation with specialized teacher facilitates completion of tool, including helping parents' complete questionnaires, as needed. 5. Classroom teacher scores questionnaire for each child. 6. Results shared with parents by head teacher (and teacher with specialized training as needed) as integral part of parent/teacher conference. 7. Accommodations and modifications implemented, as needed, for each child. 8. Parents provided with referrals and teacher (in consultation with teacher with specialized training) serves as liaison between parent and agency, as needed. 9. Classroom teachers with specialized training communicate regularly and as needed with professionals responsible for implementing a child's IFSP/IEP. 	<p><u>Materials:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Screening tool administration and scoring guides ▪ Screening tools/questionnaires ▪ Scoring pads ▪ Parent Handbook includes information on center's process for early identification and intervention of children with special needs. <p><u>Staff:</u> Director Classroom teachers with specialized training Administrative support</p> <p><u>Other:</u> If child has received a qualifying developmental screening from another entity, (i.e. as part of a CHDP [Child Health and Disability Prevention) screening or already has an IFSP or IEP]), efforts should be made to gain parent's consent to obtain the results rather than conducting another screening.</p>
<i>Screenings are used to individualize all children's needs and site level modifications and accommodations are implemented, as appropriate.</i>	
<p>Head teacher in consultation with specialized teacher develops program activities to accommodate each child, as needed.</p>	
<i>Families are guided and supported during referral process</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professional staff establish written policy for providing referrals to families for children requiring further assessments and referrals to other social services. ▪ Results of screening are shared with parents as part of parent/teacher conference. ▪ Parents identify child's strengths and needs and how they have sought help to address needs. ▪ Parents and teacher identify potential resources and referrals are provided. Classroom teacher is available to help family navigate access to referral source, as needed. 	<p><u>Materials:</u> Compilation of resources for health, social and early intervention services as well as Regional Center and local school district with contact information.</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> Classroom teachers with specialized training</p>

Strategies	Materials, Staff, and/or Other
<i>Maintain a directory of local early intervention and support services</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Purchase comprehensive directory. ▪ Research local health, social and early intervention services in community. ▪ Attend collaborative and networking meetings to learn about local resources and develop list of contacts. <p>The Director and classroom teachers with specialized training, in the development of the system to address children with special needs, should devise strategies and division of duties to address this component. The Director and each classroom teacher, for example, may commit to participating in various local collaboratives that meet monthly or quarterly and taking turns attending conferences relevant to working with children with special needs and their families.</p>	<p><u>Materials:</u> Directory of resources (may also include filing system to organize resources as staff learn about them) for health, social and early intervention services, including local regional center and school district. A comprehensive directory, such as Rainbow Referral Guide at a cost of \$80 (including tax and shipping) may serve as a starting point.</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> One classroom teacher could take lead on this: Start up: May not entail cost in materials; rather the staff time it takes to research local resources. Staff time includes attendance at local networking/collaborative meetings and conferences.</p>
<i>Staff work with child's team of professionals to implement IFSP or IEP</i>	
<p>Classroom teachers with specialized training review child's IFSP/IEP and consult with other professionals responsible for implementing IFSP/IEP to ensure that classroom routines and activities support the goals of the assessment.</p>	<p><u>Materials:</u> Copy of IFSP/IEP provided by the parents.</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> Specialized classroom teachers and their colleagues</p> <p><u>Other:</u> Substitutes provide release time for teachers to attend IFSP/IEP meetings. Estimate 1½ to 2 days per child per year for total of 10 children.</p>

Strategies	Materials, Staff, and/or Other
<i>Accommodations to ensure each child's full participation</i>	
<p>Train professional staff in use of the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) (Infant/Toddler or Early Childhood).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct an assessment of the facility (each classroom) using the ERS. 2. Develop and implement plan for program improvements based on results of developmental screening, ERS, and IFSP/IEP specifically in relationship to serving children with special needs. 	<p><u>Materials:</u> Physical space (may include rearranging the classroom and outdoor space to allow for child with special needs room to move around and participate in play and program activities). See Step 3 for information regarding adaptive play equipment.</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> Director in consultation with teaching staff Train on Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Conduct ERS: approximate time per classroom = 4-6 hours</p>
<i>At least one staff in each classroom has specialized training</i>	
<p>Classroom teacher with specialized training is trained on using the developmental screening tool.</p> <p>At least one teacher per classroom has successfully earned college units and/or professional development in early childhood that has incorporated working with children with special needs into its curriculum.</p> <p>(Note: Existing classes that have incorporated into curriculum working with children with special needs include practicum, infant/toddler coursework, observation class, coursework on children with special needs, development theory class; CSUs Northridge and Dominguez Hills offer early special ed credential.)</p>	<p><u>Staff:</u> Start up: Using a train the trainer approach, two teachers with specialized training participate in ½ day training on using developmental screening tool.⁴ Teachers train their colleagues on using the tools.</p> <p><u>Other:</u> Substitutes provide release time for teachers to attend training, unless incorporated into in-service training date.</p>

⁴ A modification of the train-the-trainer approach is to identify a local consortium of child development programs to participate in the training, thereby reducing the cost to the individual center while simultaneously ensuring that more centers are participating in early identification and intervention on behalf of children with special needs and their families.

STEP Area 5

Strategies	Materials, Staff, and/or Other
<i>Screenings done on all children within 45 days of enrollment and bi-annually thereafter</i>	
<p>All children are screened bi-annually.</p> <p>Steps to implementation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional staff establish system for individualizing all children's needs, implementing accommodations and modifications for each child, as appropriate, and providing referrals for further assessment, as needed. 2. Directory of resources for children with special needs and their families is developed and maintained. 3. Parents receive information on developmental and mental health screening process at orientation to center and at enrollment. Director or teacher with specialization addresses this component during orientation. 4. Parent completes developmental screening tool. Classroom teachers facilitate completion of tool, including helping parents' complete questionnaires, as needed. 5. Classroom teacher scores questionnaire for each child. 6. Results shared with parents by classroom teacher (and director) as integral part of parent/teacher conference. 7. Accommodations and modifications implemented, as needed, for each child. 8. Parents provided with referrals and specialist serves as liaison between parent and agency, as needed. 9. Specialist/teaching staff communicate regularly and as needed with professionals responsible for implementing a child's IFSP/IEP. 	<p><u>Materials:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Screening tool administration and scoring guides ▪ Screening tools/questionnaires ▪ Scoring pads ▪ Parent Handbook includes information on center's process for early identification and intervention of children with special needs. <p><u>Staff:</u> Director Classroom teachers⁵ Administrative support</p> <p><u>Other:</u> If child has received a qualifying developmental screening from another entity, (i.e. as part of a CHDP (Child Health and Disability Prevention) screening or already has an IFSP or IEP), efforts should be made to gain parent's consent to obtain the results rather than conducting another screening.</p>
<i>Staff facilitate connections with resources</i>	
<p>Results of screening are shared with parents as integral part of parent/teacher conference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents identify child's strengths and needs and how they have sought to address needs. ▪ Parents and teacher identify potential resources and referrals are provided. Teacher is available to help family navigate access to referral source, as needed. 	<p><u>Materials:</u> Compilation of resources for health, social and early intervention services as well as Regional Center and local school district with contact information.</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> Classroom teachers with specialized training</p> <p><u>Other:</u> Substitutes provide release time for teachers to attend IFSP/IEP meetings. Estimate 1½ to 2 days per child per year for total of 10 children.</p>

⁵ Duties of teacher with specialized training are written into scope of work, including a percentage of time to serve as consultant with other teachers to identify and address the needs of children with special needs and their families.

Strategies	Materials, Staff, and/or Other
<p><i>Sense of belonging is fostered through maximum integration of children with special needs; ongoing modifications to daily routine, curriculum, and environment are made as needed</i></p>	
<p>Teaching of social, emotional and friendship skills is explicit, deliberate and intentional for all children, families and adults in the program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specialists and special educators provide services in the classroom in small groups for children with/without disabilities/special needs. ▪ Children with/without disabilities or other special needs arrive and depart at the same time and in the same manner. ▪ Materials in the environment reflect the diversity of all children and families in the program. ▪ All staff receive training and technical assistance on inclusive practice. ▪ Teachers initiate activities that bring all of the children together by making adaptations to the curriculum and modifications to activities to meet individual needs. ▪ All children are admired and seen as competent. 	<p><u>Materials:</u> Depends on the special needs of the children and their disabilities. Recommend that programs set aside a reserve of .5% of materials and training budget for materials. Costs may range from modest materials needed to adapt activities to more significant costs relating to modifications of facility depending on accommodations needed to meet needs of children.</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> All staff participates in trainings.</p> <p>Head teachers consult with specialists for integrating IFSP/IEP goals into daily routine, curriculum and classroom/outdoor arrangements.</p>
<p><i>A majority of staff at all positions have college coursework related to working with children with special needs</i></p>	
<p>Full-time teaching staff are trained on using the developmental screening tool. One to two teachers participate in comprehensive formal training, which encompasses a train-the-trainer component. The one to two teachers train their staff on using the tool.</p> <p>Most full-time staff have successfully earned college units or professional development in early childhood that has incorporated working with children with special needs into its curriculum.</p> <p>(Note: Existing classes that have incorporated into curriculum working with children with special needs include practicum, infant/toddler coursework, observation class, coursework on children with special needs, development theory class; CSUs Northridge and Dominguez Hills offer early special ed credential.)</p>	<p><u>Materials:</u> Copy of IFSP/IEP provided by the parents.</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> Start up: Recommend “train-the-trainer” approach in that one to two members of teaching staff participate in full-day training on using developmental screening tool. Specialist and teacher train center’s remaining professional staff.⁶</p> <p><u>Other:</u> Substitutes provide release time for teachers to attend training, unless incorporated into in-service training date.</p>

⁶ A modification of the train-the-trainer approach is to identify a local consortium of child development programs to participate in the training, thereby reducing the cost to the individual center while simultaneously ensuring that more centers are participating in early identification and intervention on behalf of children with special needs and their families.

Strategies	Materials, Staff, and/or Other
<i>Accommodations to ensure child's full participation</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train professional staff in use of the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) (Infant/Toddler or Early Childhood). 2. Conduct an assessment of the facility (each classroom) using the ERS. 3. Develop and implement plan for program improvements based on results of developmental screening, ERS, and IFSP/IEP specifically in relationship to serving children with special needs. 	<p><u>Materials:</u> Physical space (may include rearranging the classroom and outdoor space to allow for child with special needs room to move around and participate in play and program activities). See Step 3 for information regarding adaptive play equipment.</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> Director in consultation with teaching staff Train on ERS Conduct ERS: approximate time per classroom = 4-6 hours</p>
<i>At least one staff in each classroom has specialized training</i>	
<p>Classroom teacher with specialized training is trained on using the developmental screening tool.</p> <p>At least one teacher per classroom has successfully earned college units and/or professional development in early childhood that has incorporated working with children with special needs into its curriculum.</p> <p>(Note: Existing classes that have incorporated into curriculum working with children with special needs include practicum, infant/toddler coursework, observation class, coursework on children with special needs, development theory class; CSUs Northridge and Dominguez Hills offer early special ed credential.)</p>	<p><u>Staff:</u> Start up: Using a train-the-trainer approach, two teachers with specialized training participate in ½ day training on using developmental screening tool.⁷ Teachers train their colleagues on using the tools.</p> <p><u>Other:</u> Substitutes provide release time for teachers to attend training, unless incorporated into in-service training date.</p>

⁷ A modification of the train-the-trainer approach is to identify a local consortium of child development programs to participate in the training, thereby reducing the cost to the individual center while simultaneously ensuring that more centers are participating in early identification and intervention on behalf of children with special needs and their families.

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