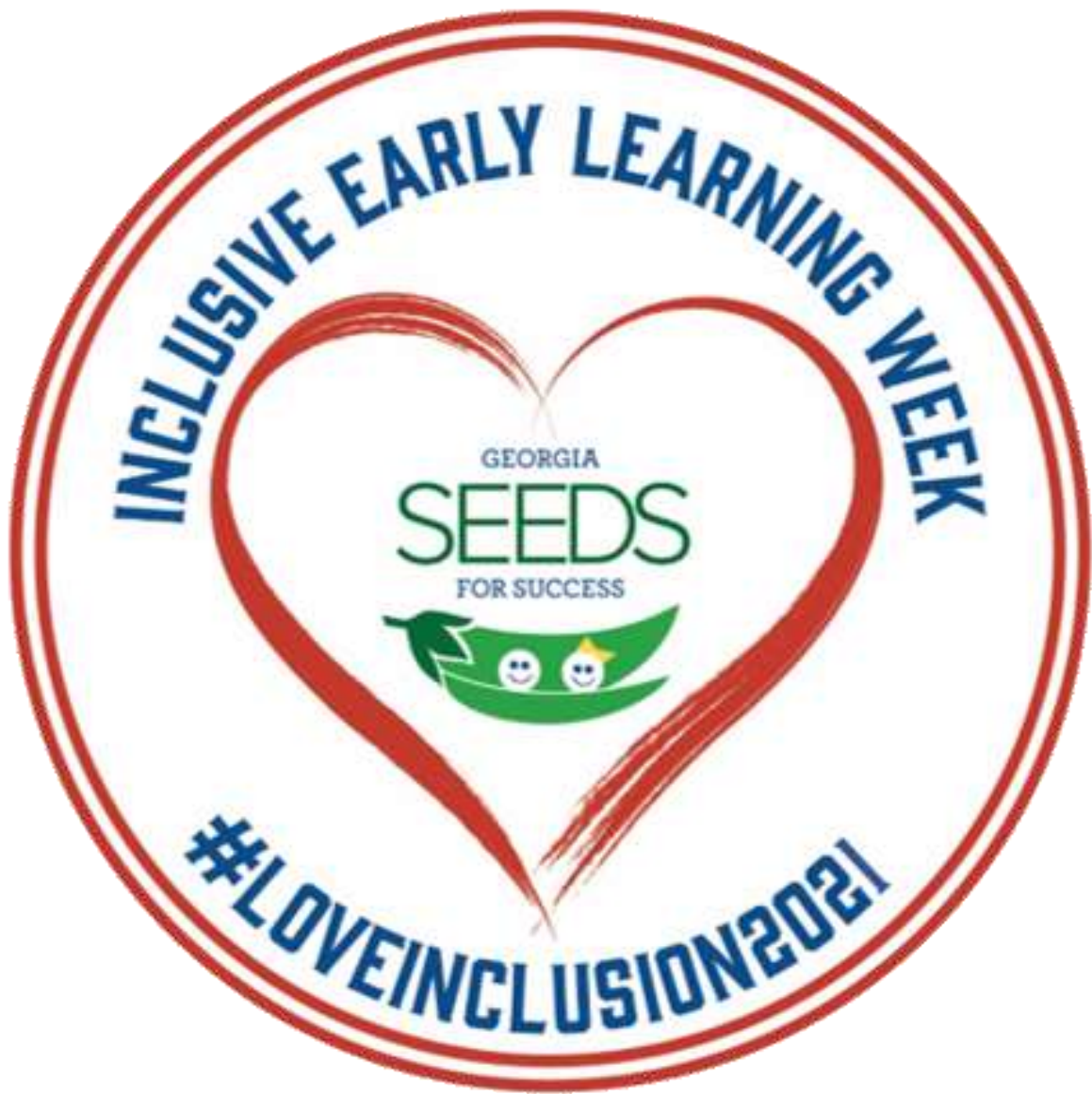


Celebration Toolkit

Inclusive Early Learning Week



February 7 - 13, 2021

A guide to 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

Inclusive Early Learning Week

#LoveInclusion2021

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

This toolkit is designed for programs to use as a guide as they plan to celebrate DECAL'S Inclusive Early Learning Week. Inside you will find daily themed activities to promote inclusive practices in the classroom, activities designed to engage staff members, as well as activities that encourage family collaboration during the week. These activities serve as a guide allowing you to choose the ones that best fit your program each day. We encourage you to use them as a springboard for adding and creating your own activities in celebration of Inclusive Early Learning Week as well.

Social Media

Post pictures of your program celebrating Inclusive Early Learning Week onto our social media pages ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), etc.) using the hashtag #LoveInclusion2021 to show others how you are celebrating.

Friendship Skills in Action Contest



It's easy to enter to **WIN!** Post ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), etc.) or email (inclusion@dec.al.ga.gov) pictures of children working together on an art project or a picture of the finished art project. Choose an art project that helps teach about friendship skills and community. Each post is a separate entry, so post away! Winners will be randomly drawn, so the more entries you have the better your odds of winning! Make sure to use the hashtag #LoveInclusion2021 on social media to be entered. There are several examples of art activities in the celebration toolkit or you can create your own activity.



Marvelous ME Monday

Promoting Individuality

#LoveInclusion2021

Classroom Activities

Infants and Toddlers:

Happy Me: Sing and use facial expressions with the students. Use the tune of “If You Are Happy and You Know It.” The teacher, facing the students, sings “If you’re happy and you know it, give a smile!” He or she then gives a big smile to the students and points to his or her smile making it very noticeable and prompts the students to smile back. If adapting for COVID, you can ask the children to give thumbs up.

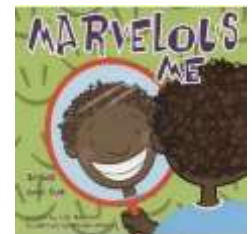


After doing this a few times the teacher can add in other emotions such as sad, excited, or surprised. **GELDS: SED2.1a**

Preschool and Pre-K:

Marvelous Me: I am “Marvelous” because...

Read the book *Marvelous Me* by Lisa Bullard (you can view the book on many online sites, such as YouTube for free). While discussing the book, teach the vocabulary word *marvelous* to the students by using examples and synonyms they can relate to. Make a chart story to display in the classroom by allowing each child to give an example of what makes him or her marvelous. **GELDS SED1.4b, CLL2.4b**



Uniquely Me: My fingerprints are “Unique” just like me!

Discuss how only you have your “unique” fingerprints. Teach the vocabulary word *unique* and talk with the children about how unique their fingerprints are. No one else on this whole Earth has our fingerprints! Then use a hand template or trace the student’s hand and use paint or a stamp pad to add each student’s fingerprints onto their own paper hand. Display the handprints in the room at eye level. Give the students magnifying glasses during center/free choice time and allow them to examine each other’s fingerprints. Ask if they can see the similarities and differences between everyone’s fingerprints. **GELDS CD-SS1.4b, SED1.4a**



Program and Staff Activity

Strings of Affirmation: Divide into groups of six to 10 and have teams sit in a circle. Give each team a ball of yarn. Have everyone in the group take turns tossing the ball of yarn to someone while sharing a positive thought or compliment about that person. The person with the yarn then pinches a piece of yarn in his hand and throws the ball to someone else. Continue until there is a large web. When everyone has been affirmed, go around with scissors, and snip the connections, having the teacher keep their piece as a symbol of staff unity and connectedness. You can even have them write the affirmation they heard about themselves on a piece of masking tape and wrap it around their piece of yarn. If someone is new, teachers can say something encouraging or offer a helpful piece of information, like the best piece of teaching advice they ever received.



Candy Confessions: Have each teacher choose three pieces of candy from a variety of candies that are available. Once they have chosen their favorites, put up the following chart:

Candy Confession Chart

Hershey's Kisses = What is your favorite thing about working with children and families?

M&M's = What is your favorite way to spend a day off?

Gum = What is your favorite meal to eat/make?

Skittles = What's one thing that can instantly make your day better?

Kit Kat = Who do you admire most in the world?

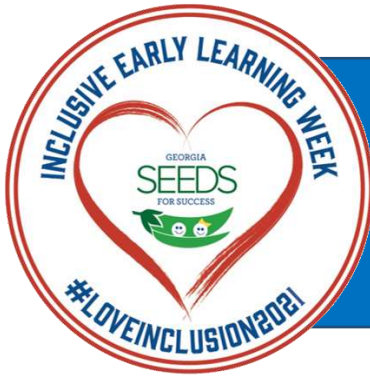


Ask each person to take turns using the chart to share their responses with the rest of their colleagues. This activity is a fun way to team build while enjoying a sweet treat!

Family Engagement Activity

What Makes Me Special: Send each child home with a Ziploc bag. Ask families to help their child choose an item that is special or important to their family and talk about why it is special. Ask families to send the bag back to school with their child. Be sure to check the bags returning to school to ensure all items are school appropriate. During large group, hold up each bag and ask the other children to guess which classmate's object is inside. Take turns making guesses and predictions. This can also be used as a center activity. Place the bags on a table with the objects face up and the child's name on the back of bag. Have the students guess whose item it is before turning it over to see if they are correct. **GELDS: SC-SS5.4b**





Tremendous TEAMwork Tuesday

Working together to accomplish a goal

#LoveInclusion2021

Classroom Activities

Infants and Toddlers:

Teamwork: When it is time to clean up play a cleanup song. This can be any song that you choose, so make it fun and upbeat! Work with the students and make it a game by having them work together to clean up all the toys before the music stops. **GELDS: SED5.1b**



Preschool and Pre-K:

Scavenger Hunt: Print out a page of pictures of 8-10 objects located in your classroom (e.g., a toy, book, crayon). Make sure that all items pictured are located in the classroom and within student reach. Divide students into groups of 2-3. Give each group a crayon and a copy of the printed page of pictures. When the search begins, a teacher should model the process of choosing a picture, looking for the item, then crossing that item off of the page. Groups will then work together to find the objects located on their picture page, crossing each item off as it is found. **GELDS: SED5.4b**



Program and Staff Activity

Teacher Tidal Wave: Give your staff this scenario: The school is about to be destroyed by a huge wave and you are the only one left in the building. You have plenty of time to escape unharmed and take with you only the necessary items for “teacher survival.” The group will brainstorm a list of things teachers cannot survive without in the classroom. Have everyone draft their own list independently at first. Next, have teachers join in small groups. Then have the groups narrow the list to the top 10 items needed for teacher survival! This can be helpful for the beginning teachers in your group who may like to hear from your seasoned veterans about how to prioritize what is needed for the year ahead.



Link Up: Have a teacher stand and share one thing about their professional life (inspirations, education, favorite teaching moment) and ask other team members to stand up as soon as they hear something that they have in common with the teacher. Ask participants to remain standing. Next, ask a second team member to share, repeating the cycle. Other teachers stand up to share when they hear something they share with the teacher. The activity continues until everyone is standing. This can be done



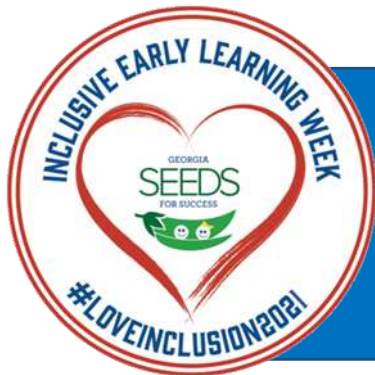
with personal information as well, such as favorite TV show, hobby, favorite childhood memory, favorite subject in school, etc.

Family Engagement Activity

Home Helpers: Talk to your child about the different jobs that each person in the home does to keep your home functioning and in order. Discuss jobs such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, or yardwork. Have your child help with different household jobs that different members of the family usually do. Let your child decide if the job is easy or hard, was it a job they enjoyed? Then talk about teamwork and how teamwork in the household can make home chores easier for everyone if we all work together!



Optional: If possible, you can also ask families to send in or email a photo of their child accomplishing a job at home to share with the class. **GELDS: SD-SS1.4a**



Awesome FRIENDS Day

Wednesday

Creating classroom community

#LoveInclusion2021

Classroom Activities

Infants and Toddlers:

Morning Greetings: As a morning greeting, have children start a ritual of giving each other an elbow bump or an air five to greet each other as they arrive to class. You could also greet with a “wiggle and a wave”. This may look different for different classroom setups but would be a good way make quick interactions between each child every day! One resource can be found here: [Greeting Poster](#) **GELDS: SED2.1a**



Preschool and Pre-K:

Creating Classroom Community: Have students sit in a circle. Using a beach ball have each student toss the ball to another student while giving a friendship compliment to the student they toss the ball to. Teachers will need to demonstrate first. For example, one teacher tosses the ball to their co-teacher and says, “I like how you are always smiling.” Then, the co-teacher can toss the ball to a student and give another example such as “I like the way you always say please and thank you!” The students will then continue passing the ball to one another until everyone has received at least one friendship compliment. **GELDS: SED 2.4b**



Program and Staff Activity

It’s a Small World After All: In this activity, have teachers find a partner and list five things they have in common with each other. For round two, have them find another partner with whom they share at least one commonality from their list. These new partners must then make a new list of five things they have in common. Rounds continue until all the teachers have at least one thing in common with everyone else in the room.



We Are All in This Together: Draw the outline of a large rectangle with painter’s tape in your meeting room and have everyone stand around the outside. This shape represents your “Struggle Bus”. When you name a specific classroom-related challenge, those who can relate should hop on the struggle bus. Ask questions like: “Who has difficulty with lesson planning?” and “Who finds mornings to be more challenging than afternoons?” Include some funny questions like, “Who has hidden chocolate in their classroom for emergencies?” For Administrators, this would be a great opportunity to empathize and paraphrase teacher responses. follow up with some problem-solving prompts such as, “What are some ways you have overcome your classroom struggles?” Have those who are not on the bus share how they cope with and conquer the challenge that has been shared. This is a great team-building activity so that staff can share their struggles while feeling supported with helpful tips from the team.



Family Engagement Activity

Celebrate Friendships: Talk with your child about what makes a good friend. Ask them to share things that good friends say and do that make them so wonderful. Then work together to make a list of all of the people that your child calls a friend. Ask your child to share stories of why he or she calls each person on the list a friend. **GELDS: SED 5.4a**





Totally TALENTED

Thursday

Celebrating talents and interests

#LoveInclusion2021

Classroom Activities

Infants and Toddlers:

Freeze Dance: Play music for the class and dance together. When the music stops, everyone should freeze. Encourage children to show off their best dance moves! Teachers may need to model the activity a few times for the children. When the music starts again, everyone continues to dance. Repeat this start and stop pattern with shorter and longer time spans as the children dance. Ask children if there were ways that they danced the same. Notice and acknowledge unique dance moves that the children are making.

GELDS: PMD5.2b



Preschool and Pre-K:

Celebrating Talents and Interests: Place students in pairs, give each pair of students a sheet of white construction paper, various colors of paint, and brushes. Have the pairs of students sit across from each other at the table and paint a portrait of each other. Once the painting dries, have the student autograph their painting then place the art show on display. The teachers can join in by painting each other as well! **GELDS: CD-CD2.4a**



Program and Staff Activity

Talent Show with a Twist: For this team-builder, have everyone write down a secret talent or skill they have or would like to learn. Place the papers in a hat to mix them up and take turns guessing all of your colleague's talents and skills. Those who are comfortable can demonstrate their secret talent. Those who don't want to demonstrate can describe the talent or skill they have or would like to learn. Not only is this a way to get to know co-workers a little better, but this could also be a great motivator to set and accomplish new personal goals.



Have You Ever: This is an interactive team-building game that gets your group up and moving around. To play this game, arrange the chairs in a circle. Then choose one person to start the game by standing in the middle of the circle. The person standing in the middle of the circle will say, "Have you ever ..." and then describe a personal or professional accomplishment. For example, "Have you ever participated in a 5k run?" All of the teachers who have also achieved that accomplishment then stand up and find a new seat to sit in. Have one of the teachers who did not stand up be the next to ask a question.



Family Engagement Activity

Celebrating talents and interests: Ask families if they have a special talent or unique skill, they would like to share with the class such as being a professional storyteller, performing a magic trick, playing a musical instrument, or maybe creating a unique craft. Invite parents who would like to showcase their skills to visit the classrooms virtually or face-to-face depending on your school or center's current COVID guidelines.



GELDS: SED5.4d



Super FRIEND Friday

Being a great friend to everyone

#LoveInclusion2021

Classroom Activities

Infants and Toddlers:

Friendship Tree: Draw a tree on a large sheet of paper. Then with teacher assistance, let each student paint their hand and make a handprint to form the leaves of a Friendship Tree. Display the Friendship Tree in the classroom. Talk to the children about how we are all different, but we all come together to make the “class” tree complete by being super friends to each other.

GELDS: SED5.1a



Preschool and Pre-K:

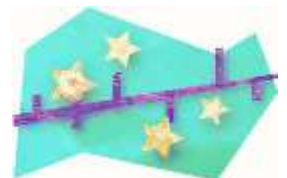
Cotton or Sandpaper: Gather some cotton balls and sandpaper. Show the students the cotton balls, letting each student touch them. Then talk about how they feel. Are they soft, fluffy, and light? Then show the students a piece of sandpaper and let them feel that also. Discuss how it feels different. Is it rough, scratchy, and pokey? Now refer to the conversation about friends. Explain that when we speak to our friends nicely, we are using cotton words. All these cotton words make us feel better, they make us smile and let us know that our friends care. Then explain how the sandpaper words hurt, they are mean words, like name calling, or yelling and they hurt our feelings just like the sandpaper does.



Next, share examples like “What if Billy and Annie both wanted to play with this toy? How can you use cotton words to ask for a toy? How might they ask using sandpaper words?” Then stop and ask the class if sandpaper words or cotton words would work better. You can also give examples with scenarios that are relevant to your classroom. Practice incorporating “cotton” words into friendship conversations on a daily basis. **GELDS: SED5.4d**

Program and Staff Activity

Chronology Countdown: This is a great way to visualize the history of your school. Create a large timeline with your school’s “history” and then add in important dates, such as, when staff members arrived, when they switched positions and other significant moments in the school’s history. Make sure to include fun things like when younger teachers were born compared to when some of your older staff started their careers! You can leave it up in your break room as a reminder of all you have accomplished as a team.



Memory Match Up: Before the exercise, make cards with pairs of objects commonly found at school: pencil/paper, desk/chair, slide/swing, basketball/hoop, etc. Write each item on separate index cards and tape them on participants' backs as they come into the room. Have everyone try to find their other half, asking only yes/no questions. When they find their match, have them sit down and find out three new things (something new they tried over the summer, a favorite Netflix show, etc.) about the other person. At the end, ask participants to share something new that they learned about their partner with the rest of the group.



Family Engagement Activity

Family Friendship Bracelets: Make family friendship bracelets using items you have at home, this can be hair ties, yarn, string, be creative! Make enough so that each family member can earn a few each afternoon as your family does their chores, homework, sports, or other routines. When someone shows an act of friendship and/or kindness to another family member (for example, by helping them or giving them a compliment), they earn a family friendship bracelet. Earning a bracelet should be simple and fun. Make sure all family members have different opportunities to earn a bracelet. See who can earn the most bracelets in one afternoon. **GELDS: SED5.4d**

