



# An Introduction to Inclusive Recreation

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in partnership with

**Texas Council for Development Disabilities and  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**



# Introduction & Overview

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Dr. Amanda Kloo



## WHY do we Include?

When inclusion drives your belief, mission, services, programming, support, & mindset...

**EVERYONE** benefits – not only kids with disabilities, but also their peers, their families, your staff, and the community as a whole.



## WHY do we Include?

Inclusion goes beyond access to move from mere attendance & possibility to active participation and engaged experiences.

Access is required. It is compliant. It is “reasonable”.  
Inclusion is intentional. It is relational. It is meaningful.

**TO...**



**NOT...**

Maximize

Judge

Celebrate

Draw attention to

Value

Exacerbate

**Everything a child CAN do!**

**Everything a child CAN'T do!**

**Because ALL kids should get to be kids!**



# WHAT is Inclusion?

INCLUSION is assuring that all people have the same opportunities to engage in meaningful experiences and build meaningful relationships.





## 3 Core Beliefs...

1. Everyone CAN participate.
2. Everyone CAN make a friend.
3. Everyone CAN succeed.

**3 CORE BELIEFS OF INCLUSION**

INCLUSION is assuring that all people have the same opportunities to engage in meaningful experiences and build meaningful relationships.

1  
EVERY child can participate.

2  
EVERY child can make a friend.

3  
EVERY child can succeed.

When these beliefs drive every aspect of programming, **EVERYONE** benefits – not only kids with disabilities, but also their peers, their families, your staff, and the community as a whole.

NATIONAL INCLUSION PROJECT  
inclusionproject.org

...to make the inclusion of individuals with disabilities the  
**EXPECTATION, not the exception!**



# WHO Do We Include?

ALL abilities...

ALL disabilities...

ALL gifts...

ALL talents...

ALL strengths...

ALL struggles...





## A Snapshot...

- 1 out of every 5 children has a disability
- 1 out of every 4 adults has a disability
- 1 out of every 3 families have a child/loved one with a disability
- For every 1 person who discloses their disability 2 others also have disabilities but don't disclose
- Over 65% of disabilities are non-apparent

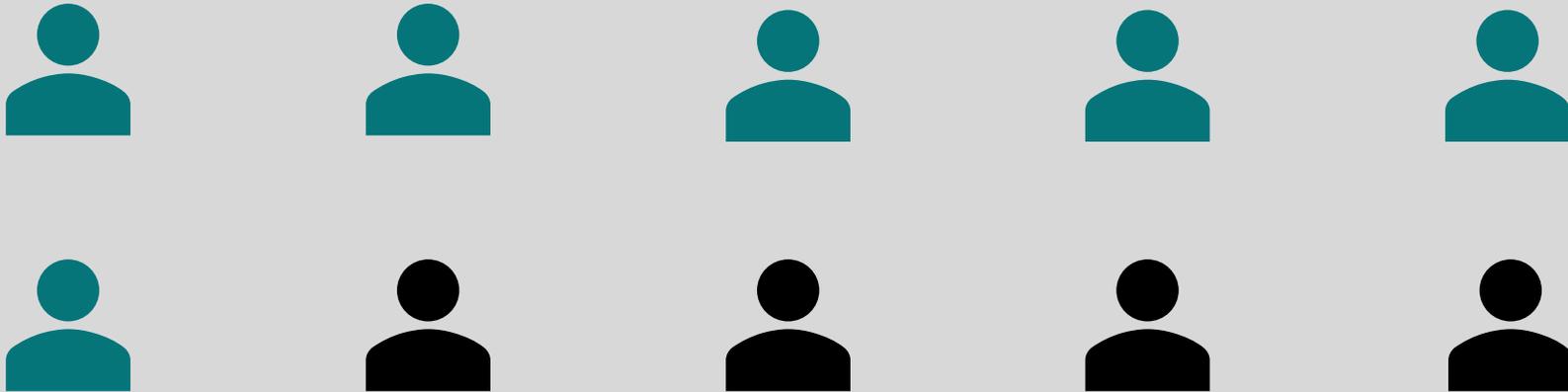


## And a Sneak Peek...

- Children with disabilities spend more than 89% of their day failing at something academically, socially, behaviorally, or physically
- 100% of individuals with disabilities have experienced exclusion, discrimination, inaccessibility, or isolation
- It take families with disabilities 1-3 hours longer to “get ready” for school, sports, meals, outings, bed, etc.
- Transitions between activities/settings/tasks take 2-3 times longer
- Behavioral skills can take 254-482 days to learn- teach daily, practice often, reinforce always, be realistic, remain empathetic, & stay patient!



So...



**What you do to include helps more people than you realize!**



# WHO Includes?

ALL Staff...

ALL Roles...

ALL Settings...

ALL Activities...





# WHO Benefits from Inclusion?

ALL Participants

ALL Staff

ALL Families

ALL Stakeholders

The ENTIRE Organization

& the WHOLE Community



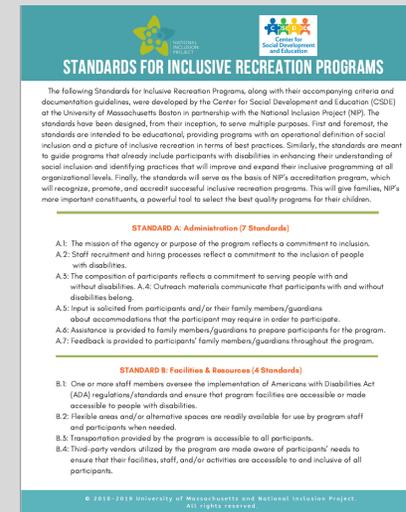


# HOW do We Include?

Start by believing it is important and essential. Reach for the “YES” ...

Explore the *Standards for Inclusive Recreation*

1. Administration
2. Facilities & Resources
3. Staffing
4. Programming
5. Evaluation





# Essential Inclusion Skills

- Understanding of each disability category, their diagnoses, subtypes, diagnostic criteria, & characteristics
- Trainings, scripts, & checklists of what to do for specific types of disabilities
- All the answers

**Oh, wait a second...**



# Essential Inclusion Skills

- ~~• Understanding disability & their diagnoses, subtypes, diagnostic characteristics~~
- ~~• Trainings, scripts, & what to do for specific types of disabilities~~
- ~~• All the answers~~

**What you really need are...**



# Essential **PEOPLE** Skills

- Positive Attitude
- Welcoming
- Helpfulness
- Friendliness
- Acceptance
- Openness
- Patience
- Creativity
- Willingness to Learn
- Adaptability
- Flexibility
- Empathy
- Kindness
- Honesty
- Cooperation
- Care
- Sense of Humor
- Growth Mindset



## Because...

- There is no right way or wrong way to include someone.
- You don't have to be an expert in disabilities to include. We serve people not diagnoses. Humans not labels. Children not categories.
- You ARE an expert in the human experience.
- It is useful to learn some tips, strategies, & etiquette but it is even more important to learn about the individuals you serve & support.
- Be open-minded, interested, empathetic, compassionate, & aware.



# Everyday Inclusion Boosters

- Always show & tell- use text, visuals, words, sounds, & actions
- Extend wait time- slow down & give extra time to respond
- Focus on “do” not “don’t”- clearly explain & model the expectation or desired outcome
- Accentuate positives– minimize hurdles & maximize successes
- Offer opportunities to regulate, relax, & regroup energy & emotions
- Teach everything. Practice often. Reinforce always. Repeat frequently.
- Answer & assist without judgement or scrutiny



# Everyday Communication Tips

Uncomfortable or awkward interactions often come from uncertainty, inexperience, curiosity, unawareness, or lack of knowledge. People (including children) fear what they don't know & question what they don't understand.

## When faced with a difficult question or situation...

- Pause & reflect rather than reacting harshly or rashly.
- Ask for more information or clarification.
- Relate back to the individual & relate back to yourself.
- Strive to find common ground & connection to build a shared learning experience.
- Be honest. Admit what you don't know & commit to finding out.

**Be OPEN not closed.**



## Everyday Behavior Support Tips...

- Pause. Breathe. & Stay calm.
- Redirect a challenging behavior to an appropriate behavior.
- Be specific, clear, & positive.
- Give grace for mistakes, space for learning, & support for change.
- Don't humiliate or embarrass--always start with a blank slate

**Behavior is learned, practiced, & mastered like every other skill.**



## Strive To...

- Make connection without forcing eye-contact.
- Be on “their” side & at “their” level (Literally!)
- Recognize that what may seem like confrontation might actually be advocacy.
- Honor age, experience, & personal boundaries.
- Practice the “Golden Rule”.



# Always...

1. Do with someone. Not for them.
2. Talk to them. Not about them.
3. Ask questions. Don't assume.
4. Decide with the person. Not for them.
5. Offer support & assistance. Don't force help or dependence.





# Meet Jack...





## Take Aways...

- ✓ Everyone CAN do. We each just do DIFFERENTLY.
- ✓ Every person, every skill, every interaction is VALUABLE.
- ✓ OPPORTUNITY EFFECT is powerful.
- ✓ Inclusion benefits EVERYONE not just someone.
- ✓ It's ALWAYS the right time & you're ALWAYS ready.



# Give Yourself An Inclusion High Five Today!

Do **1** thing to remove **1** barrier to empower **1**  
person during **1** interaction to create **1** success.

**That's INCLUSION!**

(Then do it again. 😊)





## Reminder of Next Session...

Monday, April 22, 2024 @ 11:00 AM - noon CST

- Learn practical inclusion strategies to support a wide range of needs.
- Explore effective activity designs for strength-based programming.
- Apply effective engagement strategies to meet the physical, social-emotional, Intellectual, and wellness needs of every camper.
- Walk away with dozens of actionable universal inclusion strategies that universally improve the camp experience for campers with & without disabilities alike.



# Thank You!

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