

Preschool Inclusion: “Then What Are We to Do!”

The 10th Annual National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute

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Advanced Organizer

- **Brief history of preschool inclusion**
- **Presentation of Project BLEND**
- **Presentation of our emerging work in South Carolina that promotes & sustains preschool inclusion**
- **Small group exercise on community of practice**

A Comment on Children's Experiences...

“We start with the assumption that each day, that every hour in every day, is of great importance to a child, and that when an hour is neglected, allowed to pass without reason and intent, teaching and learning go on nonetheless and the child may be the loser.” (Hobbs, 1967, p. 1109)

Bill's Personal History with Preschool Inclusion

- **Teacher, Developmental Therapy Group**
- **Teacher, Susan Gray School for Children**
- **Director, Susan Gray School for Children**
- **Investigator, Project BLEND & ECR II**
- **Investigator, Project RESPOND**
- **Consultant, school personnel**
- **Director, personnel preparation programs**
- **Consultant, SC/DE Preschool Taskforce**

Heather's Personal History with Preschool Inclusion

- **Early Intervention Specialist**
- **Respite Program Coordinator**
- **Inclusion Facilitator, Rise School of Austin**
- **Teacher, Rise School of Austin**
- **Consultant, SCDE Preschool Taskforce**

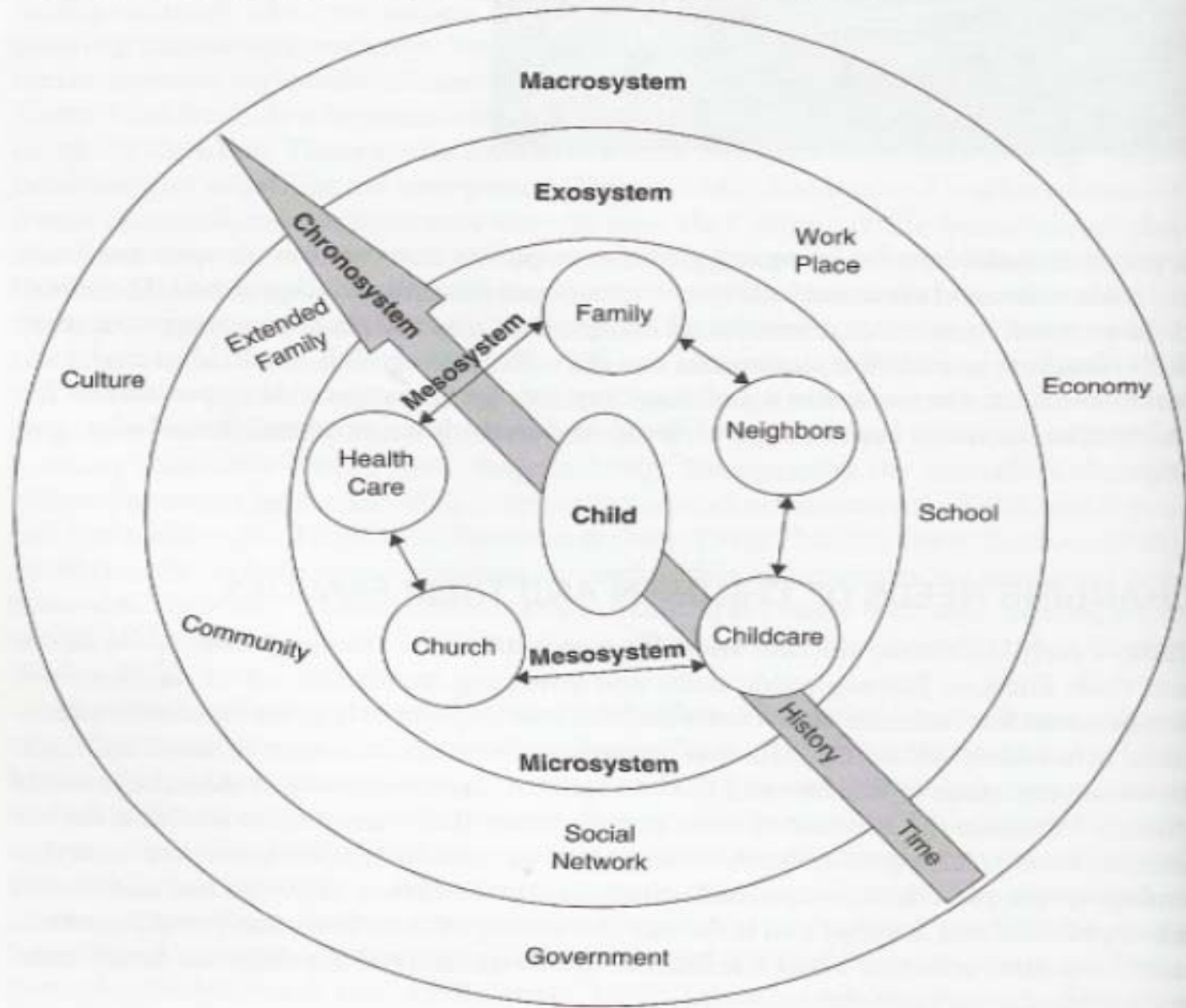
A Comment on Leadership

“The duties of leadership at any level... are to try and get the big ideas right....”

-- General David H. Petraeus, March 2010

A Powerful Paradigm

Figure 1.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development



**“Children are our future, and their
today is our tomorrow!” Susan Gray, PhD**

“The proper officers will
take the offspring of
good parents to . . .
certain nurses . . . but
the offspring of the
inferior, . . . will be put
away in some
mysterious, unknown
place, as they should
be.” (Plato, *The
Republic*)

Evolutionary Epochs for Serving Young Children w/ DD

1. Prehistory through 1950s

“FORGET and HIDE”

2. 1950s through 1960s

“SCREEN and SEGREGATE”

3. 1970s through 1980s

“IDENTIFY and HELP” (Caldwell, 1973)

4. 1990s through present

**“INCLUDE and SUPPORT” (Brown, 1996;
DEC/NAEYC, 2009)**

Goals of ECSE (Rule & Smith, 1997)

- 1) Provide family-centered intervention**
- 2) Promote engagement and independence**
- 3) Promote development in all domains**
- 4) Promote social competence**
- 5) Promote skill generalization & maintenance**
- 6) Provide normalized life experiences**
- 7) Prevent the development of problems**

DEC RP Values and Beliefs (Sandall et al., 2005)

- 1) Respect for all children and families**
- 2) High-quality, comprehensive, coordinated, and family centered services and supports**
- 3) Rights of all children to participate actively and meaningfully with their families and communities**

Preschoolers in United States

- **282,733 infants and toddlers with DD are served in the U. S. (~ 2% of general population)**
- **701,949 preschoolers with DD are served in the U. S. (~ 5% of general population)**
- **1,100,000 preschoolers in state-funded preschools**

Twenty-eighth Annual Report to Congress (2006)

- **32.2% are served in early childhood settings**
- **32.3% are served in early childhood special education programs**
- **16.6% are served in part-time early childhood/part-time early childhood special education**
- **3.1% are served in their homes**

Twenty-eighth Annual Report to Congress (2006)

- **10.3% are served in itinerant services outside of their homes**
- **2.8% are served in separate schools**
- **2% are served in reverse mainstream settings**
- **0.06% are served in residential facility**

Rationale for Inclusion (Bricker, 1978)

1) Philosophical Foundations

- Civil rights movements (PARC vs. the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1972)**
- Normalization principle (Wolfensberger, 1972)**
- Contemporary awareness & celebration of human diversity**

Rationale for Inclusion (Bricker, 1978)

2) Legal Requirements

- Public Law 94-142 free and appropriate education (FAPE) for children with handicaps in the least restrictive environment (LRE)**
- Public Law 108-446 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEIA, 2004)**

Rationale for Inclusion (Bricker, 1978)

- 3) Developmental and Educational Benefits**
 - **Benefit of peer models with appropriate behavior and peer-initiated learning**
 - **Enhanced peer interactions, peer relations, and friendships**
 - **Peers without DD may become more tolerant of and altruistic with children with DD**

Characteristics of Inclusion

Brown, 1995

- 1) Inclusion has multiple meanings and definitions for different people
- 2) Inclusion is like democracy in that it is an abstract and evolving concept
- 3) Successful inclusion is invisible and changes (and should) throughout the lifespan
- 4) Primary inclusion issue is what constitutes necessary and sufficient support for children with DD in community programs

ECRII Synthesis Points

- 1) Inclusion is about belonging & participating
- 2) Individuals define inclusion differently
- 3) Beliefs influence implementation
- 4) Programs, not children, have to be ready
- 5) Collaboration is the cornerstone
- 6) Specialized instruction is important
- 7) Support is necessary
- 8) Everyone potentially benefits

Barriers to Inclusion

Odom & McEvoy, 1988

- 1) Limited professional development for both general & special educators
- 2) Philosophical differences among early childhood & early childhood special educators
- 3) Absence of related services in many early childhood programs (e.g., PTs, OTs, SLPs)
- 4) Insufficient monitoring & evaluation systems for early childhood programs (e.g., IEPs, progress monitoring)
- 5) Negative attitudes of practitioners

ECRII

- 1) Lack of leadership
- 2) Lack of adequate training
- 3) Lack of specialized consultation
- 4) Lack of resources and materials
- 5) Lack of teaching assistants
- 6) High student to staff ratio

Project BLEND

(Brown, Horn, Heiser, & Odom, 1996)

- **Itinerant service model of inclusive services in community-based preschools with three fundamental components**
 - 1) Family-child care intervention partnership**
 - 2) Service coordination**
 - 3) Transition services to next placement**

Project BLEND

- **Tactics for establishing & sustaining collaboration among participants**
 - 1) **Collaborative consultation model vs. expert consultation model**
 - 2) **Weekly visits to community-based preschools by itinerant ECSE teachers**
 - 3) **Home visits to families by itinerant ECSE teachers**

Project BLEND Outcomes

- 1) Relative to comparison children in segregated programs, children with DD in inclusive settings
 - were as actively engaged and received similar levels of adult support
 - had more positive interactions with peers
 - made similar developmental progress as indicated by *Battelle Developmental Inventory*

Project BLEND Outcomes

- 2) Review of children's IFSPs with goal attainment scaling revealed that children with DD in inclusive settings made comparable progress on their goals**
- 3) Interviews with parents and teachers showed their satisfaction with an itinerant service delivery model in inclusive community-based preschools**

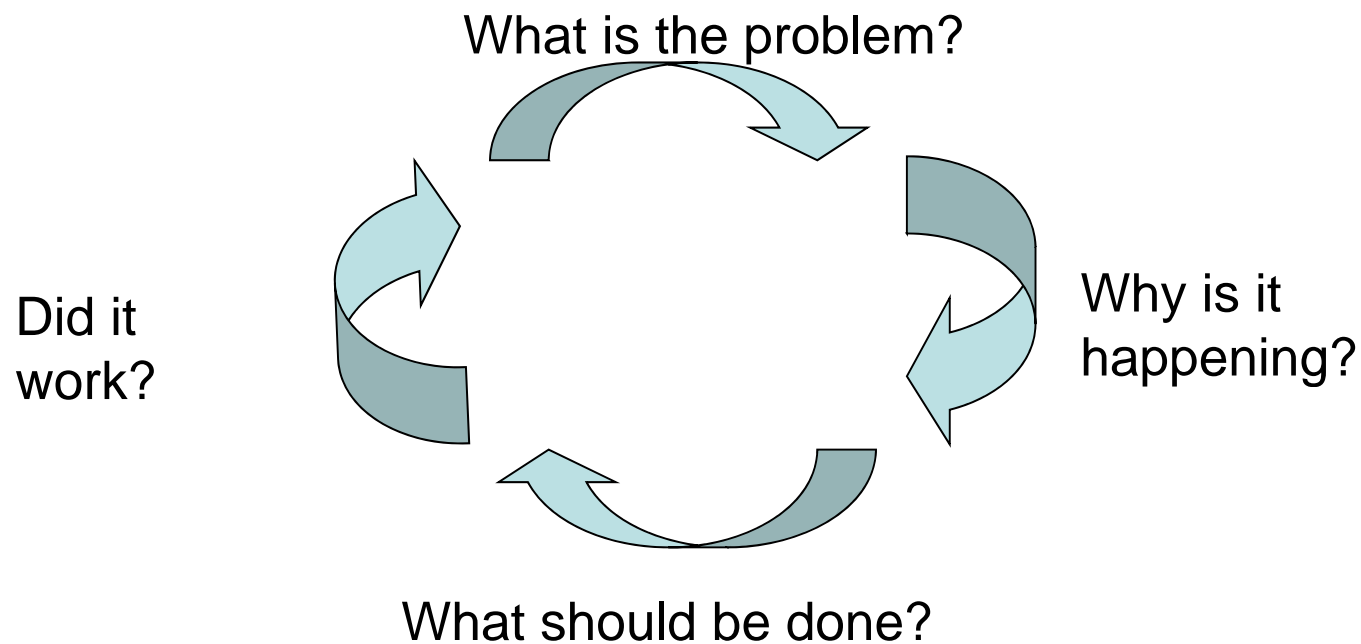
Project BLEND Outcomes

- 4) Cost analysis indicated that the inclusive service delivery model was implemented at similar costs to segregated ECSE services
 - Project BLEND findings are very consistent with information about inclusion from the *Research Synthesis Points on Early Childhood Inclusion: What Do We Know?* from the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI)

“Lessons Learned” from Project BLEND

- **“Think outside of the box!”**
- **Need for problem solving framework for services for young children and their families**
- **Power of collaboration among professionals and parents**
- **Need to individualize services and supports to promote inclusion**

Need to Employ a Problem Solving Algorithm



Recommendations for Promoting Preschool Inclusion

- Preparation of and support for personnel at the program level with inservice activities & information about preschool inclusion
- Establishment and maintenance of “street level” *community of practice* to enhance collaborative planning among practitioners who work with children who are receiving inclusive services

Professional Collaboration

➤ “A single stick can not make a fire nor build a fence.”

Hmong Proverb

➤ “He who travels fastest, goes alone!”

Merle Haggard (country philosophe)

Goal for Community of Practice

- **To enhance professional practice (i.e., knowledge, skills, & dispositions) by engaging in shared inquiry and learning with people who have a common goal (cf. NPDCI)**
- **A group of teachers, specialists, administrators, and family members form a community of practice to support high quality inclusion**

State-Level Collaboration

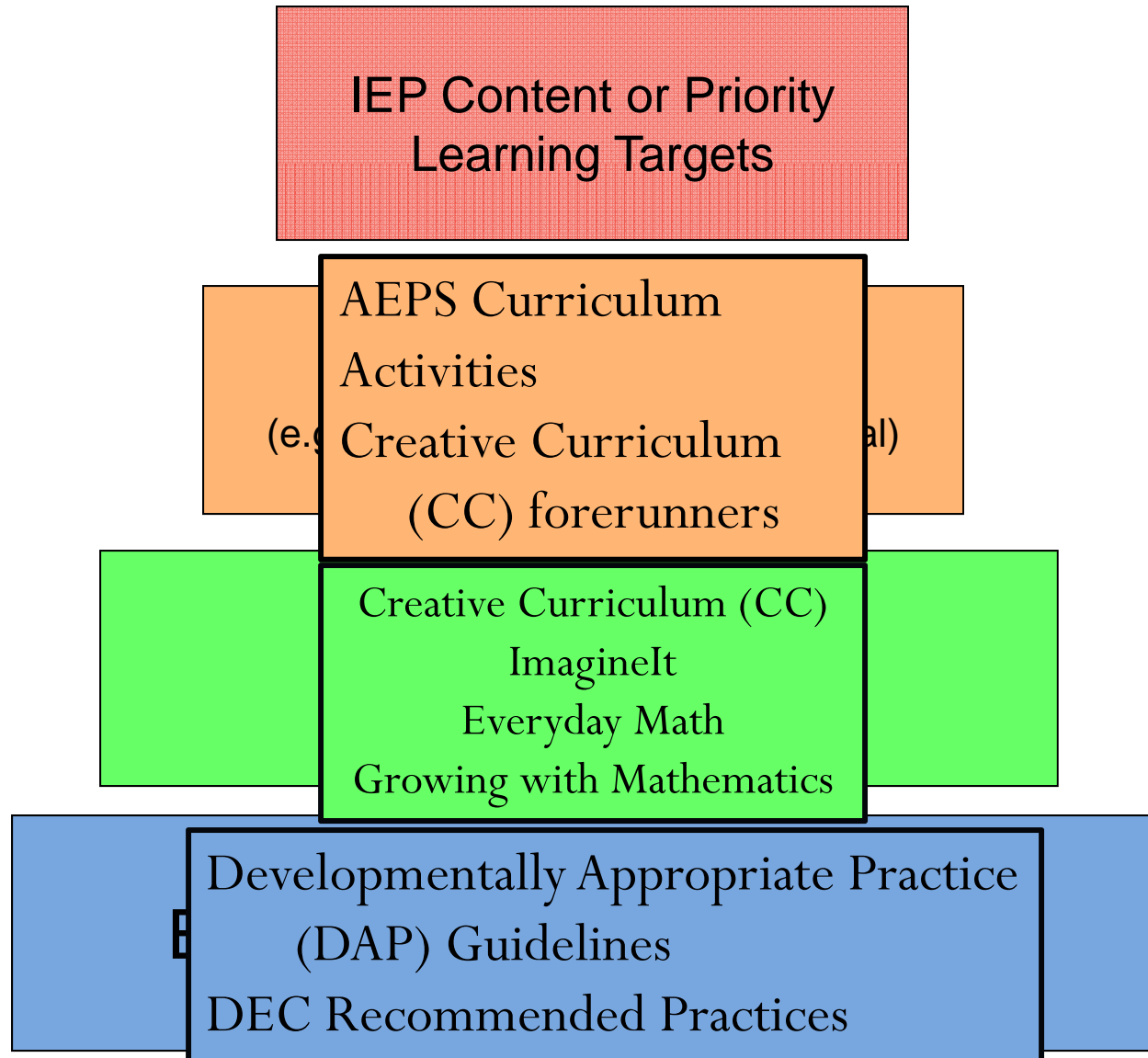
- Three-year state professional development grant
- Establishment of preschool taskforce with key stakeholders from EC and ECSE
- Professional development activities (e.g., AEPS training, PBS, preschool inclusion, early childhood outcomes)
- Evolved into district level collaboration and emerging community of practice
- Rolled into the preschool committee of the South Carolina Special Education Advisory Board (e.g., ECSE state certification, revision of state preschool plan)

Horry County Schools

- **Third largest public school district in South Carolina with rural, suburban, and urban population**
- **Working toward comprehensive, coordinated early intervening services for children birth to 6 years of age**

Approaches to Teaching All Children

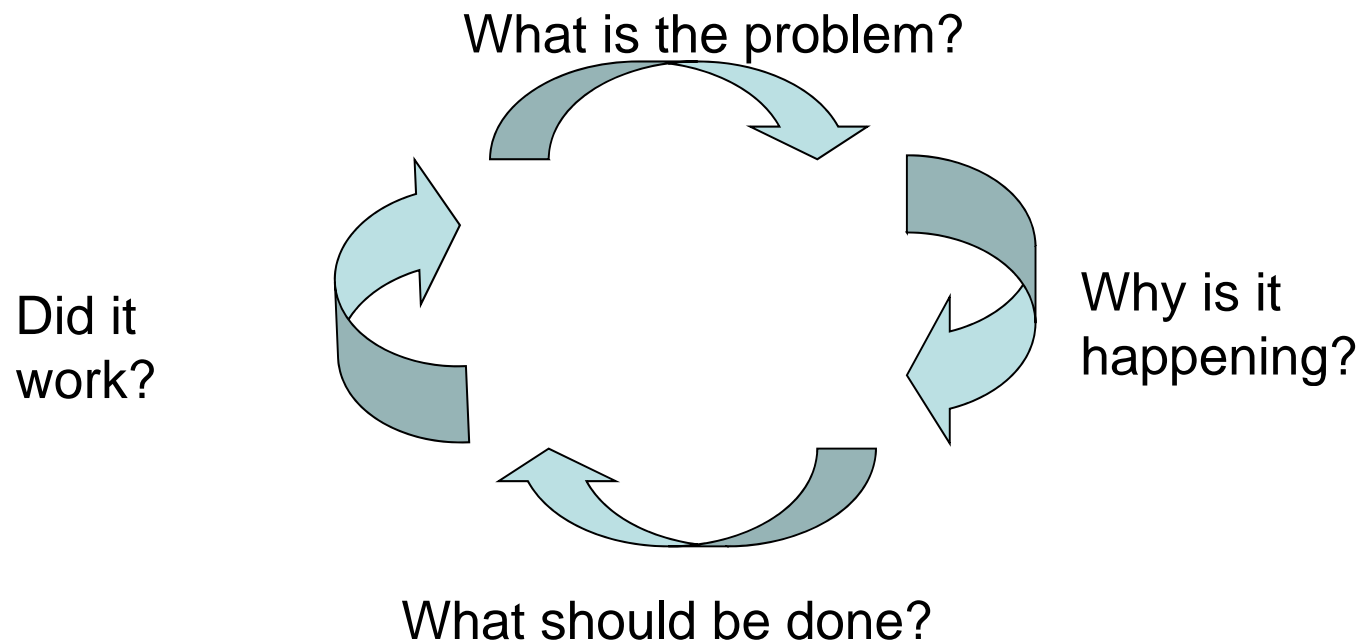
↑ Individualized
Universal



District Level Collaboration

- Established district task force
- Discussed with district administrators their perceived needs and goals for the future
- Held an initial two-hour in-service presentation on need for early intervening services
- Horry County Schools invited and supported attendance of community partners at the Inclusion Institute (e.g., BabyNet, childcare personnel, Head Start)
- Next step-meeting and continued planning with community stakeholders (i.e., determining “It”)

Core Team Will Employ a Problem Solving Algorithm



National Resources



- Center for Response to Intervention in Early Childhood
 - Project at University of Kansas, Ohio State University, University of Oregon, and the University of Minnesota www.crtiec.org

- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
 - Vanderbilt University
www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/



NECTAC & NPDCI

- **NECTAC is the national early childhood technical assistance center supported by the U.S. Department of Education's. NECTAC serves all 50 states and 10 jurisdictions with an array of services and supports to improve service systems and outcomes for infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children with special needs and their families.**
- **The National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI) is working with states to create a system of high quality, cross-agency, accessible professional development for early childhood personnel.**

Main Messages

- **Preschool inclusion is a complex and challenging social phenomenon**
- **Collaboration is necessary albeit not sufficient to promote preschool inclusion**
- **High-quality teaching and learning opportunities are necessary to promote effective preschool inclusion**

“What should our shared values be?”

- **“Everybody counts.**
- **Everybody deserves a chance.**
- **Everybody’s got a responsibility to fulfill.**
- **We all do better when we work together.**
- **Our differences do matter, but our common
humanity matters more . . .”**

(William J. Clinton)

Small Group Activity

Preschool Inclusion & CoP

- **Goal: To begin a conversation on how to establish and maintain a community of practice at the “street level.”**
- 1) Determine FACILITATER, RECORDER, and REPORTER**
- 2) Identify the core planning team who should participate (i.e., who are the cast of characters)**
- 3) Develop Action Plan with specific steps that are feasible during the next school year**

Personal Growth

- “To grow, cultivate the art of precipitating yourself into just manageable difficulties of your own choosing in the direction you want to become.”

Nicholas Hobbs, PhD