



# Preschool Inclusion and Kindergarten Readiness



A collaborative project of TN Department of Education and STEP, Inc.

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# TENNESSEE SUCCEEDS.

1 Tennessee will rank in the top half of states on the NAEP by 2019.

2 The average ACT composite score in Tennessee will be a 21 by 2020.

3 The majority of high school graduates from the class of 2020 will earn a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree.

- Early Foundations and Literacy
- High School & Bridge to Postsecondary
- All Means All
- Educator Support
- District Empowerment





# Our Priorities

## **Early Foundations & Literacy**

Building skills in early grades to contribute to future success

## **High School & Bridge to Postsecondary**

Preparing significantly more students for postsecondary completion

## **All Means All**

Providing individualized support and opportunities for all students with a focus on those who are furthest behind

## **Educator Support**

Supporting the preparation and development of an exceptional educator workforce

## **District Empowerment**

Providing districts with the tools and autonomy they need to make the best decisions for students



# Key Goals of Special Populations

## Improving Student Outcomes

- Prevention
- Intervention
- Achievement
- Outcomes

## Managing Performance

- Effective employees at every level of the organization with a focus on improving student outcomes



# STEP: Who We Are and What We Do

**Support and Training for Exceptional Parents, Inc. (STEP) is a statewide not-for-profit established in 1989 serving Tennessee families. We are Tennessee's PTI - Parent Training and Information Center.**

## WHO do we help?

Families or caregivers in Tennessee with children and youth, birth to 26, with a diagnosed or suspected disability or special healthcare/ mental health need. STEP believes parents and caregivers are a child's best advocate.

## HOW do we help?

- ★ Navigating special education laws
- ★ IEP or 504 Plan review and assistance
- ★ Workshops and in-person training
- ★ Referrals to other agencies
- ★ Life after high school planning
- ★ Training videos and webinars
- ★ Collaboration and communication
- ★ Special education updates

**Services are FREE for Tennessee families**



# STEP: Who We Are and What We Do

**STEP believes in collaborating with schools and agencies to improve results for Tennessee students.**

## **WHAT does STEP offer professionals?**

- ★ High quality in-service and professional development
  - IDEA and Section 504
  - Instructionally appropriate IEPs
  - Response to Intervention
  - Family engagement
  - Postsecondary transition
  - Customized needs-based training
- ★ Parent workshops on special education topics
- ★ Youth activities

## **HOW much does it cost for Professionals?**

- ★ FREE if parents and caregivers are invited
- ★ FREE if funded by grants from the Tennessee Department of Education
- ★ Fee-for-service but very cost effective



# Services Available Across Tennessee



## West

**Memphis office**  
Serving the Urban Areas

Fayette  
Shelby  
Tipton

**Jackson Satellite Office**  
Serving the Rural Areas  
All other West TN counties

## Middle

**Nashville office**  
Serving all counties in  
Middle TN

Bilingual staff available for families

## East

**Greeneville office and Headquarters**  
Serving all counties in East TN

**Chattanooga Satellite Office**  
Serving Bilingual families all across  
the state

STEP, Inc. is one of over 100 Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) nationwide, providing training, information and referral services to parents and caregivers of children with disabilities and professional development for school districts to improve family & youth involvement and outcomes.



# STEP: Our Mission

**STEP's Mission** is to serve families of children and youth, young adults, and those who are involved in their lives.

**We provide** accurate, timely, and relevant information and training related to special education rights, equal access to quality education, and connections to community resources.

**We believe** that parents and caregivers are their children's best advocates, and that youth with disabilities should be self-advocates.

**We know** that families and youth who are informed, empowered, and engaged can effectively collaborate as part of a team for services and supports that will lead to improved outcomes and success in life.





# STEP: Our Vision

**STEP's vision** is to ensure a brighter future for children and youth in Tennessee, with an emphasis on those with disabilities, special health care needs, and mental health needs.





# Learning Objectives

- Definition of Preschool Inclusion
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Continuum of Inclusive Placement Options for Preschool Children with Disabilities
- What to Look for in a Quality Preschool Classroom
- Developmental Milestones and Planning for Kindergarten Readiness
- How to Share Information with the School Team
- Strategies to Participate Effectively in IEP Meetings



# Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Continuum of Services

## Least Restrictive Environment § 300.114

LRE - (A) In general.--To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, **are educated with children who are not disabled**, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs **only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.**

## Continuum of Services/Alternative Placements § 300.115 C

The range of services which must be available to the students of a school district so that they may be served in the least restrictive environment.



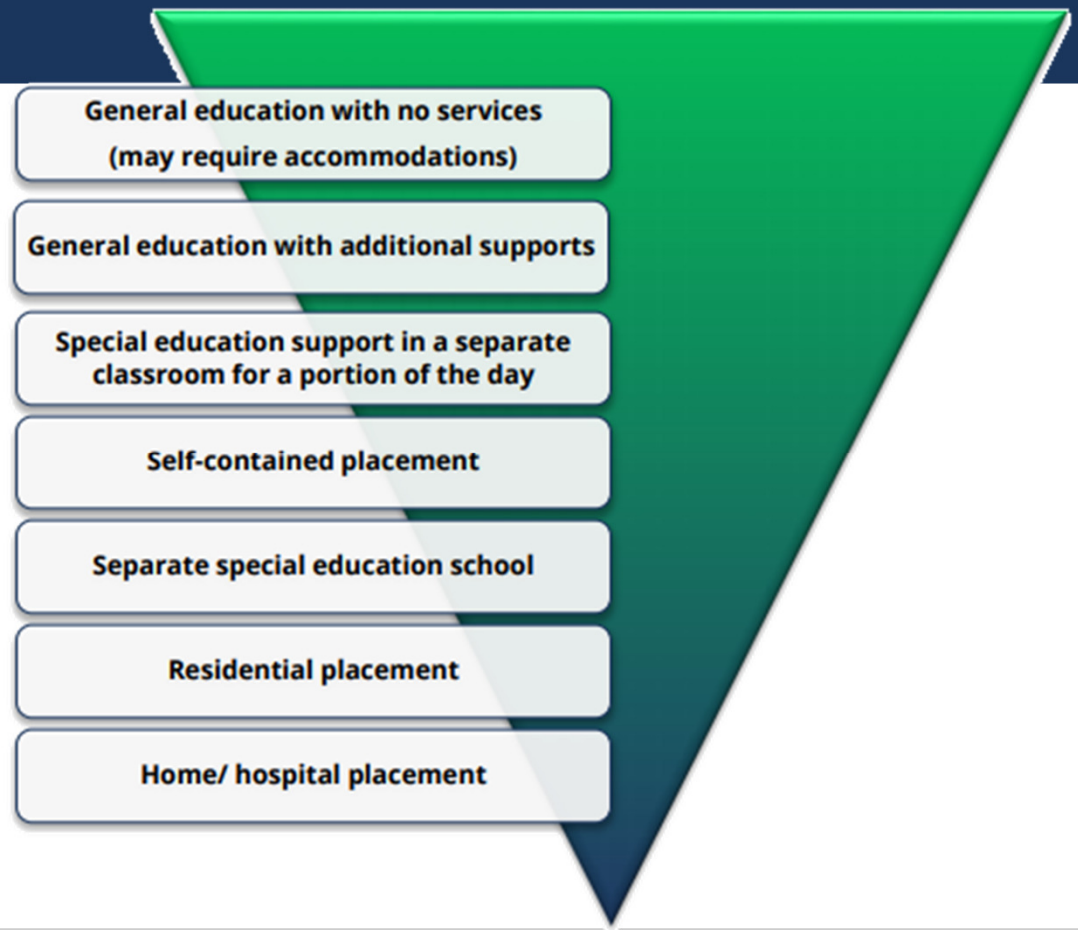
# Dear Colleague Letter

- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) applies to preschool children, including three-year-olds.
- School districts must have a continuum of placement options.
- If a school district does not have a public preschool program that can provide all the appropriate supports and services for a particular child with a disability, the school district must explore alternative methods to ensure LRE for that child.





# Continuum of Services





# Classrooms Are Ready for ALL Students

1. Shared philosophy
2. Adequate time for staff communication
3. Joint participation in program development
4. Shared “ownership” of children
5. Role clarity
6. Stability in relationships
7. Administrative support

— An Administrator's Guide to Preschool Inclusion, pg. 54



# NAEYC Key Features of Inclusion

- Access
- Participation
- Supports





# Everyone's Welcome

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MJrRvpjB1I>





# Benefits of inclusion for children with disabilities

- Friendships
- Increased social initiations, relationships and networks
- **Peer modeling academic, social and behavior skills**
- **Increased achievement of IEP goals**
- Academic benefits
- Greater access to general curriculum
- Enhanced skill acquisition and generalization
- **Increased inclusion in future environments**
- Higher expectations
- Increased school staff collaboration
- Families become part of the community instead of being socially isolated



# Benefits of inclusion for children without disabilities

- Friendships
- Increased appreciation and acceptance of individual differences
- Increased understanding and acceptance of diversity
- Prepares all students for adult life in an inclusive society
- Opportunities to master activities by practicing and teaching others
- Increased self-esteem, confidence, autonomy and leadership skills





# What is a quality classroom?

- Is safe
- Has intentional play opportunities
- Promotes learning in appropriate ways (includes intellectual, social, and motor learning)
- Has integrated curriculum, academics are worked on throughout they day
- Values differences in all children



# New Research – “Magic 8” Classroom Practices

1. Reduce time spent in transition
2. Improve level of instruction
3. Create a positive climate
4. Increase time teachers listen to children
5. Plan sequential activities
6. Promote cooperative interactions between children
7. Foster high levels of child involvement
8. Provide math opportunities

– <http://hechingerreport.org/new-research-finds-magic-8-preschool-classroom-practices/>



# Quality Indicators for ALL Preschool Programs

- *Children* select activities from a variety of learning areas (dramatic play, blocks, art, books, music, games and puzzles, etc.)
- *Children* are involved in concrete, three-dimensional learning activities, with materials closely related to their daily life experiences
- *Children* are physically active in the classroom, spontaneously initiating many of their own activities and choosing from activities the teacher has prepared

— An Administrator's Guide to Preschool Inclusion, pg. 42



# Quality Indicators for ALL Preschool Programs

- *Children* have opportunities to use pegboards, puzzles, Legos, markers, scissors, and other materials in a way of their own choosing
- *Teachers* ask questions that encourage children to give more than one right answer
- *Teachers* use activities such as block building and cooking to help children learn concepts in math, science and social studies
- *Teachers* involve children in activities by stimulating their natural curiosity and interests

— An Administrator's Guide to Preschool Inclusion, pg. 42



# What is DAP?

*Developmentally appropriate practice* (DAP) means teaching young children in ways that

- **Meet children where they are, as individuals and as a group**
- **Support each child in attaining challenging and achievable goals that contribute to his or her ongoing development and learning**

What does “where they are” mean?

How is this different for individual children and groups of children?

- Definition from <http://www.naeyc.org/event/developmentally-appropriate-practice>



# Embedded Learning Opportunities

- “Teachers can increase or enhance children’s learning by embedding or integrating planned opportunities within the usual classroom activities and routines. These planned opportunities are called *Embedded Learning Opportunities* (ELOs)”
    - Asking simple questions during arrival and snack times
    - Sorting by size in dramatic play with dishes or sorting materials in the building toys
    - Following the rules of a game by playing Candy Land
    - Teaching the child to say “more” during block play
    - Teaching the names of clothing during dress-up or dramatic play
- *Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs*, pg 15



# ELO Matrix– Individual

	<u>Objective 1</u> Cognitive: Understand “more” & “less”	<u>Objective 2</u> Interacts with a peer
Arrival/free choice		
Circle		
Free Choice		
Outside		
Bathroom		
Snack		
Small Group story time		



# Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (TNELDs) case study

- **Standard:** Understand that a number represents a corresponding quantity
- **Scenario:** Ani was diagnosed with autism at an early age and received early intervention services before beginning preschool. Her IEP team decided her least restrictive environment is a general education classroom. It is now near the end of September, and Ani is exhibiting challenging behaviors including pushing materials away into the space of other children as well as grabbing materials other children are using. Today she is working with manipulatives at a table in a center. Ms. Woods, her teacher, wants to work with her on counting, but she keeps grabbing the counting bears from the child next to her.

**What curriculum modifications or supports might make working on this standard a successful experience for Ani?**



## Areas to consider for curriculum modifications or supports

- **Environmental support:**
- **Materials adaptation:**
- **Child preferences:**
- **Adult support:**
- **Invisible support:**



## A Format to Guide Instructional Planning

*Using the General Education Classroom as a Reference Point for Planning*

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives	Sequence of Instruction						
	Objective 1						
	Objective 2						
	Objective 3						
	Objective 4						
	Objective 5						

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# Schedule

It's all about balance!

- Balance between child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities
- Balance between active and passive times and activities

Maximize this!

- Child engagement
- Center time

Minimize this!

- Transitions
- Whole group activities
- Whole group wait-time





# Play is Important and Necessary

**“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from some serious learning. But for children play is a serious thing. Play is really the work of childhood.”**

**– Fred Rogers**

**“Play is the highest form of research.” – Albert Einstein**

## **One definition:**

**“Play is fun, carried out for the pleasure of doing it... spontaneous and voluntary. It requires the player’s active involvement...” – Marjorie Kostelnik et al**



# Developmental Milestones





# All Students Need an Effective Way to Communicate

All learners need to have meaningful ways to participate in the various learning environments in the classroom and be able to express what they know.





# Tool: One Page Profiles

Parents and caregivers can help teachers get to know the child better

## One-page profiles in Education

A one-page profile captures all the important information about a young person on a single sheet of paper under three simple headings:

1. What people appreciate about me
2. What's important to me
3. How best to support me.

<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles/one-page-profile-templates/>

Templates of one page profiles

<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles/one-page-profiles-education/primary-school/>

Sample of a child in Primary School – Jessenia





# One Page Profile: Example

**Things we like and admire about** \_\_\_\_\_

Outgoing, Fun, Loves to build things, Trusting, \_\_\_\_\_

**Things to know about** \_\_\_\_\_

- He needs time to process information before responding.
- He needs his personal space to be respected.
- Very distracted by sounds and lights.

**How to Successfully Support** \_\_\_\_\_

- Using positive behavior techniques, really works. Short phrases, rewards, choices, patience, attention work well.
- He needs to know what is expected. Prepare him for changes. (reduce number of transitions)
- When he is upset or excited he needs \_\_\_\_\_
- If you need to be in his space to work alongside him, ask him to sit on his hands.
- Picture schedule
- When he is upset use one or two word phrases. "Stop" "Sit down".



# Characteristics of the Learner

1. **Readiness Level:** Skills and understanding of a topic
2. **Interest Level:** Tasks that ignite student curiosity or passion
3. **Learning Profile:** Preferred learning style of each student





# Strategies for Parents and Caregivers to Be Effectively Involved

- Communicate with your child's teacher
- Ask what you can do to support your child's learning
- Read to and talk with your child
- Review progress reports and IEP goals
- Share your child's successes
- Learn more about the curricula and interventions being used in your child's school
- Attend parent/teacher conferences and other school meetings



# Preparing for LRE Discussions

- Be familiar with your son's or daughter's disability.
- Know the laws and rights that apply to what you are discussing at the meeting.
- Be familiar with best practices and research based interventions.
- Be prepared to share what works for your son or daughter.
- Gather information of effective teaching strategies from those who have worked with your child. (i.e.: from Early Intervention providers)
- Share information on how your child has been successfully included in other areas (i.e.: church, community, clubs)
- Review the IEP goals



# Preparing for Effective Participation in IEP Meetings

- Read the invitation to the meeting
- Review evaluations and documents
- Prepare a list of what you would like your child to work on





# Communication Leads to Success

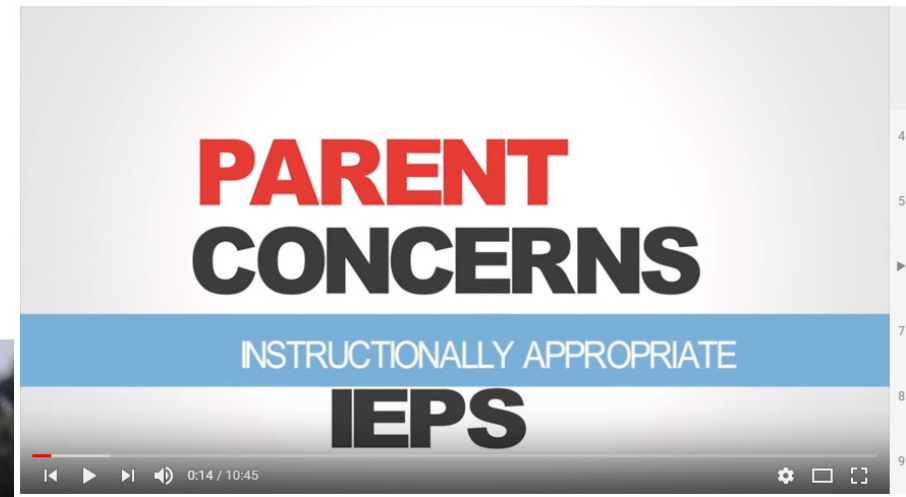
The IEP is the tool designed to help families and school personnel **plan for the future** success of children with disabilities when they exit public education.

**The purpose of IDEA is “to assist children with disabilities to meet developmental goals, and, to the maximum extent possible, the challenging expectations that have been established for all children... and to prepare students for further education, employment and independent living”.**





# Training Resources





# Tools and Resources

<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/resources-supporting-individualization">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/resources-supporting-individualization</a>	Supporting Individualization for Children Ages Birth to Five
<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework</a>	Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework
<a href="http://www.tnstep.org/uploads/files/All%20About%20Me%20Booklet%20-%20revised%20Mar%202015.pdf">http://www.tnstep.org/uploads/files/All%20About%20Me%20Booklet%20-%20revised%20Mar%202015.pdf</a>	STEP, Inc. – All About ME booklet Other STEP Resources visit <a href="http://www.tnstep.org">www.tnstep.org</a>
<a href="http://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices">http://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices</a>	Division of Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices
<a href="https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/kei/kei_instrument_2017.pdf">https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/kei/kei_instrument_2017.pdf</a>	Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI)
<a href="https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/08/welcoming-families-day-one">https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/08/welcoming-families-day-one</a>	Harvard Graduate School of Education – Welcoming Families From Day One
Theresa Nicholls, Assistant Commissioner <a href="mailto:Theresa.Nicholls@tn.gov">Theresa.Nicholls@tn.gov</a> Kate Martin, Executive Director <a href="mailto:Kate.B.Martin@tn.gov">Kate.B.Martin@tn.gov</a>	Special Populations Contacts with TN Department of Education



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# Share Your Thoughts

Please take a moment to take our parent survey.

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/STEPpreschoolinclusion](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/STEPpreschoolinclusion)

