

# Embracing Individual Differences

## What does it mean to embrace individual differences?

Embracing individual differences means that educators promote acceptance and appreciation of each child regardless of ability, focusing on each child's strengths and contributions to their learning environment.



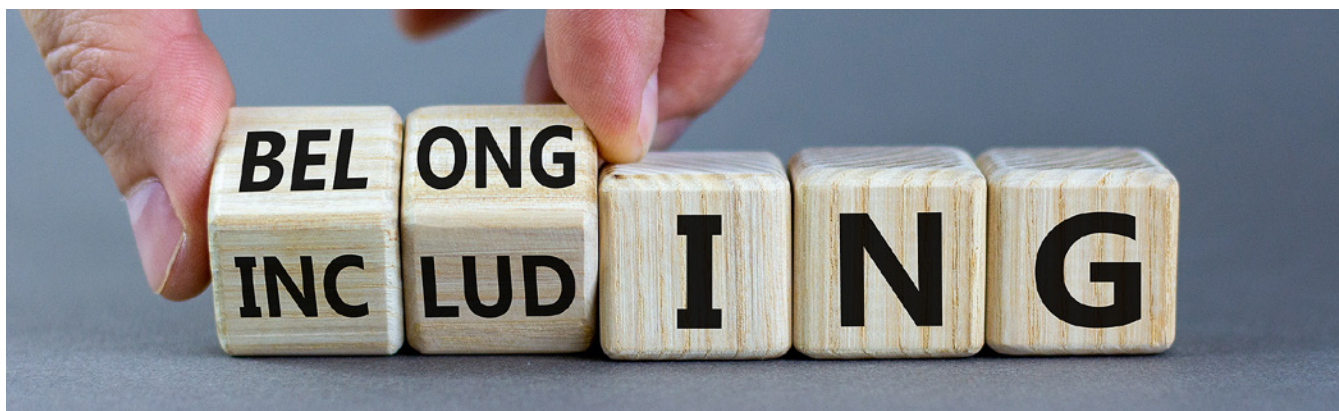
## Why is embracing individual differences important?

Each child is unique in their development and learning. When you intentionally build and nurture relationships with each individual child, you can better understand each child's strengths, interests, social and emotional well-being, culture, ability to interact with others, problem-solving skills, and engaging in imaginative play. This knowledge allows you to create programs based on children's individual differences and interests.

When educators embrace individual differences, it fosters and supports an acceptance of diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging for all children.

## What can educators do to ensure all children feel a sense of belonging?

- Create an environment where every child is valued as a unique individual with something to contribute and fostering a sense of responsibility for caring for each other.



# Embracing Individual Differences

- Display photos and artwork of all children
- Recognize that all children benefit and learn from each other regardless of their differences in abilities
- Identify all children's preferences and use this information to create an environment for learning and to support instruction
- Provide children with multiple opportunities and ways to play and learn at their own pace in a supportive environment
- Adjust instruction, materials, activities, the environment, and/or expectations as needed to support children with different learning abilities, etc.
- Routinely comment on and acknowledge the accomplishments of all children
- Help children share things that make them special
- Encourage children to ask questions
- Provide children with opportunities and time to support interactions with other children
- Facilitate play with children of different abilities
- Share your observations and knowledge about the child with the family and gather information from the family to better understand the child as a learner from the parent's perspective and experiences in another setting

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## References

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center & National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (2021). *Early care and education environment indicators of high-quality inclusion and observation*. [https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/ECEE\\_Indicators\\_Observation-Tool.pdf](https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/ECEE_Indicators_Observation-Tool.pdf)

## Helpful Resources for Educators and Families:

### **diversity is a strength:**

<https://blog.brookespublishing.com/8-ways-to-show-young-children-that-diversity-is-a-strength/>

### **Valuing diversity:**

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/dec2019/valuing-diversity-developing-understanding-behavior>

### **Adapting the childcare environment for children with special needs:**

<https://childcare.extension.org/adapting-the-child-care-environment-for-children-with-special-needs/>