

## Learning Activities: Inclusive Learning Environments

### 1. “My Inclusion Philosophy & Action Plan” Reflection (Intro Week / Warm-up)

Purpose: Help participants articulate their beliefs about inclusion, surface prior assumptions, and commit to concrete inclusive practices.

- Ask each participant to write a 1–2 page reflection on their personal “Inclusion Philosophy”: What does inclusion mean to them? Why do they believe it matters?
- Then, have them pick one concrete goal — a behavior, policy, or practice — they commit to trying in their classroom/workplace/community (e.g., “I will always ensure children with disabilities get to choose peers for group play,” or “I will advocate for visual supports in circle time”).
- In a group discussion (or paired sharing), have participants share their philosophy and goal. Encourage peer feedback: what’s strong, what might be challenging, what support might be needed.

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### 2. Inclusive Classroom Observation & Critique

Purpose: Ground concepts in real-world practice; help participants apply research-based frameworks to evaluate inclusive settings.

- Assign participants (individually or in pairs) to observe a local early childhood/preschool/daycare classroom (with permission). Alternatively, use a video of classrooms if in-person observation isn’t possible.
- Provide them with an observation framework (e.g., a simplified version of the “Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)” from the syllabus, or key inclusion indicators drawn from readings like The Preschool Inclusion Toolbox by Barton & Smith). [ecidc-ucedd.media.uconn.edu+1](http://ecidc-ucedd.media.uconn.edu+1)
- Ask them to collect evidence on aspects like physical environment, social/peer interactions, accessibility, teacher supports, differentiation, and inclusion supports.
- Then require a brief written critique (or small-group discussion) answering questions like: What inclusion practices are evident? Where is the classroom falling short? What would you recommend to improve inclusion in this setting?

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### 3. Designing an Inclusive Classroom — Floor Plan & Daily Schedule

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Purpose: Help participants practice concrete classroom design and organization to support inclusion across physical, social, and temporal dimensions.

- Provide participants with a blank floor-plan template (or let them draw by hand) of a toddler/preschool classroom space (or a typical room they have access to).
- Ask them to design:
  1. Different learning/play areas (e.g. art, dramatic play, quiet reading, blocks) with visual boundaries/labels;
  2. Furniture/material placement to maximize accessibility and independence (low shelves, labeled bins, accessible materials);
  3. Visual and physical cues for organization and transitions;
  4. A daily schedule balancing active vs. quiet times, large-group vs. small-group, teacher-directed vs. child-directed, with transition strategies (e.g., countdowns, songs, timers, visual schedule).
- Then have them write a short rationale (1–2 paragraphs) explaining how their design supports inclusion, reduces barriers, fosters independence and peer interaction, and serves children with diverse needs.

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### 4. Family Advocacy Resource Binder — Role-Play & Toolkit Development

Purpose: Recognize the importance of family voice and empower educators to engage families in inclusive practices and planning.

- In small groups, ask participants to imagine they are supporting a family with a young child with disabilities. Provide a brief “profile” of the child (e.g., age, diagnosis or developmental delays, family background, languages spoken, strengths/needs).
- Task each group with developing a mini-“Advocacy Toolkit” for that family. Components could include: sample questions for IEP/IFSP meetings, a template email/letter to request inclusive placement/services, a “family priorities” survey, and a list of community resources or inclusive early-childhood programs (real or hypothetical).
- Then, role-play a family-professional meeting: one person plays the educator/provider, another plays the parent. Use the toolkit to guide a conversation about inclusive placement, supports, and collaboration.