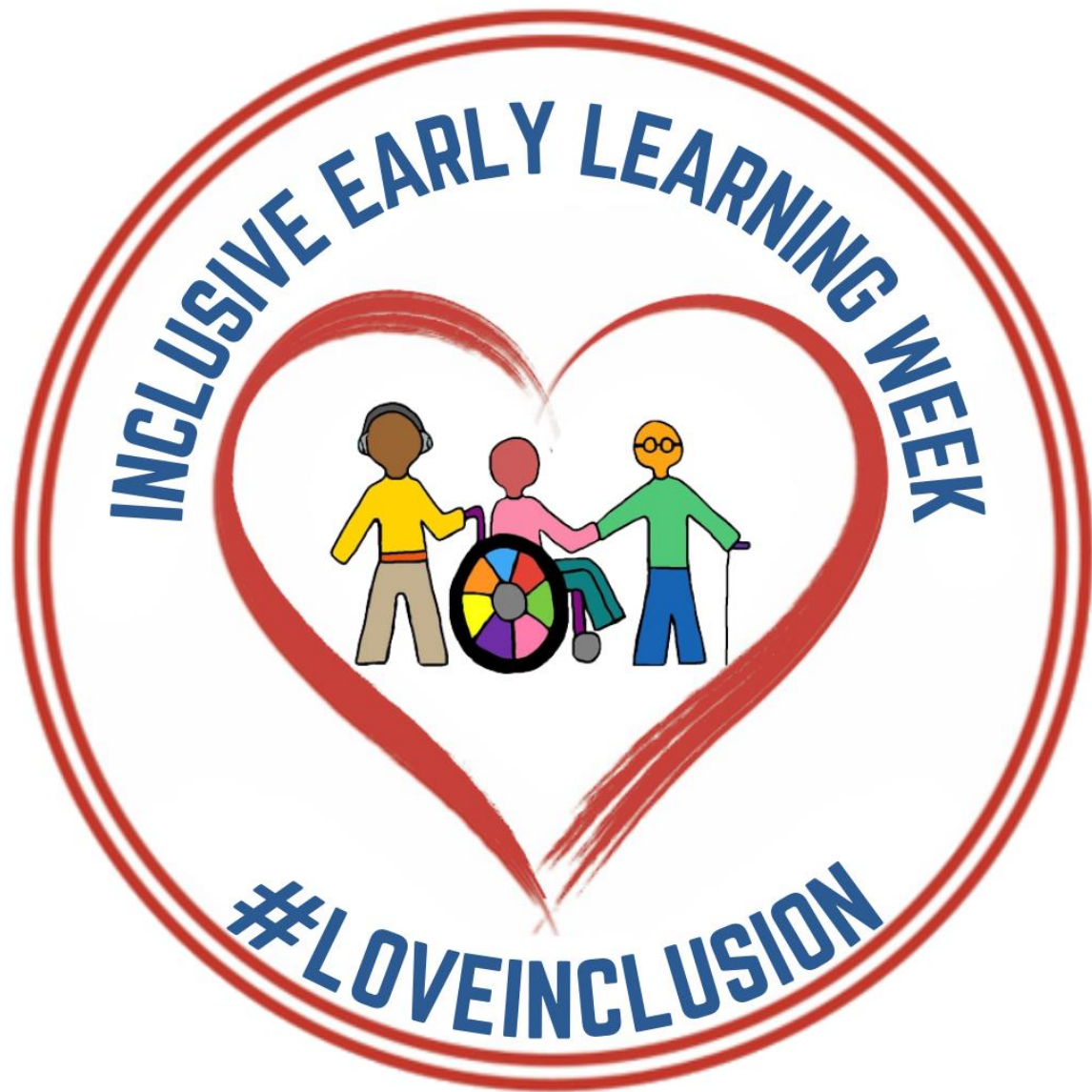


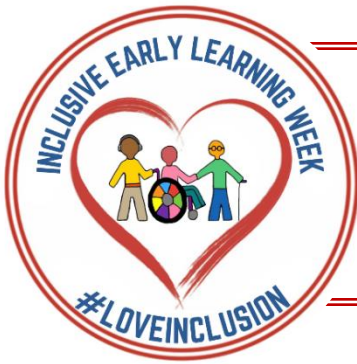
Celebration Toolkit

Inclusive Early Learning Week



February 11-16, 2024

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



The **mission** of DECAL's Inclusive Early Learning Week (IELW) 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!

Past Celebration Toolkits

For more ideas, see the previous versions of toolkits also available!

- [2023 Provider Toolkit](#)
- [2022 Provider Toolkit](#)
- [2021 Provider Toolkit](#)
- [2020 Provider Toolkit](#)

Social Media

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



CONTEST ALERT

#LoveInclusion

Inclusion Contest



CALLING ALL EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS!


Family child care, child care centers, and Georgia's Pre-K are ALL eligible to participate! It's easy to enter to **WIN!** Just follow these steps:

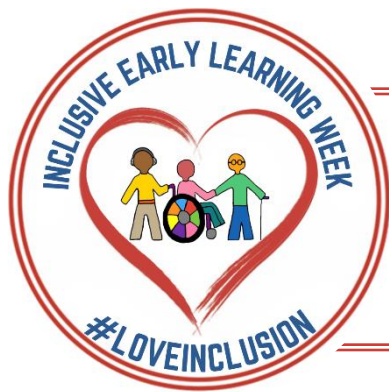
1. Use the Inclusive Early Learning Week toolkit to plan activities within your program and with families at home to celebrate inclusion. Take photos of children, families, and staff participating in classroom activities or program events that celebrate differences and inclusion. You can also showcase materials created for lessons or any other evidence showing how you are celebrating each day's theme.
2. Submit the photo via email to inclusion@dec.al.ga.gov to be entered into the drawing. Each **program** that submits photos is considered one entry into the contest. Winners will be randomly drawn on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday - the more entries you have at your program, the better your odds of winning! A total of four prizes will be given! Spread the word!
3. Along with photo submissions, include your program name and contact information so we can deliver prizes to winners.
4. Although each program can only win once, you can enter to win multiple times!
5. Entries must be submitted by 3pm each day. Winners will be announced on Facebook each evening at 5pm!



****DISCLAIMER: Entries may be shared on DECAL's Social Media to highlight the week.****

Example Entry:

Send	From	Inclusion@dec.al.ga.gov
	To	<input type="text" value="Inclusion"/>
	Cc	
	Subject	IELW Contest
		
<p>Here is our contest entry for Tremendous Teamwork Tuesday! I planned an activity for children to paint a picture together with a classmate.</p> <p>My name is John Doe and I work at Example Child Care Learning Center in Example City. My phone number is 555-555-5555.</p> <p>We would love for you to share on DECAL's Social Media Pages! #LoveInclusion</p> <p>Thanks and "see" you this afternoon for the Facebook Live Winner Announcement!</p>		



Self-Care Sunday

Promoting Self-Care

#LoveInclusion



Infant: Incorporating music into any routine can reduce stress and help improve a baby's mood, alertness, and memory. Playing music every morning can help set a positive tone for a baby's day. Choose a simple song with a repetitive chorus, while acting out any prompts with your infant, allowing them to be a part of the process. **CD-CR1.0a Responds to music.**



Toddler: Mindfulness walks are about being present in the moment, while enjoying the benefits of light exercise. Allowing toddlers to lead the way during a walk and letting them explore the environment helps foster a child's curiosity, gives them a sense of control, and independence (given the environment is safe for choices). **APL3.1b Demonstrates focus on a specific task or activity.**



Bright Idea: Playing a game like, "I Spy", helps promote and maintain a toddler's engagement during a mindfulness walk.



Preschool/Pre-K: Give children a feather, or if you do not have a feather, instruct children to stick up their thumbs. Tell your child to pretend that each feather (or thumb) is a birthday candle that they must blow out. Have them breathe deeply, and then exhale slowly and powerfully to blow out the candle. Repeat a few times, and discuss with children how they feel, using words like calm or relaxed. **SED3.4b Regulates own emotions and behaviors and seeks out adult support when needed.**



Bright Idea: Use pictures of candles or real birthday candles (without a flame) to pretend!



Staff: Sharing healthy meals with others is a fun and engaging method to engage in self-care and improve your diet. Encourage staff to pick a healthy dish to share with each other, for example, a staff bake-off in which everyone brings baked goods to share while enjoying the benefits of healthy eating, while enjoying a meal together. This is a wonderful activity, especially for afterhours staff meetings!

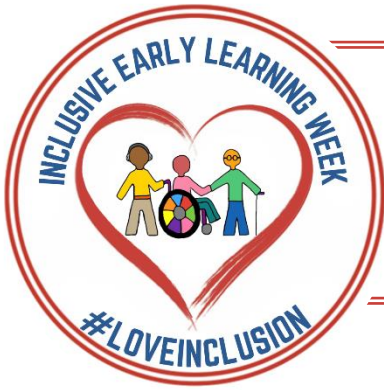
Extra Tip: Spending time with a good friend, family member, or even a pet can relieve stress. Your loved ones are there to support you and offer a safe place for you to express your feelings and frustrations. Remember that you are not alone!



Families: Board games, puzzles, and simple games like charades are all great for family members of all ages. Consider having simple prizes for the winner, like choosing what to have for dessert or a fun weekend activity is a great incentive. You can play games focused on emotions like charades and act out different feelings like brave, cranky, joyful, angry, and hopeful. Talking about feelings helps us all learn to process them better, which is a big part of self-care.



Book Suggestion: "Who I Am" by Susan Verde



Marvelous ME Monday

Recognizing Individuality

#LoveInclusion



Infant: Have some flashlight fun by dimming the lights and pointing out the shadow and body parts of the infants. Use a small flashlight when pointing to their body parts and avoid shining light into their eyes. Get creative with their shadow and pointing to different body parts that make them unique! **CD-SC3.0B Discovers body parts.**



Bright Idea: Encourage the families to do this activity at home with their babies too.



Resource: [Link to All About Me Infant Board](#)



Toddler: Place large pieces of butcher paper on the floor (enough for the children to lay flat on their back) or take this activity outside for chalk drawings. Have each child lay flat and outline their bodies with either markers or chalk if outdoors. Have the children stand up and talk with them about the parts of their body, their height, shapes that they see, etc. Have chalk, markers, and crayons available for children to decorate their life-size drawings. **CD-SS1.2b Uses simple phrases to demonstrate an emerging awareness of differences and/or similarities between self and others.**



Preschool/Pre-K: Begin by reading the book, “What I Like About Me! A Book Celebrating Differences”. Engage in conversation with your students about things that make them unique like their families, facial features, hair color, things that they like, their favorite colors, etc. After discussion, provide various art materials for each child to create their own “All About Me” book. Once the books are complete, display them in an area in the classroom where children and families can view them. **CLL9.3c Shows emerging awareness that writing can be used for a variety of purposes.**



Staff: Have your staff submit fun facts about themselves to you (places visited, met a celebrity, number of siblings, play an instrument, etc.). Create bingo cards with this information and do not include their names. You can search for “create your own bingo” in your web browser if you’d like a bingo template. Pass the bingo cards out to staff and have them find the coworkers that the bingo space relates to. Whoever gets bingo first wins!



Families: Create an empty space along a wall within your program. Invite families to add photos, messages, or items to the wall that represents them and makes them unique. If needed, provide a table for families to place items on.



Book Suggestion: “What If We Were All the Same!” by C.M. Harris



Tremendous TEAMwork Tuesday

Working together to accomplish a goal

#LoveInclusion



Infant: Create a class painting. Fold a clear shower curtain in half, tape one half to the floor, pour some paint onto the curtain and fold the other half over the top and tape it down. Have the babies roll or crawl on the shower curtain to create a classroom mural. Hang the mural in the classroom or the hallway for everyone to admire. **CD-CR2.0a Explores simple art materials.**



Toddler: Tape off a large square on the floor of your classroom and throw handfuls of pom poms or cotton balls on the floor. Give each child a small broom and encourage them to work together to sweep the pom poms into the square. **PDM5.1a Gains control and coordination of body movements.**



Preschool/Pre-K: Play a game of musical chairs with your class. Before you begin, explain that in this game of “musical chairs” the players are more important than the chairs, so the only rule change is that after each round you take away a chair, but you keep all the people. It’s up to the group’s imagination to figure out how to make a place for everyone. **SED 5.3b Engages in mutual, cooperative play AND/OR SED 5.4b Plays cooperatively with a few peers for a sustained period of time.**



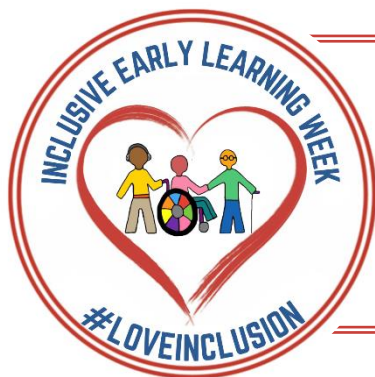
Staff: Spaghetti Tower: Divide your staff into groups of 2-8 people. Give each team a box of uncooked spaghetti noodles and a bag of mini marshmallows. The teams have a set amount of time (10-15 minutes) during which they attempt to build the largest tower with the supplies given. When the time runs out, measure each tower. The group with the tallest tower wins a prize!



Families: Tell a story about going on a trip together using the alphabet! Pretend you are packing your suitcase, and you need to pack items that start with every letter of the alphabet. Someone starts the game by saying, “We’re going on a trip, and we are packing our “_____” (item that starts with an “A”. The next person adds an item that starts with “B” and so on. There is nothing competitive about the game, it’s just fun and gets everyone thinking about words and letter sounds. It also encourages teamwork to help when someone is stuck and can’t think of an item!



Book Suggestion: “The Gigantic Turnip” by Aleksei Tolstoy



WIND DOWN Wednesday

Creating a Calm Classroom and Community

#LoveInclusion



Infant: Create sensory bags for infants to explore using laminating pouches, a hot iron, hair gel, and small items such as buttons, googly eyes, foam numbers, sequins, or wooden hearts. Cut your laminating pouch, using the iron on medium heat, seal 3 sides of the pouch closed; leaving the 4th edge open so you can fill the sensory bag. Spoon a small amount of the hair gel into the sensory bag then add your objects to the bag for the babies to discover. Wipe away any hair gel from the edge of the pouch then seal the final edge of the pouch. Once the edges are cool, you are ready to explore! Talk about the bags with infants as they squeeze. These are great sensory toys that allow babies to explore objects that are normally too small or unsafe for them to handle. **PDM4.0b Manipulates objects to see what will happen.**



Toddler: Sleeping, Sleeping, All the Children are Sleeping Game: Children pretend to sleep and the teacher sings, “sleeping, sleeping, all the children are sleeping.” Once children are pretending to sleep, the teacher says, “and when they woke up, they were (name any animal)!” Children wake up and pretend to act like the animal named. The teacher repeats the song and suggests other animals. Repeat for a few rounds. **CLL1.1b Listens to and follows simple directions**



Preschool/Pre-K: Give each child a cutout of a butterfly or a similar shape. Have the child sit quietly and try to balance the butterfly on his/her nose, holding it there for several seconds. After having the opportunity to practice in a group several times, give all the children butterflies to keep in their cubbies. Encourage the children to use this technique when they feel the need to calm down. **SED3.4b Regulates own emotions and behaviors and seeks out adult support when needed**



Bright Idea: Provide a variety of soft materials, calming books, headphones, hats, bean bags chairs, and calm-down strategies to put in your calming areas.



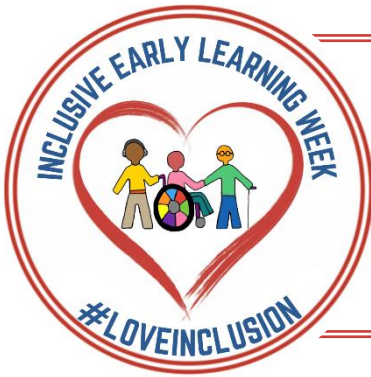
Staff: Provide a small notebook/journal for your staff members and encourage them to start keeping a “Gratitude Journal” by writing down 3 things they are grateful for every day. This will help shift to a more positive mindset.



Families: Take a family walk through the neighborhood or in the park. Pay special attention to the sounds you hear and the different things you can see. Count the number of cars you see or listen for different types of bird calls. This is a great way to get exercise while practicing calming breaths at the same time.



Book Suggestion: I'm Just a Kid: A Social-Emotional Book about Self-Regulation (Social Emotional Books) by [Chandeale Morris](#) (Author), [Jeric Tan](#) (Illustrator)



Totally TALENTED Thursday

Celebrating talents and interests

#LoveInclusion



Infant: Let's get moving! Choose songs to sing and move to that allow infants to show off their fine and gross motor skills. Fingerplays such as "The Itsy-Bitsy Spider", "If You're Happy and You Know It", and "The Wheels on the Bus" are just a few to engage infants in music and movement. **CD-CR4.0a Shows interest in rhymes, finger plays and stories with props.**



Toddler: Dance party time! Encourage toddlers to show off their dance moves by playing their favorite songs. "Freeze Dance", "Tooty Ta", and "The Penguin Dance" can be used along with your classroom go-to. **CD-CR1.2a Dances to and becomes engaged in music and movement.**



Bright Idea: Consider the abilities of all children and make sure the activities are movements all can attempt. For example, if all children are not able to walk, consider bear crawls, snake slithers, and dog rollovers.



Preschool/Pre-K: Let each child's talent shine by putting on a talent show! Spend time during the week helping children identify their special talents. Take your talents on the road by holding a talent show for the center, infant, and/or toddler classes. **SED1.3c Shows sense of satisfaction in his/her own abilities, preferences, and accomplishments.**



Staff: Each staff member brings something unique to their classroom and the center! Highlight the special talents/abilities that all staff members have. Create stars for staff to write on and have them name the staff member and their special talent/ability. Decorate areas around your program with their stars to showcase their abilities!



Resource: Example of a staff shout-out bulletin board:

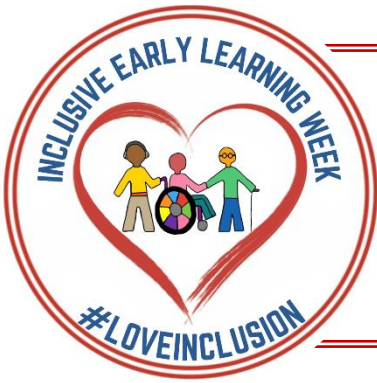
<https://cdn.teachstarter.com/filesserver/2018/11/staff-shoutout.jpg>



Families: What is one thing that you enjoy doing together as a family? It could be a favorite place you visit together, a favorite song that you sing... you name it! Take or draw pictures of your favorite family activity together and bring it to your child's school. Programs are invited to share the drawings and photos around the classrooms and program hallways.



Book Suggestion: "Shy Sofia" by CB Crew



Super FRIEND Friday

Being a great friend to everyone

#LoveInclusion



Infant: As friends enter the room, generate excitement with a smile on your face and saying, "Look who just arrived! It's Jacob! Let's all wave and smile at Jacob." **SED5.0a Demonstrates interest/excitement when other students enter the room.**



Toddler: Use a puppet to play a gentle hugging game. Use the puppet to explain to children that a hug can make you feel better when you are sad or mad. You can encourage children to hug the puppet or to offer a hug to a friend. Talk about how we can be good friends to one another by comforting each other with a hug or an embrace. **SED5.1d Shows awareness of feelings displayed by peers.**



Bright idea: If a child feels uncomfortable giving a hug, ask them to give their friend a high-five, or a wink, instead!



Resource: View this puppet shows with a story about feelings and friendship here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKXZO_g3kZI



Preschool/Pre-K: Teach children the friendship rhyme below. During outdoor time, encourage children to recite the rhyme while playing rhythmic activities, such as jump rope or hopscotch. "1, 2, 3, you are friends with me. 4, 5, 6, we make a perfect mix. 7, 8, 9, we have fun all the time. Shake my hand, shake my hand that's 10!" **PDM5.4a Coordinates movements to perform more complex tasks.**



Staff: Snowball: This is a great activity to get people out of their seats to move around while also breaking the ice. Start by asking a question relevant to your group and ask each participant to write an answer on a piece of paper. Once that's done, invite everyone to crumple their paper and come to the center of the room to have a snowball fight! After a few minutes, ask everyone to keep a snowball and find the person who wrote the answer. Not only does this team building exercise invite energy into the room, but it encourages people to get to know each other too.



Families: Make a home video as a family using a cell phone camera. Record a clip of each family member explaining what it means to be a good friend. Watch the video together as a family, once editing is complete. Bonding may occur as a side effect of this activity!



Bright Idea: Ask your families if they would like to share their videos at school and show them on the screen as families arrive in the morning.



Book Suggestion: "Our Diversity Makes Us Stronger" by Elizabeth Cole