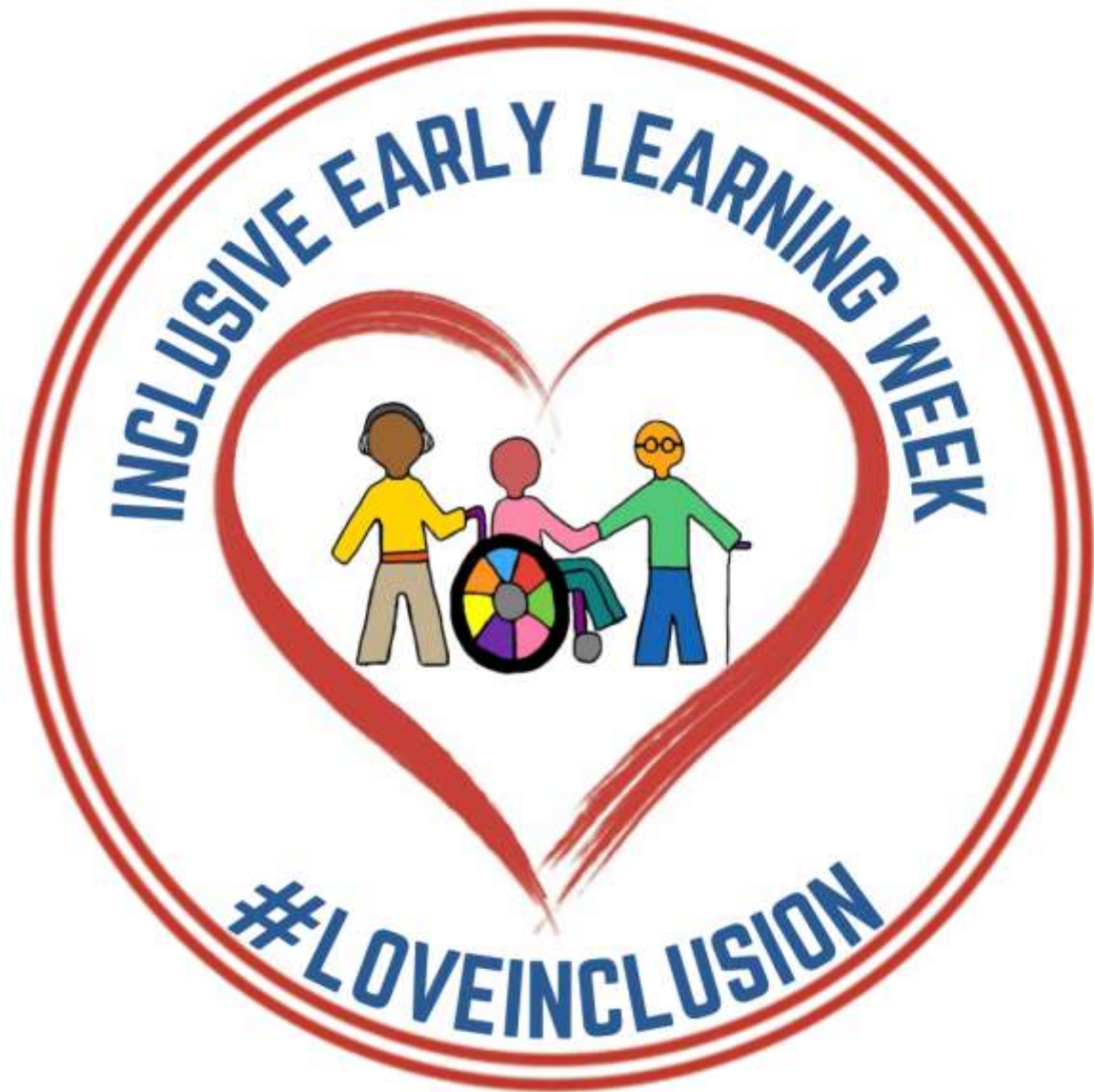


Celebration Toolkit

Inclusive Early Learning Week



February 13 - 19, 2022

A guide for classroom, staff, and family activities that promote inclusive practices.



The mission of DECAL's Inclusive Early Learning Week is to promote inclusive practices within early learning environments across Georgia.

#LoveInclusion

Goals of Inclusive Early Learning Week

Increase Awareness: Bring awareness to what inclusion is and how it benefits children, families, early childhood professionals, and the community.

Celebrate Success: Celebrate inclusive practices within early care and learning programs.

Strengthen Supports: Connect providers with resources and materials that promote inclusive practices.

Using the Celebration Toolkit

We encourage programs to use this toolkit as a guide to celebrate DECAL'S Inclusive Early Learning Week!

Inside you will find daily themed activities designed to:

- ✓ Promote inclusive practices in the classroom,
- ✓ Engage staff members, and
- ✓ Encourage family collaboration during the week.

Choose the activities that best fit your program each day or create or add your own activities. Most importantly, inclusive learning shouldn't stop when Inclusive Early Learning week ends!

Social Media

Post pictures of your program celebrating Inclusive Early Learning Week onto our social media pages ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), etc.) using the hashtag **#LoveInclusion**.

Inclusion Contest



It's easy to enter to **WIN!** Just follow these steps:

1. Simply print flat CALi from the IELW Webpage. There are several versions of CALi to choose from, so choose the one you like the best!

2. Think of ways you can include CALi in your classroom daily routines, accommodating for any needs she may have. Need help brainstorming ideas for activities? Keep reading this toolkit for some examples of activities.
3. Snap a photo of CALi being included in the activity with the children in your class.
4. Submit the photo via email to inclusion@decals.ga.gov to be entered into the drawing. Each photo sent in is considered as one entry into the contest. Winners will be randomly drawn, so the more entries you have, the better your odds of winning!



Self-Care Sunday

Promoting Self-Care

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- **Infant: Bend and Stretch:** Lay the infant on a blanket or other soft surface. Take the infant's legs and bend them gently so the knees come close to the stomach. Stretch the legs out again and repeat. *SED3.0b*
- **Toddler: Breathe In... Breathe Out:** Practice breathing activities with the toddlers in your classroom. You can do this by modeling how to take deep breaths and asking children to mimic your movements. *SED3.1b*


 <p>Drain</p> <p>Stand on one foot, pointing your arms and feet. Tighten arms, shoulders, and back muscles. Breathe slowly making a "hiss" sound and release all your muscles, draining out the stress.</p>	 <p>S.T.A.R.</p> <p>Smile, Take a deep breath And Relax. Encourage belly breathing when the belly goes out when the air goes in, and in when the air goes out. Show how children seem to stretch deeper each day they smile.</p>
 <p>Pretzel</p> <p>Standing up, cross your arms. Now cross your right knee over left, take your hands to your knees as if being the knot. Put palms together and stretch fingers. Bend your elbows out and gently turn your torso slowly and toward your body until they rest on the center of your chest. Put your tongue on the end of your nose. Smile and breathe.</p>	 <p>Balloon</p> <p>Place your hands on top of your head and inhale as if a balloon. Breathe in through your nose as you raise your arms, inflating an imaginary balloon. Release the air in the balloon by pinching your lips, exhaling slowly, lowering your arms and making a "whooshhhhh" sound.</p>

- ♥ **Preschool/Pre-K: Calm Down with Cali:** For children in Preschool/Pre-K, it can be hard to regulate feelings. Read Calm Down with Cali and learn different ways to calm down! Practice this skill by talking about what your child should do if different scenarios happen during the day. *SED3.1b SED3.3b SED3.4b*

Resource: [Calm Down with CALI](#)



- ◆ **Staff: We All Need Some (Head)space:** Sometimes, it's hard for teachers to find time for self-care. Today, take time to prioritize yourself and your needs. Self-care can look like taking a walk, a bath, or anything that brings calm to your day. You can build this time into your workday or try to make time in the morning or evening. Even if it's just a 10-minute conversation with a close friend or a quiet cup of tea, give yourself the gift of respite this week! Also, check out Headspace for Educators! They offer a free version of the app for teachers focused on bringing mindfulness to the classroom. Follow the link [here](#) to get some Headspace!

 **Families: We Wish You Well:** Life can be complicated with families and friends who might be separated by vast distance and personal struggles. Yet, there is always something we can do to demonstrate our love and support for the ones we care about: We can wish them well. It helps adults remember to take a quiet moment to reflect, also! A family wish well ritual helps to keep these connections strong while nurturing a sense of empathy and inner calm. You can use a visual aid for children when wishing others well by drawing a heart and writing the person's name in the middle. To complete the wishing well ritual, families can:



1. Take three deep breaths.
2. Think about the person you love.
3. Send that love to the person from afar.

The wishing well boosts positive feelings and can be easily incorporated into your morning routine as part of a “brain smart” way to start the day.

 **Book Suggestion:** [YouTube: Whimsy's Heavy Things by Julie Kraulis](#)



Marvelous ME Monday

Recognizing Individuality

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- **Infant/Toddler: I am Special:** Sing the “I Am Special” song and talk about the things that make each child special. Write each special characteristic on a piece of chart paper.
SED1.0c SED1.1c

(Sing to the tune of ‘Are You Sleeping’)

I am special, I am special, look at me! You will see!

Someone very special, someone very special.

Yes, it’s me! Yes, it’s me!


☀ **Bright Idea: Ask each child to choose the next person the class will sing to.**

- ♥ **Preschool/Pre-K: All About ME!** Have each child draw a self-portrait to include in an *All About Me* book. Have the children describe their picture, label their traits, and write down what each child says on their individual page. Each child’s individual page will be combined to create a class book. Staple the pages together or hole punch them and tie them together with string. This activity could be done in small group. **SED1.4a**

☀ **Bright Idea: Allow children to use pre-cut shapes to compose their self-portrait.**

- ◆ **Staff: My New Friend:** Have each person pair up with someone they do not know well. Set a time limit (two minutes is usually plenty, but feel free to change it to fit your needs) and have one person tell the other about themselves. When time is up, switch and repeat so that both parties know a bit about the other. Once both partners have gone, go around the room and have each person briefly introduce their partner to the group. The speaker should highlight interesting information, rather than repeat what their partner said. By the end of the activity, everyone in the group should know a bit more about each other.

☀ **Bright Idea: Have a list of questions available for groups to use, if needed.**

 **Families: I Like...** Work together to create a “Things I Like” poster. Each member of the family can create a poster or page. Use magazines or print pictures of things you like and glue them to your board. Talk about your likes and dislikes. Do you have any that are the same or different?

 **Book Suggestion:** [YouTube: I Like Myself! By Karen Beaumont](#)



Tremendous TEAMwork Tuesday

Working together to accomplish a goal

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- 🕒 **Infant/Toddler: Together We Make Beautiful Music!** Create a classroom drum circle and play instruments together. Prompt children to take turns using different instruments. You can use simple, everyday objects as drums, such as an upside-down bucket or box. *CD-CR4.0c CD-CR3.1a CD-CR3.2a*

☀️ **Bright Idea: Use hand-over-hand guidance for fine motor assistance as needed.**

- ♥️ **Preschool/Pre-K: Peer Partners Maze** Create a simple maze in a few large boxes using cut up disposable straws of various lengths, glue and a small ball. You may want to draw the outline of your maze with pencil first. Pair children up in partners and tell them the goal is to get the ball from the start of the maze to the finish by holding their box together and moving it up and down or side to side. After each pair has taken their turn exploring the maze, return to large group to talk about how communication and working together helped the teams during the activity. You can also try to make connections with the teamwork they have done or will do throughout the school year. *CD-CR3.4a*

Resource: [Helpful friend poster](#)

☀️ **Bright Idea: Think about altering the location of the activity so students with adaptive equipment can participate fully.**



- Staff: Bob Ross Who?** Divide staff into pairs of two, identify one person to be a “viewer” and another an “artist.” One staff person will need to be the judge for this activity. The viewer will look at an original picture of something, let’s say a scruffy black dog on a couch, and verbally describe it to the artist. The artist will have to draw the picture as accurately as possible without seeing it. The artist has only the viewer’s explanation to go from, so teamwork is essential here! All the teams will have the same original picture to work with. After five minutes, the judge will stop all the teams and inspect their artwork. The judge can choose the best one or let all the teams vote and give the judge two votes to break ties. Following the activity, ask each team member to share what skills each speaker or listener demonstrated, and what was most difficult.



Bright Idea: This activity can even be done during a virtual meeting!



Families: Helping Hands: What are some ways that your children help around the house? Discuss what teamwork looks like in the home and create helpful home jobs such as putting away laundry, drying dishes, or dusting the shelves. Consider using a [job chart](#) as a visual reminder of your family's to-do list. Remind your child(ren) often that they are important part of the family team and celebrate the jobs that they are really great at!



Book Suggestion: [YouTube: Our Class Is a Family by Shannon Olsen](#)



Awesome FRIENDS Day

Wednesday

Creating classroom community

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- **Infant: Everyone's a Star:** As children enter the room each morning, generate excitement by saying, "Look who just arrived! It's Jacob! Let's all wave to Jacob."
SED5.0a
- **Toddler: Friendship Mural:** Provide paper plates, poster sized paper and paint in the art center. Red, yellow, and blue are great alone but when you mix them with a friend, you can do so much more. Place the paper on a table for the friendship mural. Have the children pick a friend to work with and give them red, yellow, and blue paint. The children place one hand in one of the primary colors and make handprints on the paper. Ask questions like: "What does the paint feel like on your hands?" and, "What do you think will happen if you hold hands and mix your colors?" Encourage the children to hold their painted hands together and discover what new colors they can make. Ask more questions: "Can you create that color again?" "How many different colors can you make?" and "How can you make that color brighter?" *SED5.1b SED5.2b*

☀️ **Bright Idea: If some children do not like the feeling of pain on their hands, provide sponges or paint rollers as an alternative.**

- ♥️ **Preschool/Pre-K: How to Be a Friend Friendship Chain:** Use a sheet of paper to make paper cutout people for each child. Ask children to brainstorm ways that they can be a good friend to their peers and write that on their cutouts. Children can decorate their paper cutouts, and once completed the cutouts can be connected using tape or using a hole puncher and string. Hang it up on the walls of your classroom to display your friendship chain! This activity can also be paired with your favorite children's book about friendship. *SED 5.4a*

☀️ **Bright Idea: Let children brainstorm ways to include each member of the classroom community!**



Staff: Get Connected! The facilitator begins with a ball of yarn. Holding on to one end, the facilitator passes the ball to one of the participants and says something they appreciate about that person. Then, that participant gives the ball of yarn to another participant, saying something they appreciate and pinching a piece of yarn to keep. Continue passing the yarn until all people have given and received a compliment. When done, there will be a big web of positive characteristics for your team!



Families: Take Note: Write or draw a love note to your child telling them something you admire about them. Read it aloud while snuggling up!



Book Suggestion: [YouTube: Stick and Stone by Beth Ferry](#)



Totally TALENTED

Thursday

Celebrating talents and interests

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- **Infant: You Did It:** Sit or lie on the floor with the infant and imitate his/her movements. For example, if the infant is learning to roll over, you roll over. If the infant is up on all fours rocking back and forth, then you do the same. As you imitate his/her movements, describe what you are doing. **SED1.0c**
- **Toddler: High Five!** Show the children how to “high five”. Explain that is what to do if you want to congratulate someone or let someone know he/she has done a good job. High five the children when they have accomplished a task. Encourage them to high five each other throughout the day. **SED4.2c**

☀ **Bright Idea: Remember to communicate in verbal and non-verbal ways.**
☀ **Bright Idea: Remember to recognize and praise adults in the classroom, also.**

- ♥ **Preschool/Pre-K: Outdoor Talent Show:** Prior to your outdoor time, invite children to think about a talent they’d like to share with their peers, and encourage them to bring props from dramatic play or other areas in the classroom out on the playground. You can bring additional props to choose from, like costumes, microphones, musical instruments, or stuffed animals. In this “freestyle” talent show, children can come show off their talent, or watch from afar while they enjoy their favorite playground activity if they choose not to participate. Encourage the children to give each other praise and positive feedback for participating. Ask leading questions like: “What did you all love most about what [name]’s performance?” Or model encouraging statements like “Johnny, you made us laugh when you told us that joke!” **CDCR2.4C**

☀ **Bright Idea: Before you begin, show the children a short YouTube clip of a child performing in front of their class as an [example](#).**



Staff: Shout, Let It All Out! Create a bulletin-type board for staff members to give each other shout outs. Place the board in an area where all staff will be able to see it. Leave out a stack of sticky notes or notecards so that staff can easily post positive feedback for others. Get the team motivated to share their own ideas by asking them to add a compliment or “thank you” for each staff member.



Bright Idea: Administrators/Directors - consider adding pictures of positive interactions or helpful moments observed throughout the day.



Families: Family Charades: Play a game of charades. Take turns acting out familiar animals or objects and get family members to guess what you’re pretending. Have a list of ideas ready. Remember to have a good time and praise each person as they complete their turn!



Book Suggestion: [YouTube: The Dot by Peter Reynolds](#)



Super FRIEND Friday

Being a great friend to everyone

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- **Infant: Where is Thumbkin?** Gather infants for a small circle time and take turns acknowledging each child in the classroom by singing this welcome song. Acknowledge teachers present also! **SED1.0b**

(Sing to the tune of Where is Thumbkin)

Where is Henry? Where is Henry?

*He's our friend! He's our friend! (**point at child**)*

How are you today? How are you today?

*Welcome him! Welcome him! (**wave at child**)*

☀️ **Assist younger infants with waving at their peers.**

- **Toddler: Sharing Hot Potato:** This toddler-friendly, hot potato-style game is a great way to teach kids how to share. As you sing the words to the [song](#), kids pass the ball from one to the next. In this game, if you have the ball in your hands once the music stops, you're "it!" **PDM5.2b**

☀️ **Bright Idea: Practice this activity with different types of balls that may be easier to grip.**

- ♥️ **Preschool/Pre-K: The Doc Is In!** Create a prop box in dramatic play that has materials you might use to comfort or care for someone. Include a soft toy, a blanket, a book, and toy doctor supplies. The children can practice empathy by role-playing with each other. **SED5.3d**

☀️ **Bright Idea: You can encourage their role play by inserting yourself in the play story and modeling how they might care for others in a doctor's office.**



Staff: Minute to Win It: Allow time at the beginning of your team meetings for friendship time. It's important to put time on the agenda for people to talk about things like their weekend plans, how their families are, or about the new movie they went to see. It gives everyone a chance to recognize one another as human beings with lives outside of work and could be the spark that ignites a new friendship or two. Or play [Minute to Win It!](#) As a fun warm-up before a staff meeting wind-down at the end of the day!



Families: Play a Game of "That's Me!": Everyone sits together in a circle. One person is chosen to get the game started by standing and stating a fact about themselves such as their favorite animal, color, etc. Everyone in the group who shares the same likes should stand and say, "That's me!" The person who was the first to state their like should choose someone who shares that same "like" to lead the next round. This helps everyone share what they like and learn a little more about others!



Book Suggestion: [YouTube: Stone Soup by John J. Muth](#)