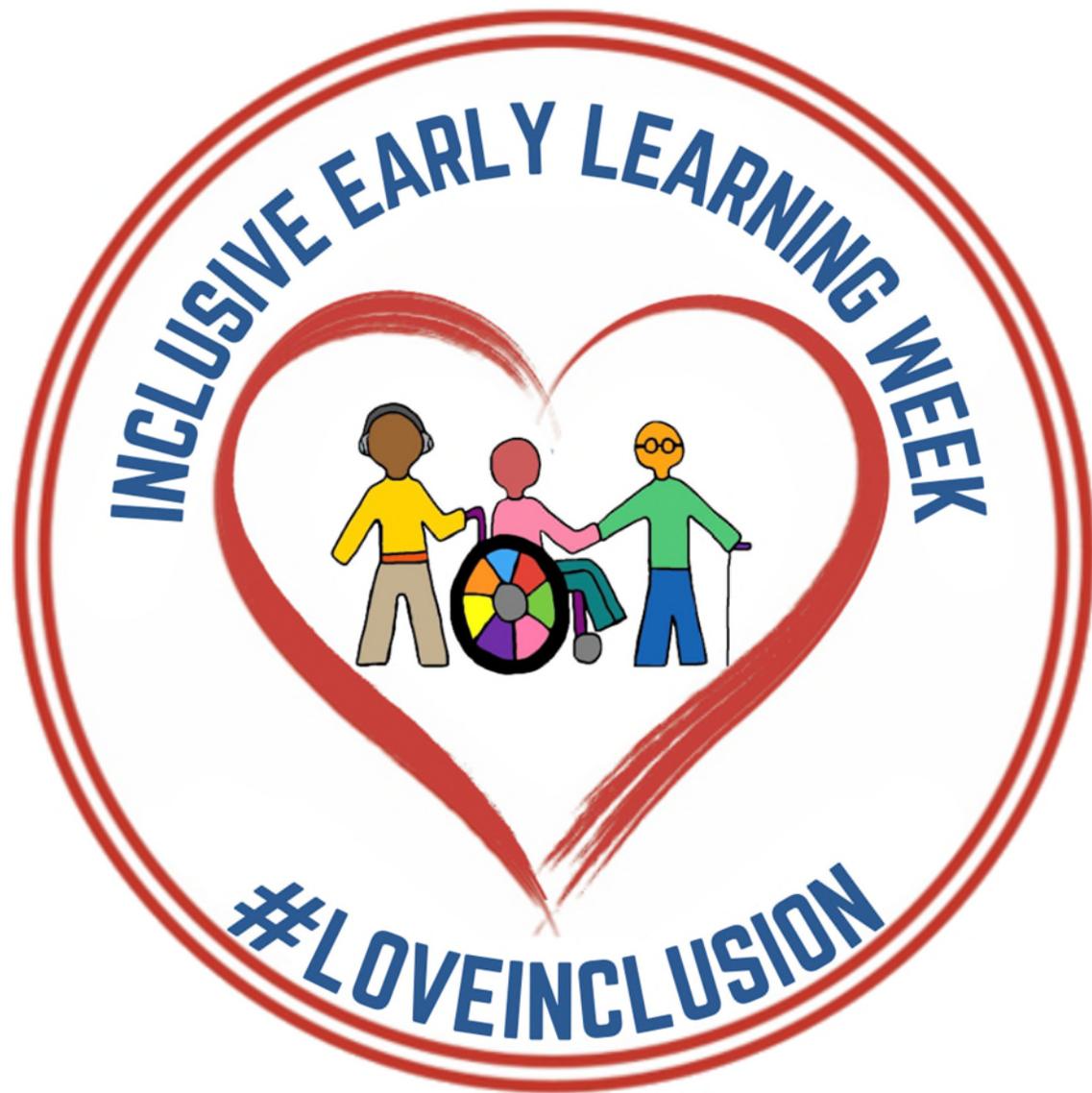
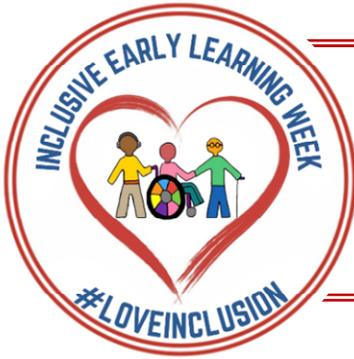


Celebration Toolkit
Inclusive Early Learning Week



February 9-14, 2025

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

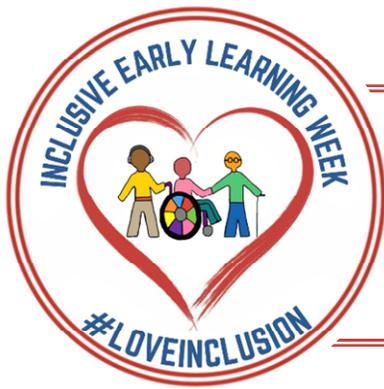
For more ideas, see the previous versions of toolkits also available on [DECAL's Website Linked Here!](#)

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

Share your celebrations with us and be entered into drawings for some great prizes for your classroom. Additional details available on [DECAL's Website Linked Here!](#)



Self-Care Sunday

Promoting Self-Care

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 **Infant:** Washing Hands Play, introduces the concept of handwashing while fostering sensory exploration. Prepare a small bowl of warm water, soft sponges, and towels. Gently dip the infant's hands into the water, wash them using the sponge, and dry them with the towel, narrating each step, such as "Let's clean your hands!" or "Now we're drying your fingers." **PDM1.0E Shows beginning awareness of personal health needs and self-care needs.**

 **Toddler:** Encourage children to make choices daily to help develop decision-making skills and express opinions. Create rituals around choices, like letting them pick clothes from a few options, choose a snack, or select a book before nap. This fosters creativity, reduces conflict, and helps prevent tantrums. Always thank them for their choice to show you value their decisions. **SED2.2a Uses verbal expressions and gestures to communicate needs, opinions, ideas, and preferences.**

 **Preschool/Pre-K:** Coping strategies help preschoolers manage emotions, handle challenges, and build resilience. Give each student a pallet of various paint colors, a paintbrush, a cup of water, and a sheet of paper. Play classical music by Mozart and encourage the students to project their emotions on paper using brushes and paint. Allow the students ten to fifteen minutes to complete the activity. Ask how the music made them feel and what emotion(s) they transferred to their painting. **SED3.4b Regulates own emotions and behaviors and seeks out adult support when needed.**

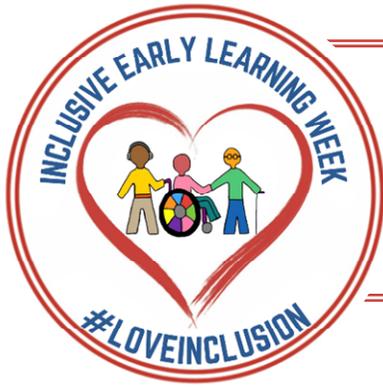
 **Staff:** While activities like getting a manicure or taking a bubble bath can be part of self-care, these types of actions are often rare events we may splurge on when we are feeling depleted. Self-care involves taking care of your physical, emotional, and mental health by creating routines you consistently schedule and rarely miss. This could include keeping a bedtime routine, so you get enough sleep; meal prepping to encourage healthy eating; evening walks with a friend for regular exercise and an uplifting chat. Plan now to pick one healthy routine to commit to consistently for one full month.

Extra Tip: Remember that you are not alone! There is someone to talk to, that wants to listen. We all struggle. No matter what's on your mind or when you want to reach out – "Whatever your reason for connecting, 988 Lifeline Is Here to Help." Text or Call 988

 **Families:** Spend time off electronics and go outdoors! Play parade or Follow the Leader with your children. Your child will love to copy you—and take turns being the leader! Children should be active for an hour every day, and getting outside to play is one way to be sure that happens. Adults benefit from being outdoors, too!



Book Suggestion: ["Ten Tiny Toes"](#) by Caroline Jayne Church



Marvelous ME Monday

Recognizing Individuality

#LoveInclusion

 **Infant:** "Look at Me!" is a great activity to celebrate individuality in infants and promote self-awareness. Place baby-safe mirrors in front of each child and point out features like "Look at your eyes!" or "That's your smile!" Show laminated photos of the infants or their families, saying things like, "Here's your picture with Mommy!" Sing a song, such as a personalized version of "If You're Happy and You Know It," to enhance engagement. This activity encourages self-awareness, language development, family connections, and curiosity, while supporting social, emotional, and cognitive growth. **SED2.0A: Responds to an image of self**

 **Toddler:** This activity gives toddlers an opportunity to look at themselves and love the parts of them that make them unique. You will need a large roll of paper and a pen or marker. Washable tempera paint (paint brushes and plates for paint), crayons and/or markers. Roll out paper and have a child lay on top and cut paper to their length. Trace their body, repeat for each child. The children will love to look at their bodies on the paper. Give them the art medium of your choice and let them "decorate" themselves. **SED1.2c Shows a sense of satisfaction in his/her own abilities/preferences.**

 **Preschool/Pre-K:** Everyone is unique and special. Provide each child with playdough and encourage them to create something that represents themselves or their interests. Have each child show and discuss what they made with their playdough encouraging them to share what makes them Marvelous. **SED1.4b Identifies personal characteristics, preferences, thoughts, and feelings.**

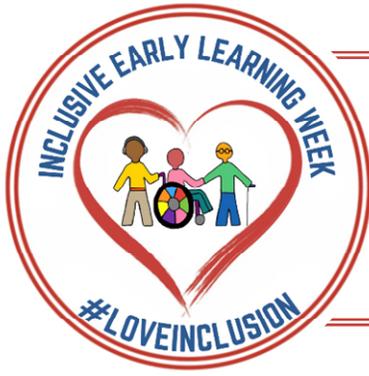
 **Staff:** Plan to have a potluck lunch, where everyone brings their favorite dish to share. Sharing food helps break down barriers and builds a sense of community within the team, making everyone feel more connected.

 **Bright Idea: Provide a list of allergies or special dietary considerations for staff to make sure everyone is included, and all needs are considered.**

 **Families:** Sing songs you remember from childhood to your child. Dance with your child to the songs as you enjoy time together.



Book Suggestion: [Marvelous Me Inside and Out By Lisa Bullard](#)



Tremendous TEAMwork Tuesday

Working together to accomplish a goal

#LoveInclusion



Infant: With help, make an indoor fort (add blankets, stuffed animals, other). Invite adults and babies to come inside and enjoy the fun. Fort play assists with spatial awareness and builds on social/emotional skills. It encourages babies to play with others and explore. If it falls down, it encourages problem-solving to set it back up. **SED5.0a Demonstrates interest/excitement when other children enter the room.**



Toddler: Strike up a band! Toddlers can make beautiful music when playing instruments together. Playing instruments builds gross and fine motor skills, helps with sensory and brain development, improves listening, and helps toddlers with self-confidence and decision making. You can even play fun music in the background and play a 'stop and go' game. When the music stops, the instruments stop. When the music starts again, the instruments play again. **CR3.2a Experiments with vocalizations, sounds, and musical instruments.**



Preschool/Pre-K: Have classroom jobs where the children help you set the table. First, have a child place the plates, then another child places cups, and then another child places napkins. By placing one at each place, they will learn one-to-one correspondence. **CD-MA2.3a Matches two equal sets using one-to-one correspondence independently.**



Staff: Encourage staff to come up with a list of common problems in the workplace anonymously. Administrators should review the entries and select some problems to come up with solutions collaboratively. You could even come up with your own "Teachers Solution Kit".



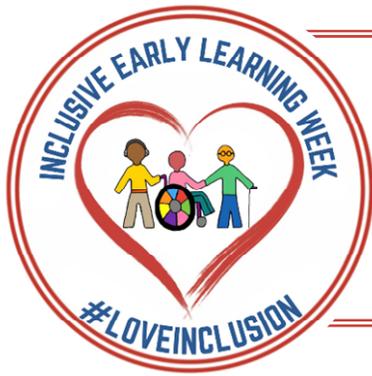
Resource: Check out this ["Classroom Solution Kit"](#) to expand this same idea into the classroom.



Families: Toddlers love to help with daily tasks. Give simple "jobs" to do and let your child know how much you appreciate the help. They can wipe off a table, put toys away, or help sweep up to name a few. When they enjoy helping as toddlers, they will be more likely to help as they grow.



Book Suggestion: [Together We Can](#) by Caryl Hart



WIND DOWN Wednesday

Creating a Calm Classroom and Community

#LoveInclusion



Infant: “Peaches” is a calming, gentle pressure routine for sensory breaks, ideal for nap time or as needed. It helps shift moods and assist transitions. Ask the child if they’d like to play the peaches game. Start with gentle squeezes from their feet to the top of their head. Switch to flat palm pushes up the hips and back, then squeeze arms before ending at the head. Squeeze gently, circling the arm or leg as if picking up a small log. Count calmly: “One peach, two peach, three peach, four. Five peach, six peach, seven peaches more. Eight peach, nine peach, now we get to TEN!” Finish with gentle head squeezes. Repeat by saying, “Oops, now we have to do peaches again,” and tiptoe fingers from head to feet to start over. After a few rounds, say, “It’s time to rest after the last round. We can do peaches again when rest time is over.” **PDM4.0a Responds to what he/she sees, hears, touches, tastes, and smells.**



Bright Idea: Extend the activity or help others wait for their turn by encouraging children to give peaches to a doll or teddy.



Toddler: Objects around us can be calming. Use everyday items in and around your home to bring stories to life through sensory storytelling, engaging sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. For example, in *Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen, you could use grass, dirt, bark, and ice to enhance the experience. Explore other books or make up stories to incorporate sensory elements and encourage calmness. **SC1.2a Uses senses to observe and experience objects and the environment with adult guidance.**



Preschool/Pre-K: Preschoolers can release tension and calm their emotions when engaging in water play. Pouring, stirring, and swooshing water provides sensory benefits. Add some color to the water by adding a few drops of food coloring. Look around for some new and unusual things to add to water play (ie. eye droppers, plastic tubing). **SC1.4a Uses senses to observe, classify, and learn about objects and environment.**



Staff: Reading can be a great way to relax. Why not start a book club! Pick a book to read together, either related to the classroom or just for fun. After reading, the group meets to talk about the book and share their thoughts. Book clubs also offer a relaxed setting for team members to bond and connect over shared interests, making work more enjoyable.



Families: Storytimes, especially before naptime and bedtime, are a great way to settle down before sleep. Let your child choose books to read and help turn pages. Help name what is seen. After reading the same book a few times, leave out some words to see if your child remembers. Soon, your child will be able to retell the whole story!



Book Suggestion: [Find Your Calm A Mindful Approach](#) By Gabi Garcia



Totally TALENTED Thursday

Celebrating talents and interests

#LoveInclusion



Infant: With white paper and a black marker, create several easy-to-recognize images on each piece of paper. Start with simple patterns (diagonal stripes, bull's eyes, checkerboards, triangles). Place the pictures so the children can see them (8"–12" inches from faces) Black and white toys and images will support visual development and teach their eye muscles to coordinate with their brain. **PDM4.0a Responds to what he/she sees, hears, touches, tastes, and smells.**



Toddler: Everyone loves to sing. Singing helps us feel better about ourselves and about the world around us. Find makeshift items to be microphones (i.e. wooden spoons, paper towel rolls, cylinder blocks). Play some songs or nursery rhymes familiar and loved by your toddler(s). Allow them to sing by themselves or as a group. Have them take a bow when finished singing and give huge applause for their singing talent. **CLL6.2a Listens to and imitates sounds in familiar nursery rhymes, songs, and chants**



Bright Idea: Consider including visuals to represent the songs and/or nursery rhymes. Also, include some common sign language gestures with the chosen selection. Offering alternative forms of communication fosters the development of both verbal and non-verbal communication skills.



Preschool/Pre-K: Have a show and tell day specifically around talents. This would be a great opportunity for preschoolers to share with their peers a talent or interest that they have (ie. play soccer, dancer, painter, make potholders, etc.). Students could bring actual objects or pictures of their talent to share with peers. Teachers will likely learn about student interests and be able to use this information to build lessons that will be highly motivating. **SED2.4a Effectively uses words, sentences, and actions to communicate needs, ideas, opinions, and preferences.**



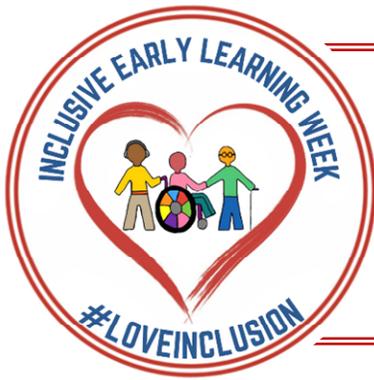
Staff: Organize friendly competitions, like trivia, board games, or online quizzes, to promote friendly rivalry and teamwork. It's exciting to win, but it's even better to bond with teammates. The games help the group laugh and relax, which makes everyone feel closer. It's a simple way to create teamwork and fun at the same time.



Families: Let your child know how much you love them and how special they are - let this be the first words you say in the morning and the last words you say at night to your child.



Book Suggestion: [Collaboration Station](#) by Shannon Olsen and Sandie Sonke



Super FRIEND Friday

Being a great friend to everyone

#LoveInclusion



Infant: Play a movement or sound imitation game with your baby, or group of babies, called 'My Turn, Your Turn'. It's a simple back-and-forth game where you take turns doing an action to help baby learn the concept of turn-taking and build social interactions. For a younger baby, you can gently move the babies' legs, hands, or arms to copy the movement of others. You could incorporate a song like "Everybody do this, do this, do this. Everybody do this just like (insert child's name.)" **CP2.0b Imitates sounds and movements.**



Toddler: Play "[The Friend Song](#)" that children can move and dance to. Stop the music at different intervals. When the music stops, each of the toddlers will find a new friend to hug. Start the music again and repeat. You will see lots of smiles with this friendship activity. **CR1.2a Dances to and becomes engaged in music and movement.**



Bright Idea: Include teaching the children [how to sign the word "friend"](#) to encourage communication.



Preschool/Pre-K: Collect family pictures including Flat CALi at home from each child. Create a classroom book to include in the class library. If possible, offer different ways that photos can be shared including text, email, printed, and any other method that is most convenient for each family. **SED1.4a Identifies self as a unique member of a specific group or demographic that fits into a larger world picture.**



Staff: Have secret pals to encourage spreading random acts of kindness all year long. As new staff are hired, plan to send out an interest survey and pair each staff member with a secret pal.



Resource: Here is the [Interest Survey](#) we created to use for new specialists on our Inclusion and Behavior Support Team.



Families: Set up playdates with other children. Younger children do not understand how to share yet, so make sure there are plenty of toys. Stay close by and help them learn how to take turns and play with other children.



Book Suggestion: [CALi is a Super Friend!](#)



IELW PLAN

USE THE SPACE PROVIDED TO ADD YOUR OWN PLANS FOR INCLUSIVE EARLY LEARNING WEEK!



Self-Care Sunday

Marvelous Me Monday

Tremendous Teamwork
Tuesday

Wind Down Wednesday

Totally Talented Thursday

Super Friend Friday



THE MISSION OF DECAL'S INCLUSIVE EARLY LEARNING WEEK IS TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE PRACTICES WITHIN EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ACROSS GEORGIA BY INCREASING AWARENESS, CELEBRATING SUCCESSES, AND STRENGTHENING SUPPORTS.

