

Wisconsin UNITES: Understanding the Need for Inclusive Training and Educational Support

Module 3

Supporting Inclusion in Your Child Care Program -
Administration



Before We Begin

Let's take a quick look at where the first two modules have taken us and how the next two will get us closer to our final destination.

- Module 1: Foundations of Inclusion



Module
1

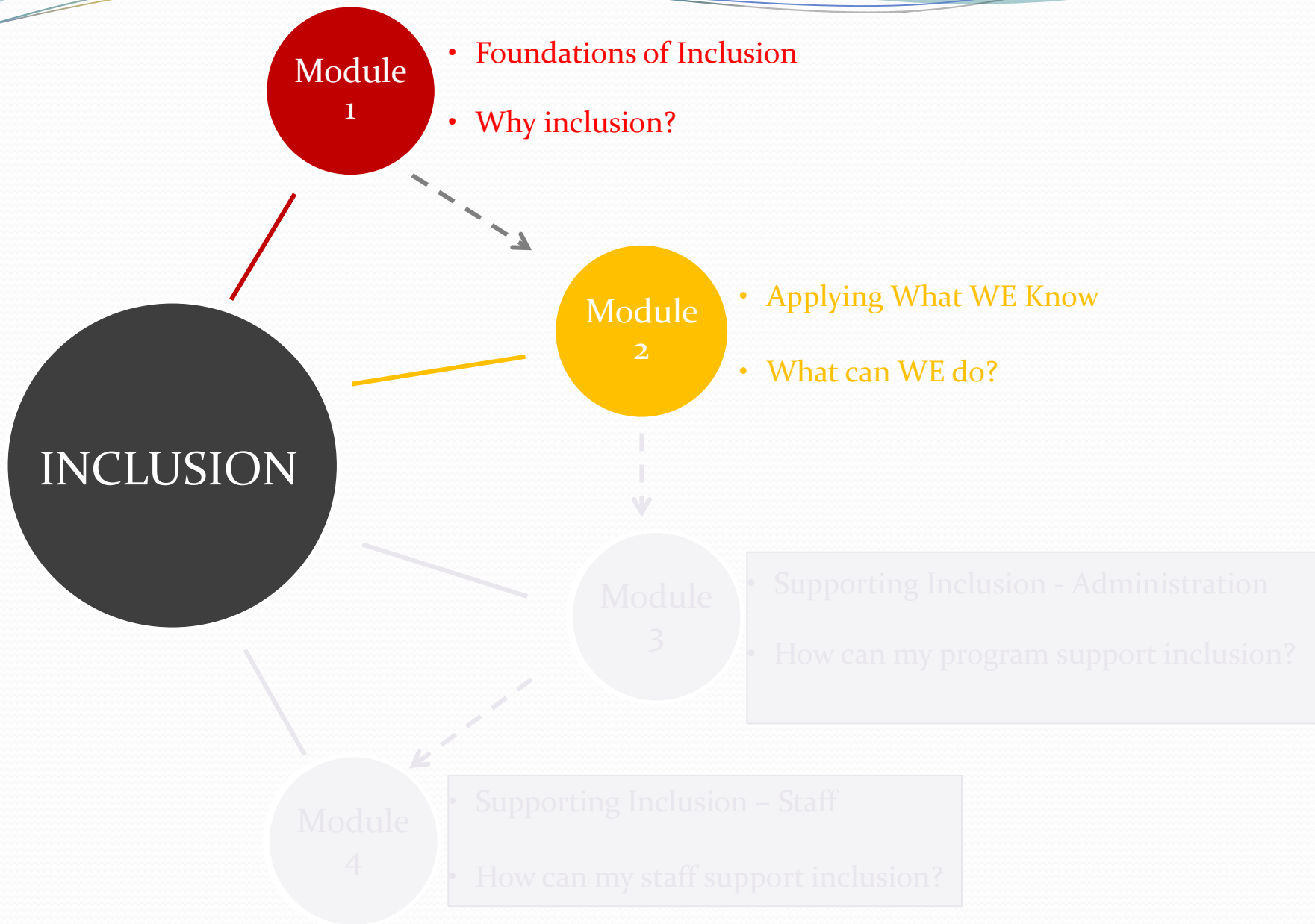
- This module provided an overview of the laws and policies that laid the foundation for, and that continue to support, inclusion
- We also looked at the research that's been conducted on the practice of inclusion and listed out the benefits for all those involved
- We set out to answer the question, "Why inclusion?"

Before We Begin

Module

2

- Module 2: Applying What WE Know
 - In the second module of this series, we looked at the Federal Policy findings to see how they could help guide us in the implementation of inclusion into our culture, our states, our schools, and our child care programs
 - We acknowledged the challenges we face, but also showed some steps our State has taken toward overcoming these barriers
 - We also looked at some of the changes that we can make in our every day work to become more inclusive
 - We approached this module with the question, “What can WE do to support inclusion?”



Where We're Going

If the first two modules focused on inclusion from a more Federal and State perspective, in the next two modules we want to bring inclusion into your child care program.

- **Module 3: Supporting Inclusion in Your Child Care Program – Administration**



Module
3

- We start this module by asking you to think about what you value as a child care provider. We want to help focus your attention on the policies you have and what they mean to your program as a whole
- We provide examples of tools and methods that you, as an administrator, could implement to help build a more inclusive program
- Ultimately, we want you to think about and take action toward answering the question, “How can my program support inclusion?”

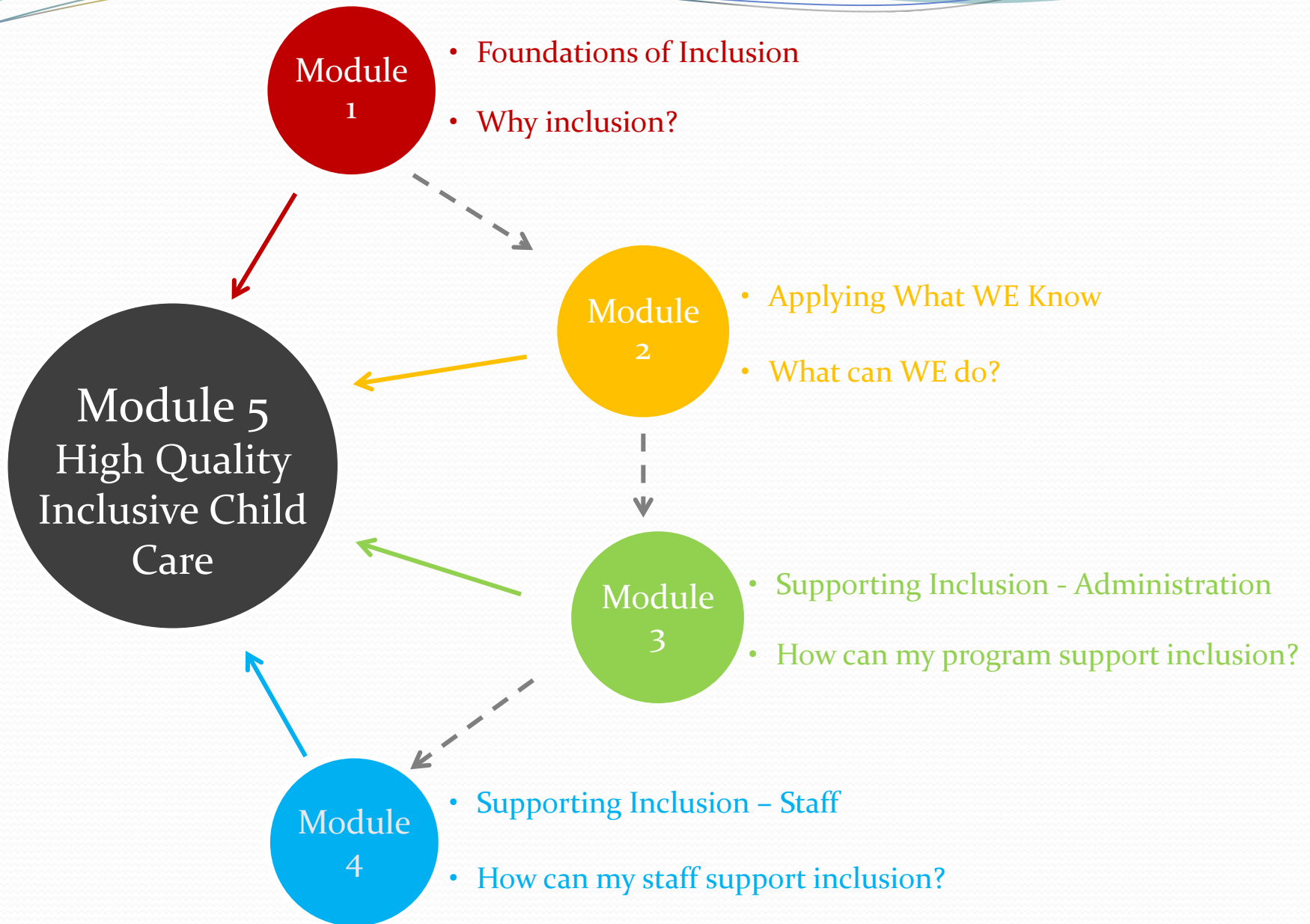
Where We're Going

- Module 4: Supporting Inclusion in Your Child Care Program – Staff



Module
4

- This module goes along with Module 3, in that it takes the foundational changes you could make to your program and policies and shows how they can impact and come alive through the teaching methods and overall attitude of those who work and care for the children in your program
- We want to help your staff understand and use the practices that research has shown to best support inclusion
- The main question we want you to be thinking about is, “How can my staff support inclusion within their classroom and through their teaching?”



Bringing It All Together

- Module 5: This is High-Quality Inclusive Child Care
 - This module is where we take one last look at how the combination of laws, policies, attitude, design and practice can come together to form the basis for high-quality inclusive child care

Module 5
High Quality
Inclusive Child
Care

Before We Begin



- The following resources may be useful as we make our way through this module
 - [An Administrator's Guide to Preschool Inclusion](#) by Wolery and Odom
 - <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/resource-library>
 - Check out the tip sheets under Relationships and Program Strategies

Activity

Pre-survey



- Print out the following [Inclusion Self-Checklist](#)
- Look over the introduction and directions for filling out the checklist
- Read through the items and rate your program practices accordingly. Be honest with your ratings. This is not meant to be a test, instead it is a way to evaluate your practices to see where you are doing well and where you could make some improvements
- Use this checklist over the next month or so as a reference for things you could do to improve your program practices (focus on the items where you scored yourself a 1 or 2)
- Keep track of this checklist, as we will have you fill it out again after finishing Module 4

Module 3: Supporting Inclusion in Your Child Care Program - Administration

- Section 1: What Does Your Program Value?

- A Look at ADA Statements
- An Inclusive Philosophy
- An Inclusive PROGRAM



- Section 2: Building An Inclusive Program

- The Improvement Puzzle
- Building Partnerships

Section 1: What Does Your Program Value

- A Look at ADA Statements
 - Moving beyond the words
 - Activity – Your program values
- An Inclusive Philosophy
 - A change in Attitude
 - The principles of inclusion
 - Access, participation and support
- An Inclusive PROGRAM



ADA Statements

- The Americans with Disabilities Act:
 - *Prohibits* discrimination
 - *Ensures* equal opportunity
 - Reasonable modifications/accommodations
 - Accessibility
- Does your program, like many others, have a policy statement(s) similar to one of the following?
 - Our Program will not discriminate against or exclude any individual because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color or disability.
 - Our Program will make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when necessary to ensure that its services are available in a nondiscriminatory manner.



Question: Do well meaning words mean discrimination won't happen?

ADA Statements

Unfortunately, No.

Take a look at this article:

- [*New Jersey Expulsion Lawsuit 2016*](#)

And why would we need this Federal policy statement for guidance?

- [*DHHS and DOE Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension in Early Childhood Settings*](#)

As can be seen in these and other recent articles, discrimination of all kinds is effecting our youngest citizens

Policies need to be more than just words

An ADA Statement

Moving beyond the words



- What changes are you willing to make in order to move your program beyond just words?
 - Are you willing to approach the running of your program with an **attitude** that supports the inclusion of all children?
 - Are you willing to **support** and **accommodate** the diverse needs and unique skills of every child in your care?
 - Are you willing to take the necessary **actions** to ground your program in the principles of inclusion?

The ultimate question is,
“Are the above statements something you value as a child care provider?”

Activity

Your Program Values



- Take a few minutes to think about and answer the following set of questions:
 - Do you remember why you decided to become a child care provider?
 - Write that reason down on a piece of paper
 - Now, think about or look at your program's mission statement
 - First things first, do you have a stated mission for your program?
 - If not, why not?
 - If you do, does it match what you wrote down on your piece of paper?
 - If not, why not?
 - Taking care of children is no easy task, so your **reason** for choosing this career must have been an important one.

Shouldn't that reason influence every aspect of your program?

Activity

Your Program Values



- Do the things you value drive your program's policies?

OR

- Do you have separate, stand alone policy statements that are independent of one another?

No Connection Separate Policies

- No real connection between your mission/values and your program policies
- Policies are written separately and stand alone without connection to something bigger



Or...

Philosophy/Mission Drives Policies

- Policies are connected to or guided by those things you value most as a child care provider
- Your mission/values directly impact and drive the creation of your policies and the running of your program



Activity

Follow-up



- Hopefully the last few slides helped to show how important your program policies **could be** if they were connected to and informed by your core values of child development and care
 - Having *core values that support inclusion* aren't just good for children with disabilities or other special needs, but they will help and support the development and learning of all children
- For the remaining portion of this section, we will look at some steps you can take to begin your journey toward building an inclusive program that is connected to and supported by your core values

An Inclusive Philosophy

A change in Attitude



- In Module 2, we introduced the idea of an *Inclusive Attitude* and how the simple act of changing ones attitude could influence the relationship you have with parents and families
 - For example:
 - Instead of asking **exclusionary**, yes/no questions (e.g., Does your child have a disability?) you can ask **supportive**, open-ended questions (e.g., What kinds of situations does your child find overwhelming or upsetting?)
 - The information you gather from questions that are inclusive will not only be more **usable** to you as a professional, but it will also help you to be more supportive of the child and family
- Something to think about:
 - What would it take to bring an *inclusive attitude* to your entire program, not just one aspect of it?

An Inclusive Philosophy

A change in Attitude



- Inclusive = Open to everyone; not limited
- Attitude = The way you think or feel about someone or something
 - Ask yourself these questions:
 - Is your program open to everyone, regardless of ability or disability?
 - How do you feel about caring for children with special needs?
 - A little scared? Maybe nervous? A bit tentative? Unsure?

**It's ok to feel all of these things.
It's what you do with these feelings that's most important!**

An Inclusive Philosophy

Implementing the principles of inclusion

- *The defining features of inclusion that can be used to create and identify high-quality early childhood programs are:*
 - *Access*
 - *Participation*
 - *Support*



Resources to review:

[DEC & NAEYC Joint Statement on Inclusion](#)

[Quality Inclusive Practices Checklist – Heartland Equity and Inclusion Project](#)

[Writing an Inclusion Policy – Healthy Child Manitoba](#)

An Inclusive Philosophy

The main principles of inclusion

- Principle #1 – Access
 - Strategies supporting access include the removal of physical barriers, as well as promoting a wide range of learning opportunities, activities, and environments that *accommodate* and *respond* to individual differences

Sample Statement:

Our program supports the full inclusion of children who may require additional supports and/or adaptations due to a physical, cognitive, social, or emotional need.



An Inclusive Philosophy

The main principles of inclusion



- Principle #1 – Access
 - Strategies and/or evidence-based practices that support Access:
 - Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)
 - The practice of meeting young children where they are (by stage of development), both as individuals and as part of a group
 - Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
 - Providing *multiple means* for children to learn, express their understanding and engage in learning activities
 - Assistive technology
 - Any item (from high to low tech) that supports a child's ability to actively participate in their home, child care program, school or community
 - Adaptations/Accommodations
 - Changes to activities, materials, routines and/or instruction that support the individual needs of a child and enable them to access and benefit from learning opportunities

An Inclusive Philosophy

Incorporating the principle of Access

- Some questions to ask of your program and practices:
 - Do you present information and content in ways that support a variety of different learning styles?
 - Is the physical environment set up to welcome and support the unique abilities of all children?
 - Do you adapt routines and activities based on the needs of the individual children in your program?
 - Are the additional needs of a child (e.g., visuals, a wheelchair, special educators or therapists, assistive technology, etc.) supported and even welcomed?
 - Do you use developmentally appropriate teaching practices to meet the needs of and appropriately challenge the children in your program?

An Inclusive Philosophy

The main principles of inclusion

- Principle #2 – Participation
 - Strategies supporting participation include using a range of instructional approaches and interactions that *promote* engagement, learning and a sense of belonging for every child

Sample Statement:

We believe that each child deserves an environment and experiences that promote growth in all areas of development.



An Inclusive Philosophy

The main principles of inclusion



- Principle #2 – Participation

- Supporting strategies and/or evidence-based practices:
 - Embedded instruction and naturalistic interventions
 - Addressing specific developmental or learning goals within everyday activities, routines, and transitions
 - Differentiated instruction
 - Designing instruction or activities based on student's interests and ability
 - Scaffolding strategies
 - Providing support and guidance while the child is learning something new or age-appropriate (e.g., modeling, encouraging, asking questions, prompting, etc.)
 - Tiered models of instruction
 - A framework used to connect a child's assessment results or teacher collected data to specific teaching or intervention strategies (e.g., Pyramid Model, RTI, etc.)

An Inclusive Philosophy

Incorporating the principle of Participation

- Some questions to ask of your program and practices:
 - Are a child's learning goals being embedded within daily, naturally occurring activities and routines?
 - Do you provide opportunities for children to play together so they develop strong, meaningful social relationships?
 - Do you assess/monitor the skills of the children in your care? Do you use that information to plan appropriate activities?
 - Do you know how to support and guide the children in your class or program as they learn a new skill?

An Inclusive Philosophy

The main principles of inclusion

- Principle #3 – Support
 - The broader aspects of the early childhood system that support inclusion such as *Professional Development* and opportunities for *communication and collaboration* between, within and among professionals, programs and families

Sample Statement:

We work and partner with parents and service providers who have valuable knowledge and expertise that should be shared in order to help each child be successful while in our care.



An Inclusive Philosophy

The main principles of inclusion

- Principle #3 – Support

- Supporting strategies or evidence based practices:
 - Professional Development opportunities
 - Adult training and learning opportunities for skill development
 - Resources: [The Registry](#), [YoungStar](#), [Supporting Families Together](#)
 - Models of collaboration and care
 - Resources: [Child Care Resource and Referral](#), [Training and Technical Assistance](#), [Practice-Based Coaching](#), etc.)
 - [Family and early childhood partnerships](#)
 - Families and early childhood care and education providers exchange information and work together in a cooperative manner



An Inclusive Philosophy

Incorporating the principle of Support

- Some questions to ask of your program and practices:
 - Do you acknowledge, respect and encourage input and communication from the families in your program?
 - Are you open to collaborating with parents and other service professionals in order to help every child in your program be successful?
 - Are Professional Development opportunities requested and taken advantage of by you or your staff so that you know the best methods for supporting every child in your program?
 - Do you request Technical Assistance in order to gain information and resources that will help you improve the way you work with the children in your program?

An Inclusive PROGRAM

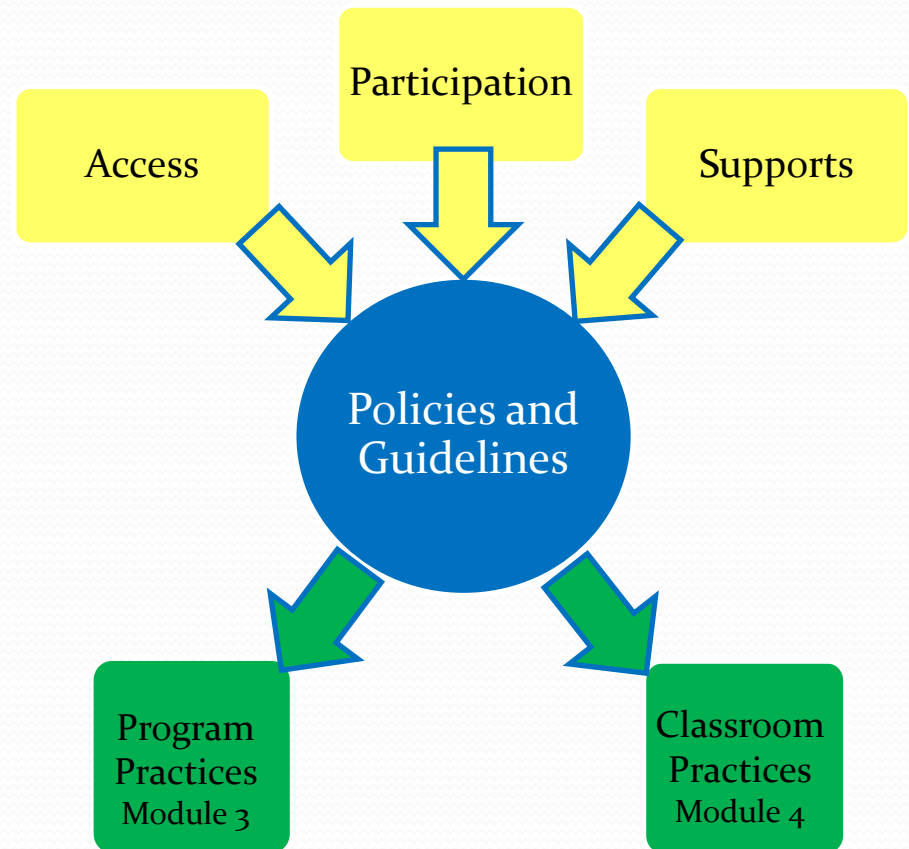
- A program that establishes a comprehensive set of policies that are grounded in the core principles of access, participation and support will naturally be inclusive
- ALL aspects of your program will be guided by these principles:
 - The way you interact with and care for children
 - How you include and partner with parents
 - The set up of the environment
 - The training of your staff
 - The way you manage behavior
 - How you partner with support staff
 - The activities you develop
 - Your attitude toward differences



An Inclusive PROGRAM

A summary

- High-quality inclusion is achieved when a program uses the main principles of access, participation and support to guide the development of policies that in turn directly inform and guide the practices at both the program and classroom levels.



Section 2:

Building An Inclusive Program

- The Improvement Puzzle
 - Program Practices and Tools for Improvement
 - Piece 1: Using Self-Assessments
 - Piece 2: Creating a Quality Improvement Plan
 - Piece 3: Effective Professional Development
 - Content, practice and feedback
 - WI Core Competencies
- Creating and Fostering Partnerships
 - Family Engagement
 - DHHS and DOE Policy Statement
 - Special Education Staff and Service Providers



Building An Inclusive Program

The improvement puzzle



Tools For Improvement: Piece 1

Using a self-assessment

- Is a self-assessment a kind of test?
 - A self-assessment is NOT a test
 - There are no grades and you can't fail
- Then what is a self-assessment?
 - A tool that a program can use to **examine** and **improve** the services they provide to children and families
 - One goal of the process is to help providers take a closer look at the important **indicators of quality**



Self-Assessments

Indicators of Quality



- The following is a list of the research-based indicators linked to program quality:
 - Teacher/Provider/Director Educational Qualifications
 - Learning Environment & Curriculum
 - Business & Professional Practices
 - Health and Well-Being

We know that by making positive changes in the above areas, your program will grow in quality

Resource to review:

[YoungStar Evaluation Criteria/Quality Indicators](#)

Self-Assessments

Examples

- Example tools used in Wisconsin:
 - YoungStar Self-Assessment
 - Use for Group and Family child care
 - Grow in Quality Self-Assessment (2 parts)
 - Use for Group and Family child care
 - Part 1: Materials and Practices
 - MAP (M – Materials, A – Age-appropriateness, P – Plan)
 - Part 2: Professional Practices



Resource to review:

[YoungStar Resources for Providers](#)

Self-Assessments Inclusion



- Where does inclusion fit?
 - Most tools have a short section on inclusion or a separate area that focuses on children with disabilities
 - Unfortunately, most self-assessments:
 - Focus the majority of their inclusion questions around environmental accessibility, which is **only one part** of inclusion
 - Have a **separate section** for the questions on inclusion, instead of embedding them throughout the assessment
 - **Skip over** the inclusion questions if the program does not have a child with a disability present at the time of the observation

Self-Assessments Inclusive Tools



- Only a select number of tools have inclusion as the main focus
 - Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)
 - Can be used as a supplement to a program-wide assessment (e.g., ECERS, ITERS, etc.) or as a self-assessment tool
 - Ordered around 12 research-based inclusive practices
 - Inclusion Checklists
 - SpecialQuest Inclusion Planning Checklist
 - Preschool Inclusion Self-Checklist
 - Quality Inclusive Practices Checklist

Resource to review:

Quality Indicators of Inclusive Early Childhood Programs
10 Things to Look For by Donna Nylander

Self-Assessments

Indicators of Quality - Inclusion



Effective components of quality inclusion and program “Look For’s”

- Environment (Space, Materials, and Equipment)
 - Teachers and staff welcome and respect all children and families and use person-first language as a rule
 - Teachers intentionally organize the physical space and materials to accommodate individual needs and encourage interactions and communication

- Interactions
 - Teachers consistently encourage and support interactions between peers with and without disabilities
 - Teachers actively facilitate cooperative play, learning and problem solving
 - Teachers assist children during times of conflict by helping them find alternative, more appropriate ways to interact with their peers

Self-Assessments

Indicators of Quality - Inclusion



Effective components of quality inclusion and program “Look For’s”

- Family Engagement
 - Teachers and staff foster *partnerships* and encourage the involvement and participation of families in all aspects of the program (e.g., exchanging and sharing information, participating in meetings and planning, encouraging communication, involving in celebrations, etc.)

- Professional Development (PD)
 - Teachers and staff are given time to attend PD and receive administrative supports associated with high-quality implementation (e.g., Technical Assistance, coaching, collaboration, feedback, etc.)
 - Staff have scheduled planning time to specifically plan for individualization of activities and instruction

Self-Assessments Indicators of Quality - Inclusion



Effective components of quality inclusion and program “Look For’s”

- Inclusive Services
 - Teachers have opportunities to collaborate with special education staff in order to ask questions, develop and discuss goals, and create plans for the integration of services into daily activities and routines
- Specialized Supports
 - Teachers make individualized adaptations and accommodations to activities and routines to support developmentally appropriate learning
- Program and Practice Evaluation
 - Staff collect data through frequent observations and evaluations in order to make decisions toward improving goals and objectives

What you've done so far...

- Through the self-assessment process, you have:
 - Examined and reflected on the different areas of your program, using the quality indicators as a guide;
 - Identified areas where your program is doing well; and
 - Identified areas that you feel could be targeted in order to improve the quality of your program's inclusive services



What's Next?



The Next Piece of the Puzzle

Creating a Plan to Improve Quality

- It's now time to:
 - Prioritize the targeted areas of improvement
 - Write a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)



Tools for Improvement: Piece 2

Quality Improvement Plan



- What is a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)?
 - A plan that outlines the strategies you'll use to work on the top 3 or 4 outcomes that you identified through the self-assessment process
 - Plans should address the following (see next slide for sample):
 - **The desired outcome for each improvement area**
 - A discussion of the barriers or challenges that might get in the way of you successfully improving in this area
 - **Who is assigned to the each task**
 - **How progress will be tracked or measured**
 - **A timeline for what needs to be completed and when it will be completed**
 - **A quick test of the plan to make sure it's worth doing, it's inclusive, improves outcomes, etc.**

Resource to review:

[Sample Quality Improvement Action Plan](#)

Quality Improvement Plan - Sample



Wisconsin's Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement System

Program Name: Sample name

County: _____

Person completing form: _____

Date: _____

9-24-2012

Top 1 - 3 Quality Improvement Areas for this Plan:

1. Environment Indoor
2. Professional Development
3. Social Emotional Level.

Sample Quality Improvement Action Plan

Directions: Using the results of the self-assessment, prioritize the quality improvement area(s) to be completed within the plan. Not all quality improvement areas need to be addressed. It is recommended that a program identifies three – five aim/outcomes to work on. More aims/outcomes can be overwhelming and too few will limit the success that you experience in your program. Please see definitions on the second to last page or call your local agency with questions. **To complete this form, please fill out all columns for each goal area.** For example, If there are three goals, it would be necessary to fill out all eight columns for each of those three goal areas.

Quality Improvement Area	Aim/Desired Outcome	Barriers	Task(s)	Responsible Party(ies)	Resources In-hand/ Resources Needed	Measurement	Timeline/ Benchmarks	Test of Plan
Environment Indoor								Worth doing? Yes No Measureable? Yes No Improve outcomes? Yes No Inclusive? Yes No Culturally competent? Yes No
Professional Development (Credit or non-credit based)								Worth doing? Yes No Measureable? Yes No Improve outcomes? Yes No Inclusive? Yes No Culturally competent? Yes No

What you've done so far...

- You've completed a self-assessment and identified things you do well and things your program could improve
- You've created an improvement plan prioritizing the top 3 or 4 practices you want to target and the steps you'll take to reach your goals
- So what do I do with this plan?



The Final Piece of the Puzzle

Effective Professional Development

- It's now time to:
 - Locate trainings, workshops, seminars, consultation or courses to help you gain information and develop the skills necessary to improve your programs practices



Tools for Improvement: Piece 3

Professional Development



- Professional Development (PD)
 - Any specialized training, formal education or professional learning intended to help improve knowledge, competence, skill and effectiveness
 - Learning opportunities aligned with prioritized needs and focused on improving teacher and/or program effectiveness or quality

Resource to review:

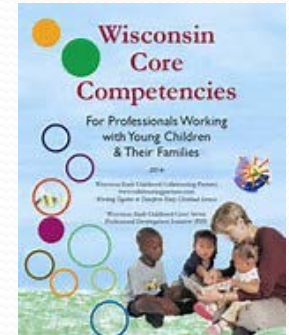
[Training Opportunities in Wisconsin](#)

Professional Development Supporting inclusion



- To be effective, PD should include the following:
 1. **Content:** Workshops or trainings designed to support the gaining of knowledge and skills
 - Example: A training that provides information and discussion around the history, laws, and research that support inclusion
 2. **Practice:** Opportunities to observe and practice using the newly learned skills
 - Example: Workshops with live or video demonstrations of the skills being used, as well as opportunities to practice and connect the new skills to successful inclusion
 3. **Feedback:** Frequent and ongoing coaching opportunities that include observation, reflection and supportive feedback
 - Example: After a training, teachers are provided ongoing coaching in order to gain verbal or written feedback on their use of the new inclusive practice

Professional Development Wisconsin Core Competencies



- What are the Wisconsin Core Competencies?
 - They are the expectations for what the workforce should **know** (content) and be able to **do** (skills) in a respectful and competent **manner** (attitude) in their roles working with children and families
- Why were they developed?
 - To help create a common thread and language for what is expected of Professional Development across system partners and the workforce

Resource to review:

[WI Core Competencies](#)

Wisconsin Core Competencies

A common language

- The core competencies are organized into 12 content areas
 1. Child Development (DEV)
 2. Family Systems and Dynamics (FAM)
 3. Diversity (DIV)
 4. Special Needs, Disabilities, and Inclusive Practices (INC)
 5. Learning Experiences, Strategies, and Curriculum (LRN)
 6. Health, Safety, and Nutrition (SAF)
 7. Guidance and Nurturing (GUI)
 8. Observation, Screening, and Assessment (OSA)
 9. Family and Community Relationships (COM)
 10. Professionalism (PRO)
 11. Planning, Reflection, and Evaluation (PRE)
 12. Administration and Management (ADM)



Wisconsin Core Competencies

Inclusion content area

- Special Needs, Disabilities, and Inclusive Practices (INC)
 - Embody the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every child and family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society



Wisconsin Core Competencies

Using the competencies



- The core competencies should act as a guide to help organize other professional development systems under a common language
 - Examples:
 - Guidance for College and University early childhood **courses and curriculum**
 - Students will know what content areas a class will cover
 - Framework for statewide **training content and offerings**
 - Conference attendees can search for sessions that meet a content requirement
 - A resource for individual **PD planning** and reflection
 - Providers can use the content areas to organize their PD opportunities so that they are meeting the needs of their staff

Building an Inclusive Program

Creating and Fostering Partnerships

- Building Partnerships
 - Families and Providers
 - DHHS and DOE Policy Statement
 - Promoting Family Engagement
 - Family Engagement in YoungStar
 - Inclusion in the Community
 - Providers and Special Education Staff and Therapists
 - Supporting Parent to Parent Partnerships
 - Inclusive Discussions



Building Partnerships Federal Policy Statement



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

U.S. Department of Education (DOE)

Policy Statement on Family Engagement

From the Early Years to the Early Grades

May 5, 2016

The purpose of this policy statement is to provide “recommendations to early childhood systems and programs on family engagement”

Policy Statement

- For **family engagement** to be integrated throughout **early childhood systems** and programs, **providers** and schools must engage **families** as essential partners when providing services that promote children's learning and development, nurture positive relationships between families and staff, and support families.

Resource to review:

[DHHS and DOE Policy Statement on Family Engagement](#)

Policy Statement



- Definitions of key terms:
 - Family engagement
 - Refers to the inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children's development, learning, and wellness, including in the planning, development, and evaluation of activities, programs, and systems
 - Early Childhood Systems
 - Include child care options, Head Start and Early Head Start, early intervention programs, preschool programs, and elementary school from kindergarten through third grade
 - Providers
 - Include teachers and paraprofessionals in schools, preschools, and Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms; child care providers, early intervention service providers; related service personnel; comprehensive services staff; and other professionals that work directly with children in early childhood systems
 - Families
 - All adults who interact with early childhood systems in support of their child, to include biological, adoptive, and foster parents; grandparents; legal and informal guardians; and adult siblings

Promoting Family Engagement

- Why is it important to involve a child's family?



- *Children are intertwined with their families*

- Families are a child's first and most important teachers, advocates, and nurturers
- Involving the family allows you insight into **whole** child.

- *Lifelong returns*

- Research indicates that families' involvement in a child's learning and development impacts their lifelong health, developmental, and academic outcomes

Resource to review:

[Making Family Connections Tip Sheet](#)

[Family Engagement \(Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center\)](#)

Promoting Family Engagement

- Why is it important to involve a child's family?



- *Mutual benefits*

- Family engagement in early childhood systems and programs *supports families* as they teach, nurture, and advocate for their children, and in turn, family engagement *supports and improves the early childhood systems* that care for and teach children

- *Long lasting impacts*

- Strong family engagement in early childhood systems and programs is central—not supplemental—to promoting children's healthy intellectual, physical, and social-emotional development; preparing children for school; and supporting academic achievement in elementary school and beyond

Activity

Engaging Parents of Children with Disabilities



- Food for thought
 - Think about and write down some ways you could engage the families in your program that have a child with a disability
 - Now read over the statements you wrote down. Are these ideas any different from how you would engage **any** family in your program?
 - What you hopefully can see is that family engagement is universal. The **discussions** you have or the **supports** you provide may be different from one family to the next, but the “how to’s” don’t change

Family Engagement for All

The “How To’s”



- Invite parents to participate in daily learning activities
- Create a family friendly environment where parents feel safe sharing information and asking questions
- Ask parents to share stories or information about their family (e.g., hobbies, jobs, special topics, important events, etc.)
- Plan activities that encourage parents to be involved, by working around their schedules, etc. (e.g., picnic lunches, trips to the park, etc.)
- Encourage and support the building of connections *between* families

Resources to review:
[Strengthening Families](#)

Family Engagement for All

The “How To’s”



- Provide opportunities for two-way communication (e.g., dialog notebook, offer regularly scheduled conferences, etc.)
- Support families as decision makers and advocates for their child
- Identify and provide supports and resources to families (e.g., packets about parenting topics, such as age-appropriate activities, developmental expectations, etc.)
- Develop relationships with family members that are linked to their child’s learning, development and wellness

I’m sure you can think of a lot more “How To’s” that you can add to this list!

Family Engagement in YoungStar

A quality practice

- Understanding how to effectively engage families is an essential piece to building meaningful relationships
- YoungStar Family Engagement Criteria
 - Five Categories
 - Transition
 - Family involvement and engagement
 - Family communication strategies
 - Family support strategies
 - Family/community connection strategies
 - Two Tiers (within each category)
 - Tier A
 - Tier B



Resource to review:

[YoungStar Evaluation Criteria \(Group\) – Section C.5 Family Engagement](#)

[YoungStar Evaluation Criteria \(Family\) – Section C.5 Family Engagement](#)

Family Engagement in YoungStar

Five Categories

1. Transition

- The ongoing process to ensure that children and families have appropriate information and support whenever there is a change in placement

2. Family Involvement and Engagement

- Opportunities for family participation in a variety of program activities that support child and adult development, including policy and program decision making

3. Family Communication Strategies

- The foundation for building meaningful relationships and back-and-forth communication with the families that attend your child care program

Family Engagement in YoungStar

Five Categories

4. Family Support Strategies

- The support a family receives in areas of need, especially during challenging times, that allows them to interact with their children in a way that enhances their physical, emotional, social, and educational development

5. Family and Community Connection Strategies

- The development of a strong relationship with communities and community service providers so an early childhood program can effectively connect a family with what they need

Resource to review:

[Wisconsin Family Engagement Guiding Principles](#)

Fostering Partnerships Inclusion in the community



- Another part of Category 5 (Family and Community Connections) that sometimes gets overlooked is how providers can help families become advocates for their child **within** the community
 - For example:
 - Think about how you could help a family talk to the community park system about installing adaptive equipment
 - Think about how you could assist families of children with special needs locate social networks or groups within the community where they could find emotional support and assistance
 - Think about how your actions could set an example for others within the community (e.g., seeing how you include children with special needs in all parts of your program, supporting and advocating for families, etc.)

Resources to review:

[Community Engagement \(Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center\)](#)

Building Partnerships Providers and Special Education Staff



- If you have a child in your program who receives special education services, one of the most important partnerships you can build is with the specialists from the school district. Unfortunately, this can sometimes prove to be a difficult task.
- Why can this partnership be so difficult to build?
 - Maybe you haven't been included in the special education process and therefore haven't been given the opportunity to make the necessary connections
 - Or maybe you are a part of the IFSP or IEP team, but finding a time to meet in person is proving to be quite difficult
 - It could be that you're unsure of your role and don't know if you can talk with or ask the specialist about what they're working on
 - Or is it that the services for the child are not occurring in the a natural setting (e.g., in your program) or alongside their peers so you don't ever see the specialist or have any contact with them



Building Partnerships Providers and Special Education Staff

- What can you do as a provider in order to begin building a partnership with the special education team?
 - If you're not a part of the IFSP or IEP team, talk with the family about being included in the meetings (See [Module 1](#) beginning on slide 33 for a recap on IEP teams and membership)
 - This could give you the opportunity to meet the special education team and have a better idea of what they are working on. It could also provide you with an opportunity to discuss the child's services and where they take place (e.g., natural environments, alongside peers, etc.)

Resources to review:

[With Families, Together We're Better \(Tip Sheet\)](#)



Building Partnerships Providers and Special Education Staff

- What can you do as a provider in order to begin building a partnership with the special education team?
 - Ask the family for a copy of the child's IFSP or IEP
 - Familiarize yourself with the goals that have been set for the child so that you are aware of what is being worked on. This knowledge will show the team that you are interested in supporting the child and the family.
 - Make sure you have a positive attitude
 - Meet the team with a willingness to listen to ideas and participate in planning
 - Some ideas may new to you, but having an open mind benefits everyone, especially the child

Building Partnerships

Parent to parent partnerships



- Another way you can support the families in your program is to promote inclusive discussions **between** the parents and families that attend your program
 - This is important for all families, but especially for those families who have children with disabilities because:
 - There's a good chance that these parent's feel like outsiders, or worse, feel blamed for their child's disability or behavior
 - The other families in your program may have questions about the child's disability or why the child acts the way they do, but are unsure of how to approach the topic with the family

Building Partnerships

Parent to parent partnerships



- More reasons why it's important to promote inclusive discussions **between** the families in your program:
 - The family may have overheard another parent make a negative comment about their child's disability or behavior and now they feel uncomfortable around that family
 - Everyone needs a support system and having other families to talk to or discuss things with can be a tremendous help

Building Partnerships

Parent to parent partnerships



- As a child care provider, **how** can I help?
 - Have the families in your program take turns presenting stories or fun facts about their child(ren)
 - All parents enjoy sharing things about their children and this may be an easier way for the family to share about their child's disability
 - Provide the families in your program with information about different disabilities and things that can be done to support the family and child with a disability
 - Set up your program as a place where families feel comfortable asking questions or sharing information
 - Provide information about the importance of being empathetic and non-judgmental (something we teach our children every day)

A Final Thought



- As the administrator and/or owner of a child care program, you are the person who can set the tone for how your program will care for and teach children with disabilities.
 - Will you embrace an Inclusive Attitude?
 - Will the policies you create be informed by the three principles of inclusion (Access, Participation, and Support)?
 - Will you take the time to assess, plan, and locate training opportunities so that your program is continually improving its inclusive practices?
 - Will you search out ways to partner with the people that are important to the growth and development of the children in your program (e.g., parents, specialists, etc.)?

What will you do?



Quiz

- Question #1:
 - The American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunities for all people with disabilities.
 - A – True
 - B – False

Quiz

- Question #2:
 - What strategy supports the inclusive principle of Access?
 - A – Promoting a wide range of learning opportunities
 - B – Removing physical barriers
 - C – Providing environments and activities that accommodate and respond to individual differences
 - D – All of the above

Quiz

- Question #3:
 - What strategy supports the inclusive principle of Participation?
 - A – Having a separate area for children with disabilities to play
 - B – Promoting a child’s cognitive development over the other areas of development
 - C – Interactions that promote engagement and a sense of belonging
 - D – All the above

Quiz

- Question #4:
 - What evidence based practice supports the inclusive principle of Support?
 - A – Family and early childhood partnerships
 - B – Models of collaboration
 - C – Professional Development opportunities
 - D – All of the above

Quiz

- Question #5:
 - Which is not a piece of the improvement puzzle?
 - A – Quality Improvement plan
 - B – Inclusive activities
 - C – Self-assessment
 - D – Professional development opportunities

Quiz

- Question #6:
 - What is Quality Improvement Plan?
 - A – A tool for assessing your program’s strengths and weaknesses
 - B – A plan for a child who meets criteria for a disability category
 - C – YoungStar
 - D – A plan that outlines the strategies you’ll use to work on improving your program practices

Quiz

- Question #7:
 - What are the Wisconsin Core Competencies?
 - A – A set of classes that are necessary for child care providers to earn a license in the state of Wisconsin
 - B – Expectations for what the workforce should know and do and the manner in which they should work with families and children
 - C – Specific learning standards that are recommended for all children under the age of 5 years
 - D – All of the above

Quiz

- Question #8:
 - Why is it important to include and involve the family in a child's learning and development?
 - A – The return on your investment continues throughout the child's entire life
 - B – The benefit is not only for the child, but you, as a provider, will reap the benefits as well
 - C – Families are the child's first and most important teachers, advocates and nurturers and their influence should never be underestimated
 - D – All of the above

Answer Key

- Question #1: A
- Question #2: D
- Question #3: C
- Question #4: D
- Question #5: B
- Question #6: D
- Question #7: B
- Question #8: D