

Elementary Inclusion:

OUR INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM :
TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES FOR
ENGAGING EVERY LEARNER





Reflecting on Early School Days

Close your eyes and think back to your first days in school. Do you remember the joy of bounding into your PreK classroom, excitement bubbling inside as you greeted your teacher with a smile? Picture yourself nestled on a colorful rug, surrounded by friends, joyfully singing your favorite tunes.

Maybe you see yourself at a bright red table, your little hands exploring a world of blocks and captivating picture books, while the gentle nasheed playing softly in the background. These early memories are often filled with joy and wonder, setting the foundation for a lifelong passion for learning.

In this brochure, we'll outline effective practices for creating inclusive early childhood environments. These guidelines are designed to help support all young learners as they embark on their educational journeys.



Early Childhood: The Foundation of a Bright Future

The Crucial Developmental Stage

Did you know that 90% of a child's brain develops by age 5? This period is critical for emotional, social, cognitive, and linguistic development, laying the foundation for future success. Many children learn key skills during these formative years, but some may struggle to meet developmental milestones. For families concerned about their child's growth, starting with a pediatrician or early intervention agency is essential. Initial screenings or formal evaluations can identify any developmental delays and determine eligibility for early childhood special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

For more information about IDEA

Click here - <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/idea>

For more information about Early Intervention

Click here - <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30321>

Understanding Inclusion

Inclusion is vital for young learners with disabilities and their peers. Research shows that inclusive environments foster positive learning experiences for all children.

- **Children under age 3** are served under Part C of IDEA, leading to an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) if they qualify.
- **Children ages 3 to 21** receive services under Part B of IDEA, which involves creating an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) once they turn three.

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Key Characteristics of an Inclusive Elementary Environment

1. **Diverse Learning Experiences:** A variety of teaching methods accommodate different learning styles.
2. **Collaborative Learning:** Peer interaction promotes social skills and emotional development.
3. **Accessible Resources:** Materials and activities are designed to be inclusive and engaging for all children.

Benefits of an Inclusive Environment

1. **Social Integration:** All children benefit from interacting with peers of diverse abilities.
2. **Skill Development:** Children with disabilities gain essential skills in an enriching environment.
3. **Positive Attitudes:** Inclusive settings foster empathy and understanding among children.

Components of Comprehensive Inclusive Curriculum

1. **Play and Learning Approaches:** Engaging, play-based learning supports exploration.
2. **Social and Emotional Development:** Activities that enhance social skills and emotional regulation.
3. **Communication and Language Development:** Strategies that promote effective communication.
4. **Creative Development:** Encouraging expression through art and nasheed.
5. **Physical Development:** Activities that enhance motor skills and physical health.
6. **Adaptive Skills:** Fostering independence and functional abilities.
7. **Emerging Academic Skills:** Building foundational literacy and numeracy.
8. **The Science of Reading in PreK:** Utilizing evidence-based practices for literacy development.

Understanding Accessibility

Physical Accessibility

Our inclusive classrooms ensure that all facilities—classrooms, gyms, and cafeterias—are accessible to children with physical disabilities. We have features like ramps, wide doorways, and suitable furniture for our students. Additionally, we use adaptive technology and sensory experience areas to support our learners' diverse needs.

Curricular Accessibility

Our curriculum is flexible and adaptable to accommodate varying abilities and learning styles. We do this by providing diverse instructional materials and activities that engage all learners effectively in each of our lessons.

2

Diverse Learning Materials

Representation

Our learning materials reflect the diversity of the classroom, including various cultures, languages, and abilities. This promotes a sense of belonging among all of our students.

Variety

We use a wide range of materials that are available to cater to different interests and developmental levels, such as fiction and nonfiction books, manipulatives, technology-based lessons, Islamic content, and sensory activities.

3

Supportive Classroom Climate

Positive Relationships

Our inclusive environment fosters strong, respectful relationships between teachers, staff, children, and families. Our effective communication methods—like newsletters, events, and apps—are crucial for maintaining these connections with our families.

Social-Emotional Support

Our classrooms prioritize social and emotional development, offering opportunities for children to express feelings and build empathy. Implementing social skills curricula and peer-modeling programs enhance children's interpersonal abilities.

4

Collaborative Teaching Practices

Team Teaching

Our inclusive classrooms often employ a collaborative approach, where general and special education teachers, along with support staff, work together to deliver instruction. Related service providers play a key role in achieving each child's individual learning goals.

We are Passionate about Ongoing Professional Development

We strongly believe in continuous professional development is vital for early childhood staff to remain informed about best practices in inclusive education. We have ongoing training that takes place with our collaboration with MUHSEN. Our Training is tailored to meet the diverse needs of educators, covering aspects like curriculum onboarding, differentiated instruction, and student data analysis.

5

Family and Community Involvement

Partnerships with Families

Our families are viewed as our partners in education, with regular communication and involvement opportunities. We engage with our families through home visits, neighborhood meet-ups, and personal conversations that enhance our children's development.

Community Resources

We leverage community resources and partnerships that enriches inclusive learning experiences and activities like field trips, therapeutic horse riding, swimming, Masjid visits. We have local specialists that come to our site to foster deeper learning and connection to our community.

Embracing Inclusivity in Elementary Education

Creating an inclusive environment fosters growth not just for children with disabilities but for all learners. We nurture empathy and respect, and emphasize the importance of kindness, compassion, and support for all individuals, as taught in the Quran and hadith. We help our students appreciate diversity and develop crucial social skills, paving the way for a harmonious transition where every child's abilities are recognized and celebrated.

Core Elements of an Inclusive Elementary Curriculum

Our high-quality classroom thrives on diversity, where children learn through play and collaborative exploration. Our educators provide structured learning experiences tailored to each child's needs, utilizing data-driven approaches to inform our instruction.

Our curriculum emphasizes developmentally appropriate activities, enabling our young learners to build peer relationships, enhance communication, and strengthen emerging academic skills. This is achieved through our comprehensive inclusive special education curriculum designed to support both children with developmental delays and their peers.



Play and Learning: A Path to Development

Decades of research affirm that children learn best through play. Our curriculum integrates various play formats—free play for social outcomes and guided play to teach academic content. It ensures that play-based activities are accessible to all children, utilizing scaffolds like visual supports and tailored prompts to enhance participation.

For instance, our sensory exploration activities, such as driving toys over textured surfaces, not only engage children but also facilitate fine motor development and imaginative play.

Fostering Social and Emotional Skills

Our inclusive early childhood curriculum prioritizes the development of social relationships and emotional intelligence. Our students have ample opportunities to interact with peers from diverse abilities, fostering empathy, cooperation, and enhanced communication skills. Our explicit instruction in social skills is vital for all of our learners.

Enhancing Communication and Language Development

Communication is a cornerstone of early learning. Our curriculum supports both verbal and non-verbal communication, incorporating visual aids and augmentative communication tools. Each lesson is designed to ensure every child's voice is heard and valued.

With 42% of preschool children needing language support, early intervention is crucial. Our approach combines effective language strategies with an inclusive framework to boost our children's communication skills and academic readiness.



Encouraging Creativity and Imagination

Creative development flourishes through artistic and imaginative experiences. An inclusive curriculum invites children to explore their creativity through art, nasheeds, and storytelling, adapting activities to ensure everyone can participate. This flexibility fosters problem-solving skills and critical thinking.



Supporting Physical Development and Motor Skills

Physical growth and motor skills are essential areas of focus. Our curriculum offers opportunities for all children to practice fine and gross motor skills through adaptive activities. By promoting sensory play and motor skill exercises, we nurture coordination and overall health in a supportive environment.



Laying the Foundation for Academic Success

Our comprehensive curriculum ensures children have both structured and incidental learning opportunities that promote literacy, math, science, and social studies skills. These foundational skills are delivered through engaging, hands-on learning experiences.

Independent Functioning and Life Skills

Teaching daily living skills—like dressing and hygiene—is crucial for fostering independence. Our curriculum is designed to cater to individual needs, empowering children to gain self-confidence through mastering everyday tasks.

Data-Driven Insights for Continuous Improvement

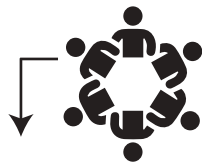
Effective data collection is key in early childhood settings. We emphasize the importance of gathering actionable insights from various sources to inform instructional strategies and support individual growth. Regular assessments help create a clear picture of each child's progress, ensuring tailored learning experiences. Each child's curriculum has their IEP embedded into their personalized programs where teachers can regularly guide lessons to meet their individual needs.

Theme-Based (72 Themed topics)



We use engaging, theme-based content each week as students are able to work towards their own mastery of learning goals at their own pace; our curriculum cover 72 themes.

Play-Focused (Practice through play!)



We use circle time, story time, fine motor & art skills, gross motor movements, Nasheeds, sensory exploration, physical materials & exploration learning and theme-based manipulatives for hands-on learning. Learning is fun!

Language-Rich (Speech and language development through book)



We use 144 children's books and Islamic themed contents that covers the Seerah of the Prophet (SAW), Classics and modern story books, and character based with Tarbiyah focused books.

Data-Driven (We use proven research methods to drive progress!)



Our students take a benchmark assessment and we use tools to support student growth and address areas of their specific needs. We use observational assessments and benchmark assessments designed to monitor progress on key early learning standards and developmental milestones over time. Each child's program has their customized IEP goals as areas of learning and focus so students can thrive and exceed their goals!