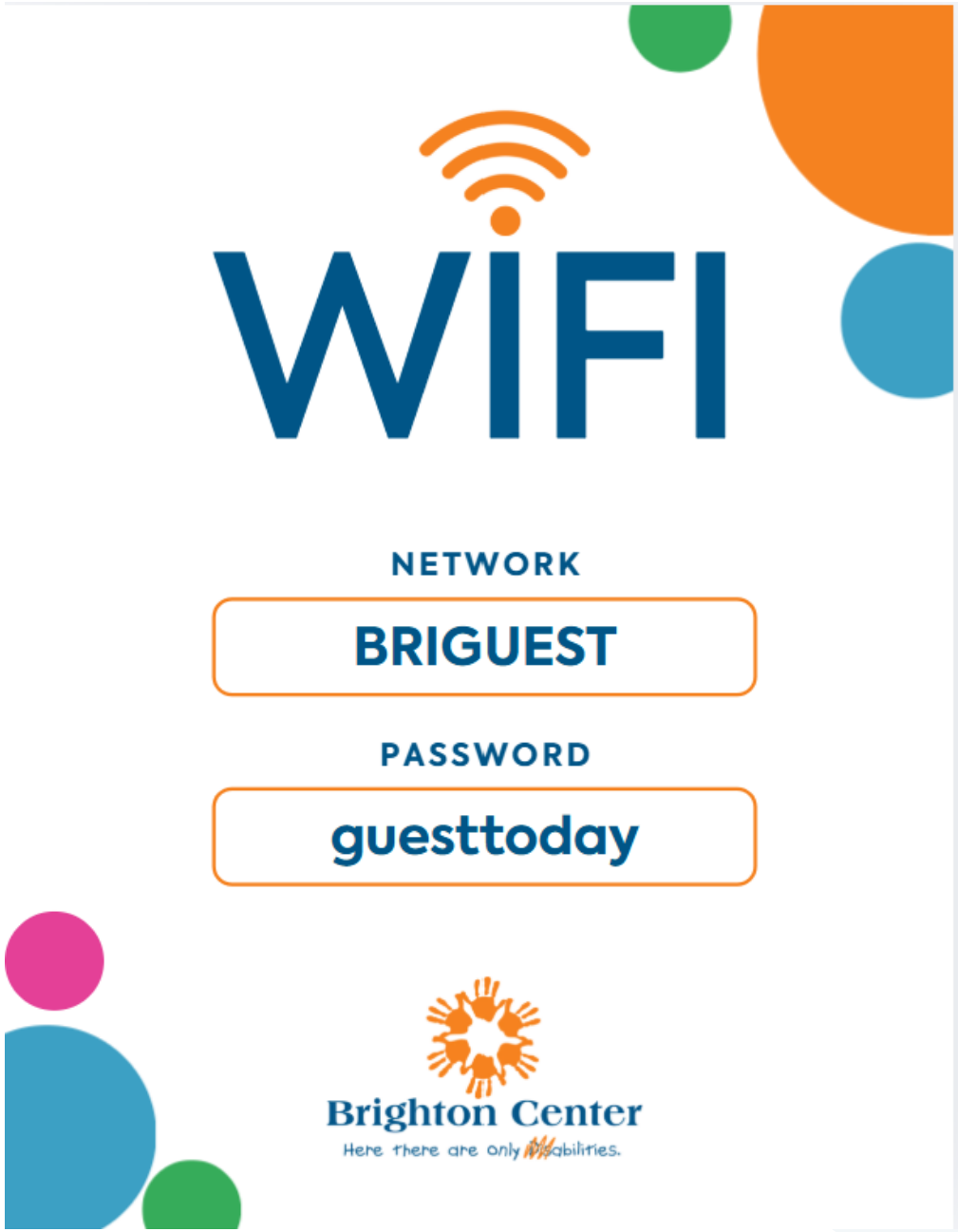
Brighton Center
Here there are only Abilities.

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Pathways to Inclusion Conference

Hosted by Brighton Center in partnership with Early Matters San Antonio


WIFI
NETWORK
BRIGUEST
PASSWORD
guesttoday
Brighton Center
Here there are only Disabilities.

Brighton Center
Here there are only Abilities.

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Welcome to Brighton Center

Please complete Pre-Survey

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Here there are only Abilities.



Tessa Harlin
Early Matters, Partner Engagement Director



Juan Hernandez,
Brighton Center
Special Education Support Services Director

Who We Are – Brighton Center x Early Matters

Brighton Center

Our Mission

> ***"We exist to provide the right help at the right time to children of all abilities, empowering them to discover new possibilities."***

What this means in practice:

- Early, timely intervention matters
- Every child has potential
- Families are essential partners
- **Inclusion is not optional—it's foundational**

Early Matters

Community Collaborative

A collective of **over 70 partner organizations** and **300+ members** working together to implement a community-created Early Childhood Impact Plan.

Access **Affordability** **Educator Pipeline**

The Partnership Strategy

Aligning Early Matters' focus on **quality systems-building** with Brighton's expertise in **inclusive, family-centered services** to create stronger outcomes for children and build a more responsive early childhood community.

Who We Serve

Brighton Center provides comprehensive support to our entire community ecosystem.

Children of All Abilities

From early intervention through preschool and preparing for kindergarten

Children with developmental delays and disabilities

Kids navigating behavioral challenges

Families Navigating

Parents seeking the right help at the right time

Families needing special education advocacy

Caregivers wanting to be active participants in therapy

Those looking for inclusive, supportive communities

Community Partners

Early childhood educators needing practical classroom strategies

Program directors building inclusive environments

Local school districts and therapy providers

Community advocates (like Early Matters)

Our Programs & Services

A high-level overview of Brighton Center's comprehensive continuum of care.

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)

In-home, family-centered services

Developmental support from birth to 3

Individualized family service plans

Preschool Programs

Inclusive classroom environments

Focus on school readiness

Social-emotional development

Pediatric Therapy Clinic

Speech Therapy (SLP)

Occupational Therapy (OT)

Physical Therapy (PT)

Preschool Intervention Team (PIT)

Specialized support within classrooms

Collaboration with teachers to implement strategies

Focus on embedding therapy into daily routines and coaching model

Special Education Support Services

Understand and access public school special education

Review evaluations and IEPs

Attend ARD meetings with families

Why Inclusion Matters

Key Statistics

- **1/6** Children experience developmental delays
- **90%** Brain development occurs before age 5
- **80%** Of adult brain size reached by age 3

The Benefits

- ✓ Better developmental outcomes
- ✓ Stronger social-emotional growth
- ✓ Increased independence

Inclusion benefits ALL children, not only those receiving services.

Conference Goals

- Share practical, usable strategies
- Bridge therapy and classroom practice
- Expand access to inclusive practices
- Support community educators

Community Target

70% Kinder-Ready by 2030

Our Expertise

Multidisciplinary Team Approach

- Therapists (SLP, OT, PT)
- Early Intervention Specialists
- Educators
- Special Education Consultants

Deep Experience In

- Inclusion best practices
- Classroom-based interventions
- Coaching educators and caregivers
- Data-informed and outcomes-driven services

Why We Are Hosting the Inclusion Conference

Why We Are Hosting

- To share our expertise with the early childhood community
- To equip educators with practical, usable strategies
- To bridge the gap between therapy and classroom implementation
- To increase access to inclusive practices across all community programs
- To support educators who often feel under-resourced in this area

What Attendees Can Expect

- Real-world strategies from practicing experts
- Classroom-ready tools and techniques
- Collaboration between therapists and educators
- A focus on practical application, not just theory

Get Up and Dance

Section 2: Early Identification of Developmental Delays and Disabilities

Presented By:
Maddison Carolin, MAT

Tutelage

1 **a :** instruction especially of an individual

b : a guiding influence

> a business under the *tutelage* of a new director

2 **:** the state of being under a guardian or tutor

3 **a :** an act or process of serving as guardian or protector **:**
GUARDIANSHIP



Objectives

1. I can identify milestones.
2. I can identify early indicators of a delay.
3. I can identify resources for myself and families.

Brain Development Before 5



By age 5, the brain reaches roughly 90% of its adult size. Many delays go unidentified before kindergarten.

Brain Development Before 5

> *Many things can wait. Children cannot. Today their bones are being formed, their blood is being made, their senses are being developed. To them we cannot say "tomorrow."*

GABRIELA MISTRAL

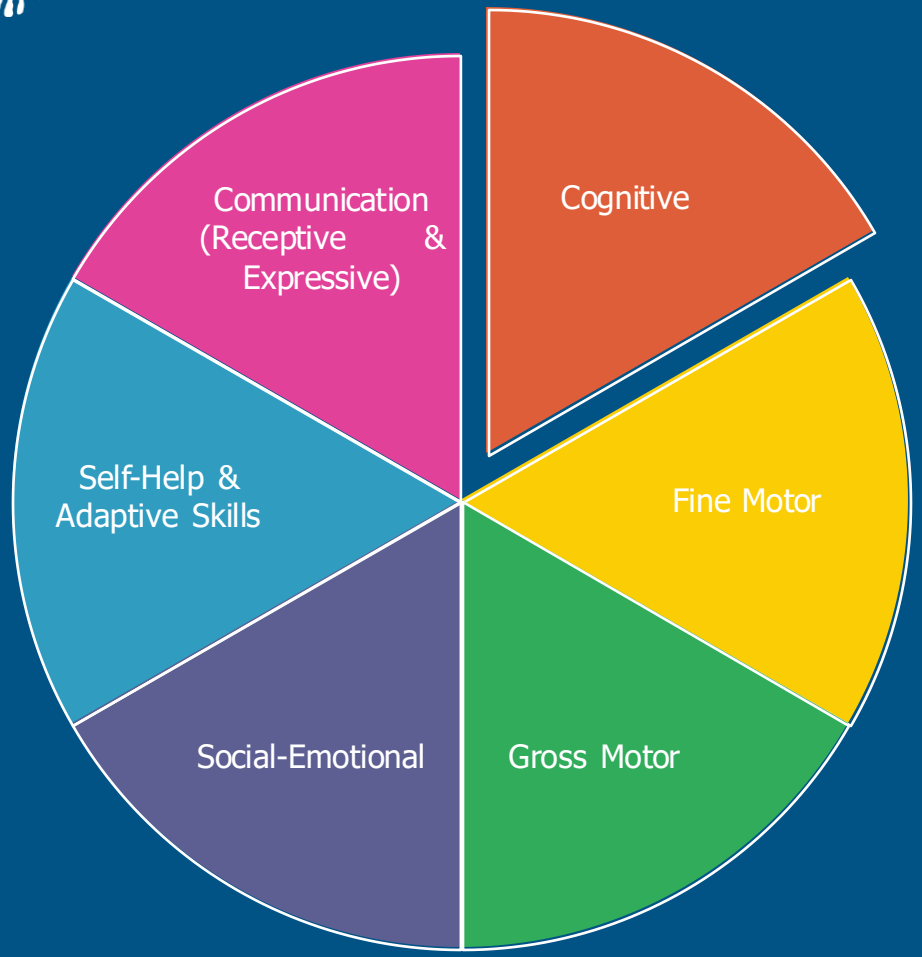
Why Early Identification Matters



1 in 6 children experience developmental delays

Delay of What?

Milestones!



Areas of Development

Confidence Check-In

On a scale of 1-10, how confident do you feel *knowing* early childhood milestones?

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

🙄 🌫️ "Raincheck. Don't call on me. I'm blending into the wall."

🎤 🕺 "GIVE ME THE MIC. I was *born* for this moment."

On a scale of 1-10, how confident do you feel *discussing* milestones with parents/caregivers or colleagues?



Why Understand Milestones?

- Identify Strengths and Needs
- Early Detection of Delays
- Intentional Teaching
- Build a Strong Foundation and Relationship

What intervention might help children with delays?

Childcare or Preschool!

Milestone vs Average

Milestone: what "most" children can do, 90th percentile, a skill

Average: average timing that children can achieve that skill

Milestone

A developmental skill that most children are expected to achieve by a certain age range



Walking

Average

A statistical number that describes when most children tend to accomplish a milestone

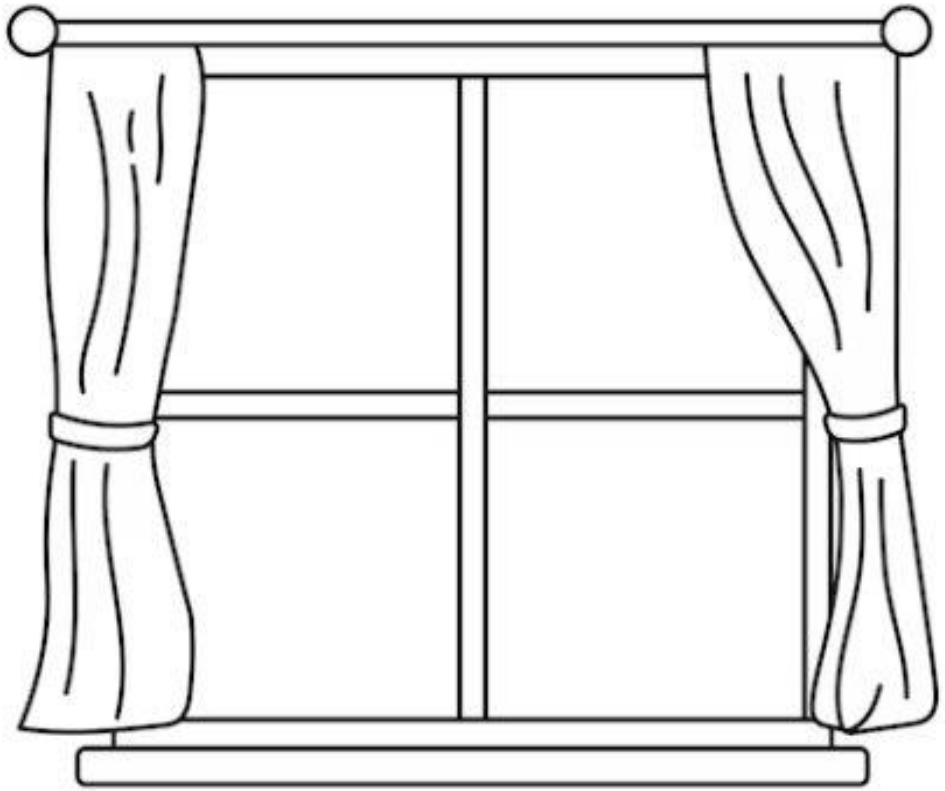


On average, most children walk around 12 months

Simple way to remember:

Milestone = the skill | Average = the timing

Milestone vs Average



Developmental Milestones, Strategies & Resources

CHILDREN'S LEARNING INSTITUTE™

Infant & Toddler DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLISTS

First Case Study Together

Leonel

18 months old, toddler classroom

He says “papa” for food. He also says mama. He loves to explore the classroom and loves the kitchen/dramatic play area. When you call his name, he doesn’t respond to his name. When he wants something like a toy or food, he grabs your hand to take you to what he wants. Mom shared that he is being raised in a bilingual household.

What milestones are being met?

What indicators of delay do you notice?

Case Study

Leonel

18 months old, toddler classroom

He says “papa” for food. He also says mama. He loves to explore the classroom and loves the kitchen/dramatic play area, making pretend food. When you call his name, he doesn’t respond to his name. When he wants something like a toy or food, he grabs your hand to take you to what he wants. Mom shared that he is being raised in a bilingual household.

What milestones are being met?

Strengths: Pretend play, has at least two words, bilingual

What indicators of delay do you notice?

Indicators of Delay: not pointing, not using 10+words

Small Group Activity: Case Studies

1. Groups of 1-3.

2. Read a case study together.

Questions to Answer

What milestones are being met?

What indicators of delay do you notice?

3. Discuss strategies you might use to support this child

Small Group Activity



Let's Discuss!

What milestones are being met?

What indicators of delay do you notice?



Now What?

Referral Process

Brighton Center prides itself in providing a well-organized, systematic referral process that ensures families receive prompt attention to ensure all babies get what they need.

3 ECI Programs In Bexar County

Brighton Center: Judson, Northeast, South San, Southwest, Randolph AFB

The Center for Health Care Services: San Antonio ISD, Fort Sam Houston, Harlendale, East Central, Southside, Somerset

Easter Seals: Northside, Edgewood, Alamo Heights, Medina Valley, Lackland, Schertz-Cibolo, Comal, Boerne

Who Can Refer?

Pediatricians

Parents

Family Members

Child Protective Services

Anyone!

Why Refer to ECI?

Early Identification: ECI supports children birth to 36 months with developmental delays or disabilities.

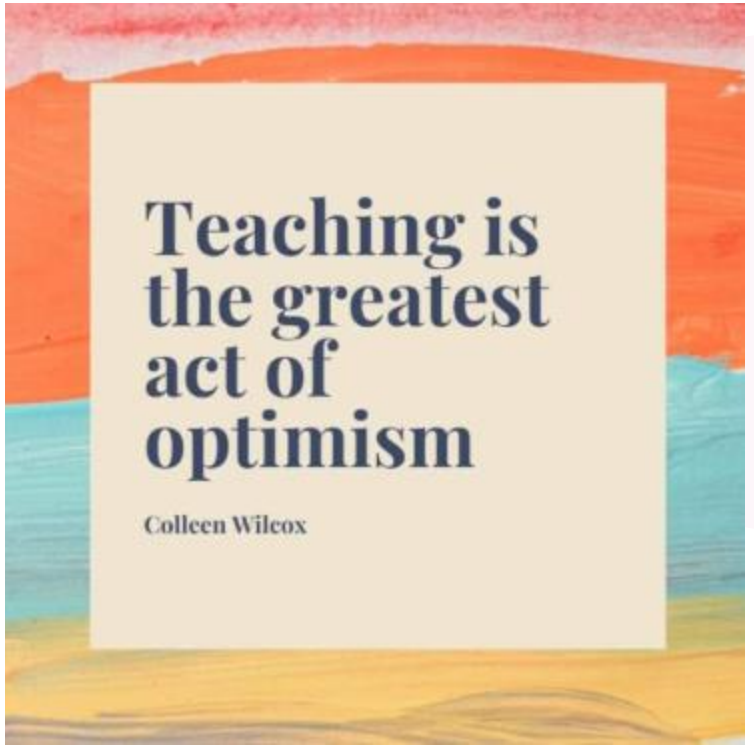
Natural Environment: Services are family-centered and provided in natural environments.

Support at the right time: ECI helps children participate in everyday routines and activities.

No Cost Evaluations: Developmental evaluations are provided at no cost to families.

Preschool is an intervention—you are part of the solution!

Understanding developmental milestones, early indicators of delay, and family-centered intervention changes trajectories.



Essential Resources & Tools

- Ages & Stages (ASQ) Overview Guide
- Local ECI Referral Pathway Maps
- Brighton Center Contact & Support

Confidence Check-In

On a scale of 1-10, how confident do you feel *knowing* early childhood milestones?

1



10

🙄 ⬜ "Raincheck. Don't call on me. I'm blending into the wallpaper."

🎤 🕺 "GIVE ME THE MIC. I was *born* for this moment."

On a scale of 1-10, how confident do you feel *discussing* milestones with parents/caregivers or colleagues?

Break Time

Take the next 15 Minutes to:

- Grab a snack or drink
- Use the restroom
- Go to your next Session

Section 3: What's Happening in the Classroom

Four Pillars of Inclusive Practice

Presented By:
Lauren Clancy and Mariah Sutton

Section 3: What's Happening in the Classroom

Sticky Note Activity: Where Do Challenges Show Up?

Reflect & Share

- Write 1-2 challenges you experience during each routine
- Post sticky notes on the matching routine poster
- We'll review together to identify patterns and common themes

- Pick Up/ Drop Off
- Circle Time
- Centers
- Transitions
- Meals

Common challenges occur during predictable parts of the daily routine



The Four Pillars of Inclusive Practice



Strong Relationships

Build trust and emotional safety for children, improve communication with families.



Structured Routines

Help children know what's happening, what's expected, what comes next.



Supportive Classroom Environments

Clear spaces help children understand where activities happen and how to use materials.



Intentional Teaching

Ensure lessons are developmentally appropriate, engaging, and meaningful.

These pillars maximize learning, increase participation, and reduce behavior challenges.

Strong Relationships — Why It Matters



- Build trust and emotional safety for children
- Improve communication with families
- Strengthen collaboration with leadership and support teams
- Ensure consistent strategies for children
- Support high-quality practices aligned with TRS and NAEYC standards

> *Helping educators understand that they are not alone in supporting children with delays. Inclusion is supported through collaboration, communication, and shared responsibility.*

Strong Relationships — What It Prevents



- ✕ Miscommunication between teachers and families
- ✕ Inconsistent strategies between classroom and support teams
- ✕ Teachers feeling isolated when challenges arise
- ✕ Delays in identifying or addressing children's needs
- ✕ Increased frustration for both educators and families

> *Strong relationships create a support system that helps educators respond to challenges more effectively.*

Strong Relationships — What Supports It



Teacher + Child

Predictable, responsive interactions build trust



Teacher + Family

Two-way communication and partnership



Teacher + ECI/Support

Coordinated plans and shared strategies



Teacher + Leadership

Shared problem-solving and feedback

Strong Relationships

Build Partnership Tools

Choose tools that strengthen partnership systems and collaboration. Explore materials that help build connections with families, leadership, and support teams.



Ways to build strong Partnerships

- ASQ overview and milestone guides – Directors/Owners
- Annual Family Questionnaire
- Family Conferences
- Working with Outside Therapy Teams
- Slow enrollment – Directors/Owners
- Brighton Family Input form
- Observation Form

Structured Routines — Why It Matters



- Helps children know what is happening
- Clarifies what is expected of them
- Shows children what comes next
- Supports smooth transitions between activities

> *When routines are clear and predictable, children are more likely to participate successfully throughout the day.*

Structured Routines — What It Prevents



- ✕ Difficulty during transitions between activities
- ✕ Resistance to starting or ending tasks
- ✕ Running, wandering, or leaving group activities
- ✕ Increased frustration or emotional outbursts

> *Predictable routines reduce confusion and help children navigate daily expectations with confidence.*

Structured Routines — What Supports It

Consistent Daily Schedule

Predictable order of activities throughout the day

Clear Expectations

Children understand what to do during each routine

Visual Schedules & Cues

Pictures and symbols help children follow along

Visual Timers

Support transitions and task completion

Supportive Classroom Environments — Why It Matters



- Help children understand where activities take place
- Show children how to use classroom materials
- Support children moving independently through the classroom
- Keep children engaged in learning activities
- Incorporate adaptive tools and equipment to ensure every child can access, engage, and succeed in the classroom environment

> *When environments are clear and organized, children are better able to participate throughout the day.*

Supportive Classroom Environments — What It Prevents



- ✕ Wandering or difficulty staying in learning areas
- ✕ Conflict over materials or space
- ✕ Increased frustration during activities
- ✕ Difficulty understanding classroom expectations

Well-organized environments reduce confusion and support positive participation throughout the day.

Supportive Classroom Environments — What Supports It



Clearly Defined Learning Areas

Organized spaces for different types of activities



Visual Supports

Visual cues for routines and expectations



Accessible & Adapted Materials

Materials that are accessible and adapted to meet diverse needs



Regulation Spaces

Areas for focus and emotional regulation

Supportive Classroom Environments — Buzz & Build!

Explore Environmental Tools

10 volunteers to come to the front to play
We'll show an image of a tool on the screen —

1. **What is this item?**
2. **What routine does this support in the classroom?**

If an answer isn't given within 30 seconds, another player will have the opportunity to steal!



- ✓ Visual Schedule
- ✓ Flexible Seating
- ✓ First/Then Board
- ✓ Timer Sensory Tools
- ✓ Choice Board

Intentional Teaching — Why It Matters



- Ensures lessons are developmentally appropriate for young children
- Makes activities engaging and meaningful
- Keeps children actively involved in learning
- Builds learning experiences on children's interests and strengths

> *When instruction is thoughtful and engaging, children are more likely to participate successfully.*

Intentional Teaching — What It Prevents



- ✕ Children losing interest in activities
- ✕ Increased off-task behavior
- ✕ Frustration when activities are too difficult or not engaging
- ✕ Difficulty keeping children involved in learning

Engaging, developmentally appropriate activities support participation and reduce behavior challenges.

Intentional Teaching — What Supports It



Dedicated Planning Time

Protected time for thoughtful lesson planning



Developmentally Appropriate

Curriculum matched to children's ages and stages



Engaging Activities

Hands-on learning experiences that captivate children



Child-Led Exploration

Opportunities for exploration and discovery

Revisit: Sticky Notes: How do the Four Pillars Support?

Reflect & Share

- Post sticky notes have been categorized by the four pillars
- We'll review together to identify solutions based on the four pillars

- Pick Up/ Drop Off
- Circle Time
- Centers
- Transitions
- Meals

Common challenges occur during predictable parts of the daily routine



Video / Real-Life Demonstration — Observe



As you observe, reflect on the following questions:

- Which children might be receiving additional support?
- What classroom strategies or accommodations do you notice?
- How are teachers supporting participation for different learners?
- Which inclusive practices are helping children engage in the activity?

Video / Real-Life Demonstration — What You May Not Have Noticed

What You May Not Have Noticed

50%

of children in this classroom

Approximately 50% of the children receive developmental or therapeutic services within the classrooms. These may include supports such as: speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, developmental services, ABA therapy.

Many children receiving services participate fully in classroom routines when inclusive practices and supports are in place.

Section 4: Director Session

Systems to Support Diverse Learners

Presented By: Lauren Clancy and Mariah Sutton

Stop Before You 'Kick Out': Cost vs. Support Pathways

Costs of Disenrolling

- ✕ Lost enrollment revenue
- ✕ Vacant seat/time to fill
- ✕ Restarting transitions and onboarding
- ✕ Trust and reputation impacts

Support Instead

- ✓ Collect ABC data
- ✓ Meet with families
- ✓ Activate resource team: ECI, School District, Home Health/Outpatient, ABA
- ✓ Clarify who/what/how to refer
- ✓ Align classroom supports

Try targeted supports and referral pathways before removal.

Pause & Reflect — Decision-Making Questions

Before making a major decision, ask:

- ☑ What strategies have we already tried?
- ☑ Are routines, environments, and lessons supporting participation?
- ☑ Have we partnered with the family and listened to their insights?
- ☑ What does our data show (ABC logs, observations, incident notes)?
- ☑ Are safety risks present and addressed?
- ☑ Are we seeing any progress with supports?
- ☑ Equity/bias check: Would we decide the same for a different child?

Before Deciding a Child Cannot Stay — Alternatives to Consider

Planning Steps

Consider these alternatives before making a final decision about a child's placement. Each step provides data and support to help make informed decisions.

Document what was tried, by whom, and when to ensure continuity.

Action Steps

- ✓ Implement low-cost tools and accommodations
- ✓ Collect ABC data for 1-2 weeks
- ✓ Hold a collaborative family meeting
- ✓ Consult your resource team (ECI, district, therapies)
- ✓ Trial targeted supports and document outcomes
- ✓ Set a review date and adjust as needed

Know Your Support System — Community Partners



Early Intervention (ECI)

Developmental evaluation and in-home supports; referral steps and eligibility



Local School District

Child Find, evaluations, ARD/IEP supports; how to initiate



Home Health/Outpatient

OT, PT, SLP services; when clinic-based care helps

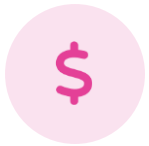


ABA & Specialized Services

Behavior support; coordinate with classroom goals

Keep a current contact list and referral cheat-sheet for staff.

The True Cost of Removing a Child Too Quickly



Financial

- Lost tuition revenue
- Unpaid gap time
- Marketing and re-enrollment costs



Operational

- Staff time for onboarding new family
- Resetting routines and relationships
- Classroom disruption



Relational/Community

- Family trust and confidence
- Program reputation
- Staff morale and burnout

Strengthening supports often costs less—and benefits every child.

Section 4: Breaking Barriers to Inclusion

Building Knowledge, Access, and Belonging

Presented By: Amy Altamirano, OTR MS

Opening Discussion: What do these words mean to you?

- ☑ Disabled/Disability
- ☑ Inclusion
- ☑ Access
- ☑ Belonging

Reflect for 1 minute, then share with your table. Add 1 example from your practice.

The Three Barriers to Inclusion

Lack of Knowledge

Limited awareness of disabilities and inclusion principles

Inadequate Access / Understanding

Unfamiliarity with support devices and accommodations

Fear, Stigma, or Bias

Misconceptions and unconscious barriers

Goal: turn each barrier into an action plan.

Disability History – Laying the Groundwork



Barrier 1: Lack of Knowledge

Grounding Our Language in Facts

What is Disability?



1 in 4
adults has a disability

1 in 6
children have a disability

Disability can impact any or all parts of development: physical, cognitive, social-emotional, communication, and adaptive (self-care)

Disability is the largest minority group

Anyone can join at any time

What is Disability? - Video from "Chronically Jenni"



What is Inclusion?



Inclusion means everyone participates at the level they desire and are capable of.

We reduce barriers by meeting basic needs, offering supports, and designing environments where all can engage.

What is Inclusion? - Video from Special Olympics



Common Disabilities in Early Childhood

Autism
Neurotype affecting communication & processing

ADHD
Attention, hyperactivity, impulsivity

Down Syndrome
Trisomy-21 genetic condition

Cerebral Palsy
Brain/nervous system condition

Spina Bifida
Neural tube development

Others
Deaf/HOH, Blindness, Intellectual Disability

Autism



A neurotype that causes differences in brain development, functioning, and processing

May Impact:

- Communication
- Social interactions
- Sensory processing
- Cognitive functioning
- Emotional regulation
- Poor body awareness/coordination

ADHD

A neurotype that can include short attention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity

May Impact:

- Cognitive functioning
- Social interaction
- Emotional regulation

Down Syndrome



Also known as Trisomy-21. A genetic condition caused by an extra chromosome 21

May Impact:

- Physical abilities
- Cognitive functioning
- Communication
- Other health factors

Cerebral Palsy



A condition affecting the brain and nervous system that can lead to developmental delays and challenges with participation in daily routines

May Impact:

- Physical abilities
- Cognitive functioning
- Communication
- Other health factors

Spina Bifida



Caused by the neural tube in spine not closing or developing properly

May Impact:

- Physical abilities
- Other health factors

Other Disabilities



Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Visual communication and amplification



Blindness/Vision Impairment

Tactile and auditory learning



Intellectual Disability

Adapted pacing and concrete supports



Genetic Disorders

Varied impacts requiring individualized plans

Barrier 2: Inadequate Access/Understanding of Supports

Demystifying Support Devices

Support Devices Overview – Video from Chronically Jenni



Support Devices Overview

- Feeding Tubes
- Cochlear Implant / Hearing Aids
- Mobility Aids
- Braces (AFO/SMO)
- AAC
- Noise-Cancelling Headphones
- Chewy Tubes
- Fidget Toys
- Weighted Items

Feeding Tubes



Purpose

Ensure safe nutrition for children with feeding difficulties or medical conditions

Classroom Considerations

- Respect privacy during feeding times
- Follow individualized care plans
- Ensure safe seating position
- Partner with families and medical teams

Cochlear Implant / Hearing Aids



Purpose

Access to sound for children with hearing loss

Classroom Considerations

- Minimize background noise during activities
- Face the child when speaking
- Use visual supports and cues
- Check device is worn and charged per care plan

Mobility Aids



Purpose

Enable safe, independent movement through the environment

Classroom Considerations

- Clear wide pathways between centers
- Accessible height for materials and activities
- Floor time alternatives for group activities
- Transition planning for different spaces

Braces (AFO/SMO/etc.)



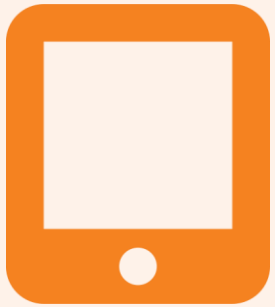
Purpose

Support joint stability and proper positioning

Classroom Considerations

- Allow movement breaks as needed
- Supportive footwear requirements
- Safe gross-motor activity choices
- Observe for skin discomfort or rubbing

AAC (Augmentative & Alternative Communication)



Purpose

Increase access to communication for nonspeaking children

Classroom Considerations

- Model use during daily routines
- Keep device accessible at all times
- Honor all communication attempts
- Collaborate with speech therapist

Noise-Cancelling Headphones



Purpose

Decrease noise sensitivity and auditory overwhelm

Classroom Considerations

- Offer during predictably loud routines
- Teach request signals or signs
- Maintain engagement and safety awareness
- Respect sensory needs

Chewy Tubes



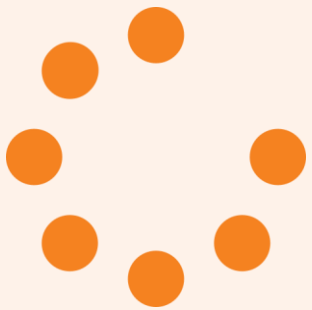
Purpose

Provide oral input for regulation, often used past expected mouthing age

Classroom Considerations

- Label and store hygienically
- Teach appropriate use expectations
- Offer alternatives as child develops
- Coordinate with OT/SLP

Fidget Toys



Purpose

Support sensory needs, attention, and emotional regulation

Classroom Considerations

- Set clear expectations for use
- Match fidget type to task demands
- Avoid visual/auditory distractions
- Rotate choices to maintain effectiveness

Weighted Items



Purpose

Provide calming proprioceptive input for regulation

Classroom Considerations

- Follow safety guidelines and weight limits
- Set time limits for use
- Observe individual response and effect
- Offer alternatives if not effective

Barrier 3: Fear, Stigma, or Bias

Practicing Language and Mindsets of Belonging

Disability is Neutral – Video from Apple featuring diverse disabled performers



Disability is Neutral

"I'm Not Remarkable"

Disability is a natural part of human diversity

Avoid inspiration-porn framing. Center access and participation, not pity or amazement.

Presume Competence – Video from Madison Tevlin



Presume Competence

"Assume I Can"

Start with strengths and expect growth

Offer supports that unlock participation. Measure progress from individual baseline.

Language Matters

✓ Preferred Language	✕ Avoid
Non-disabled	Normal
Disabled (if preferred) or person-first by family preference	Special needs, differently-abled
Signs of delay	Red flags
Wheelchair user	Wheelchair-bound, confined to wheelchair
Nonspeaking	Non-verbal

Always follow individual and family preference!

How to Challenge Bias/Stigma

Take Action

Build awareness and create inclusive environments through intentional practice and learning.



Action Steps

- Learn from disabled creators and advocates
- Diversify books, media, and classroom visuals
- Model inclusive language consistently
- Build feedback loops with families and staff
- Review policies for access and equity
- Celebrate varied communication and participation

Conclusion — Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Knowledge + supports + mindset reduce barriers**
- ✓ **Inclusion benefits every child**
- ✓ **Partner with families and community resources**
- ✓ **Document strategies and progress**
- ✓ **Keep improving systems**

Take Action

- → Identify one barrier to address this month
- → Add one new support to your classroom



Break Time

Take the next 15 Minutes to:

- Grab a snack or drink
- Stretch and walk around
- Use the restroom
- Connect with others

Brighton Center
Here there are only Abilities.

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Thank You for Being Here!

We are so grateful for your time, engagement, and commitment to inclusion. Your work makes a meaningful difference for the children and families you serve every day.

Before You Go…

✅ **Complete the Post-Survey**

Don’t forget—survey completion