

# *Preschool Inclusion*



It is not just a  
good thing it is  
the law!

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**YES**

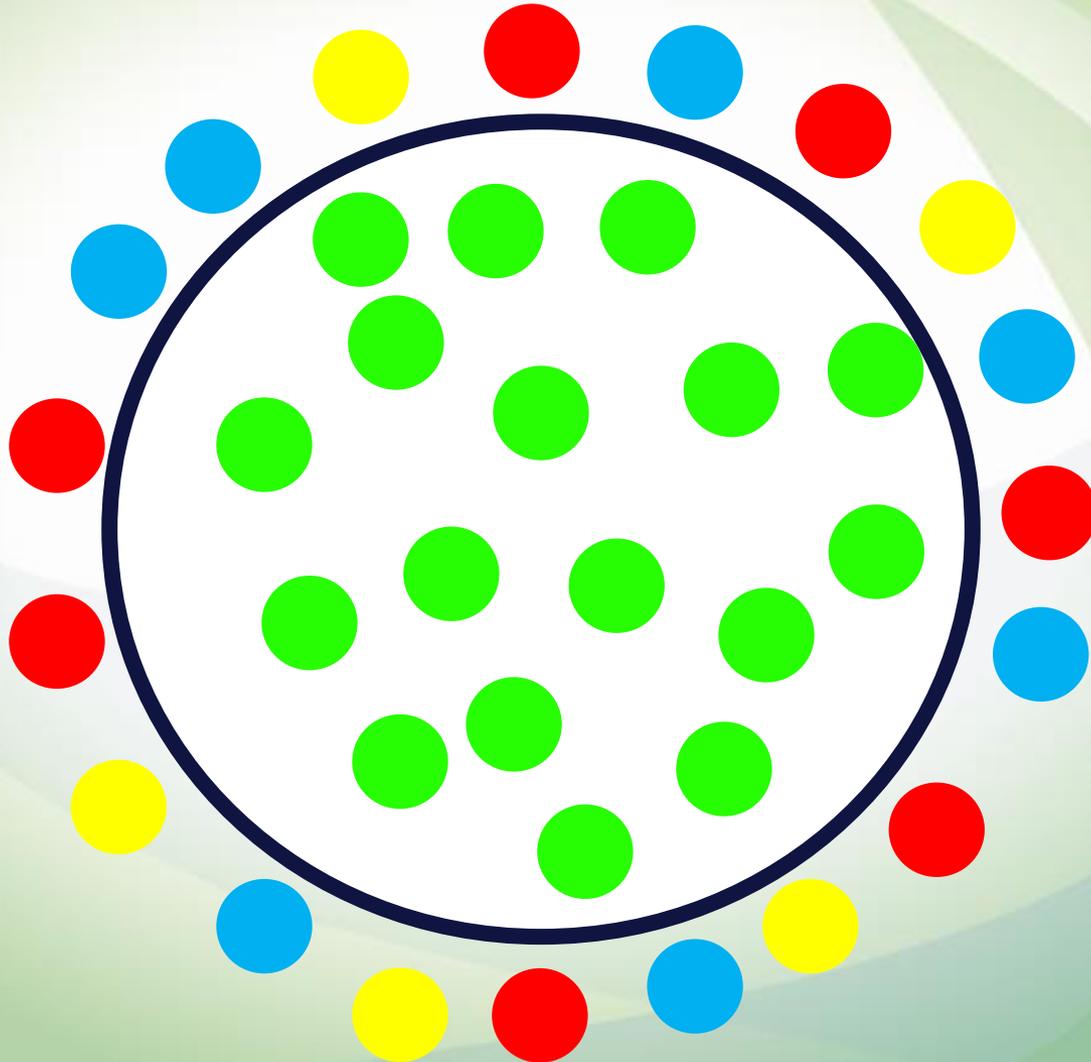
**&**

**NO**

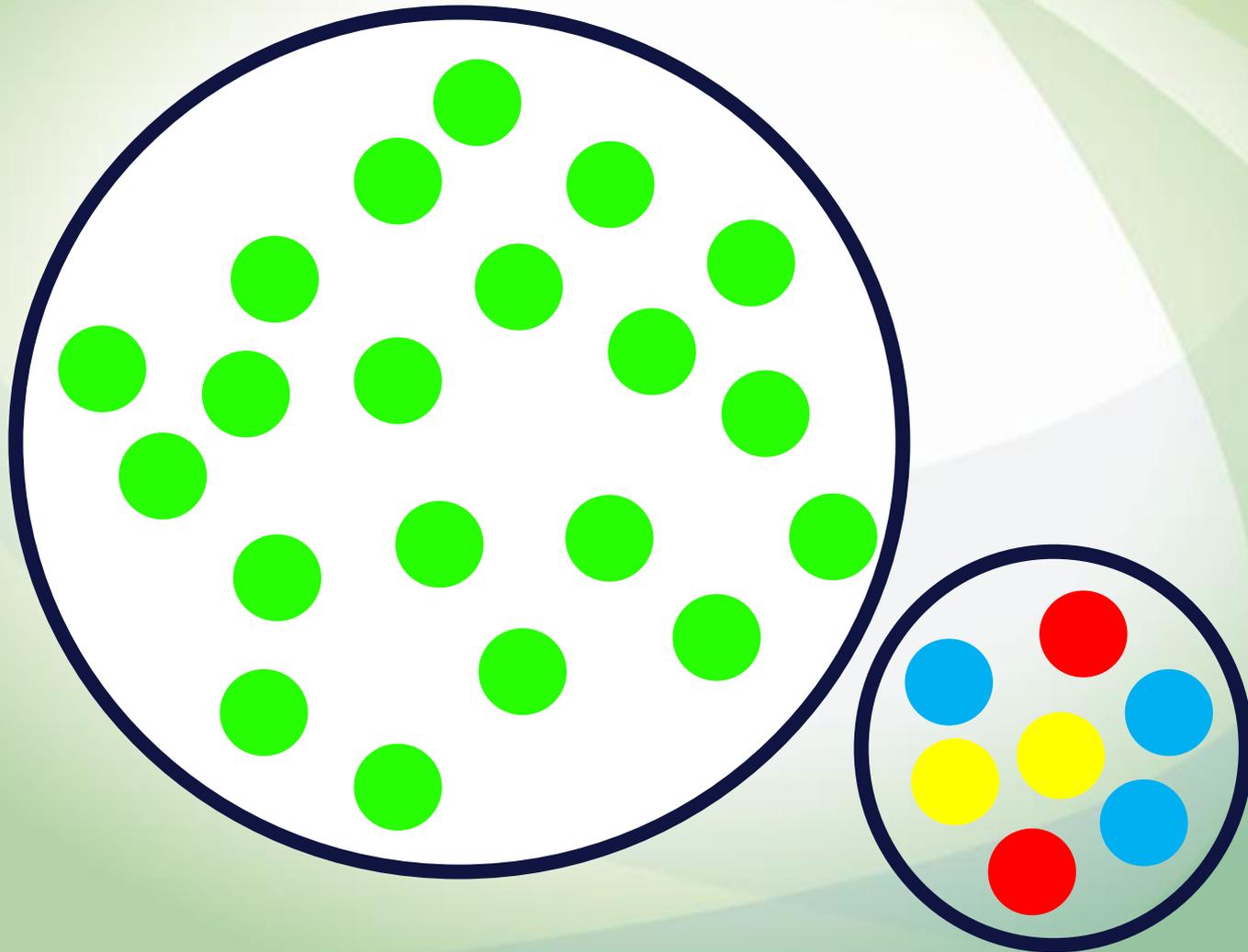
**GAME**



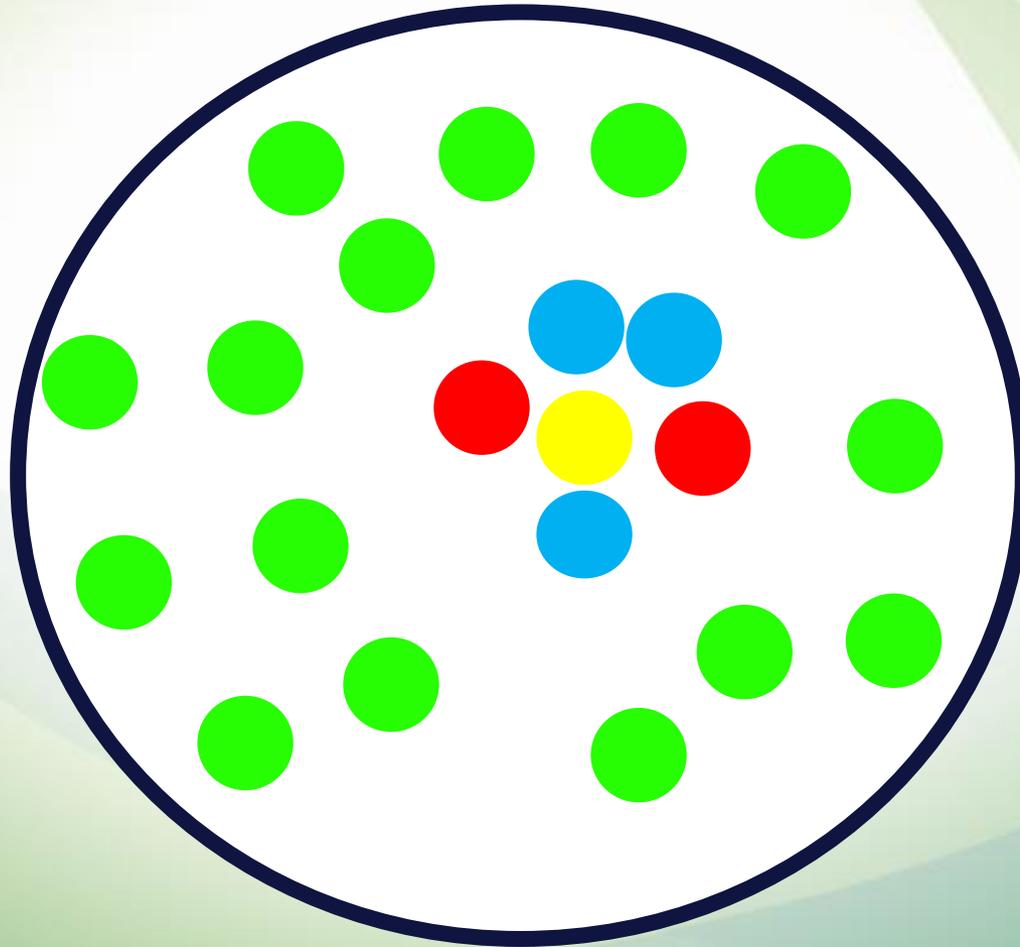
# ***Inclusion Journey..... How far have we come?***



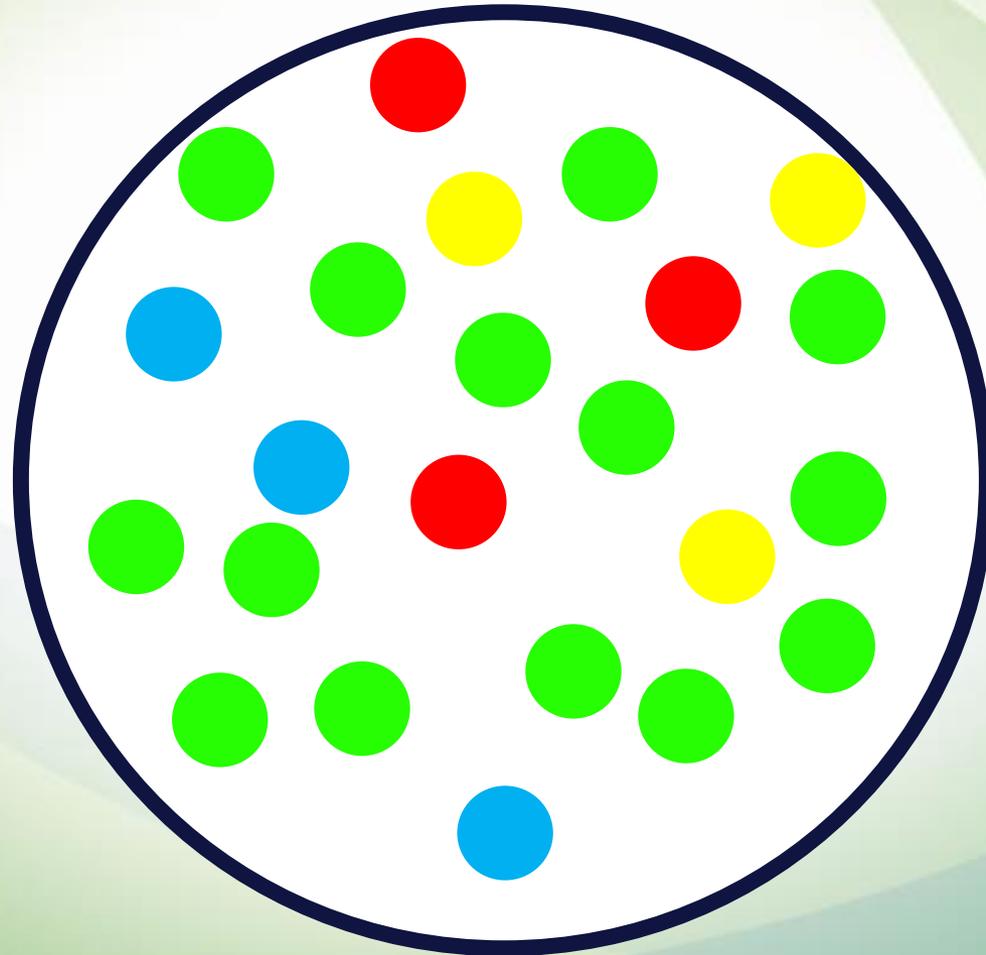
# *Inclusion Journey..... How far have we come?*



# *Inclusion Journey..... How far have we come?*



# *Inclusion Journey..... How do we get here?*



# *Legal Foundations for Preschool Inclusion*

- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Continuum of Placement
- Preschool Options
- Specially Designed Instruction
- Early Learning Standards
- General Curriculum/ Age Appropriate

MYTHBUSTERS

# Common Myths About Preschool Inclusion

- Inclusion only benefits students with disabilities
- Inclusive education is more expensive than educating students in special education classrooms
- Parents don't support inclusion
- IDEA values services in self-contained special education classes equally with services in inclusive general education classes
- Some children are not candidates for inclusion due to the nature or severity of their disability
- Students with the most significant disabilities do better when they are educated in separate classrooms
- Children must be "ready" to be included
- Intense specially designed instruction can't be delivering in an inclusive setting and is just more of the regular education instruction

# Policy Statement on Early Childhood Inclusion

[www.ed.gov/early-learning/inclusion](http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/inclusion)



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## POLICY STATEMENT ON INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

September 14, 2015

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy statement is to set a vision and provide recommendations to States, local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and public and private early childhood programs, from the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) (the Departments), for increasing the inclusion of infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities in high-quality early childhood programs.<sup>i</sup>

It is the Departments' position that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations. This joint ED and HHS policy statement aims to advance this position by:

- Setting an expectation for high-quality inclusion in early childhood programs;
- Increasing public understanding of the science that supports meaningful inclusion of children with disabilities, from the earliest ages, in early childhood programs;
- Highlighting the legal foundations supporting inclusion in high-quality early childhood programs;
- Providing recommendations to States, LEAs, schools, and early childhood programs for increasing inclusive early learning opportunities for all children; and
- Identifying free resources for States, programs, early childhood personnel<sup>ii</sup>, and families to support high-quality individualized programming and inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs.

Though this policy statement focuses on including young children with disabilities in early childhood programs, it is our shared vision that all people be meaningfully included in all facets of society

<sup>i</sup> Early childhood programs refer to those that provide early care and education to children birth through age five, where the majority of children in the program are typically developing. These include, but are not limited to, private or publicly funded center or family-based child care, home visiting, Early Head Start, Head Start, private preschool, and public school and community-based pre-kindergarten programs, including those in charter schools.

<sup>ii</sup> Early childhood personnel refer to professionals who provide early care and education services to children birth through age five, including public or private preschool teachers, home and center-based child care providers, Head Start and Early Head Start teachers, home visitors, early interventionists, early childhood special educators, and related services personnel.

# ***Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs***

- ***The importance of early childhood inclusion:***
  - Being meaningfully is the first step to equal opportunity, and is every person's right
  - Research indicates that meaningful inclusion is beneficial to children with and without disabilities
  - Meaningful inclusion in high-quality early childhood programs can support children with disabilities in reaching their full potential resulting in broad societal benefits
  - Inclusion in early childhood programs can set a trajectory for inclusion across the course of an individual's life

# ***Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs***

- ***The need to focus on inclusion in early childhood:***
  - Children with disabilities continue to face significant barriers to accessing inclusive early childhood programs
  - Too many preschool children with disabilities receive special education services in settings separate from their peers without disabilities
  - While States have worked to expand access to high-quality early learning programs, there has not been a proportionate expansion of inclusive early learning opportunities for young children with disabilities

# *Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs Refers to:*

- including children with disabilities in general early childhood programs together with their peers without disabilities;
- holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities, facilitated by individualized accommodations; and
- using evidence-based services and supports to foster their development, friendships with peers, and sense of belonging.

# Benefits of Preschool Inclusion



## Social

- Increased Opportunities for Interactions
- Friendship
- Typically Developing Peers Models



## Academic

- Enhanced Skills Development and Generalization
- Increased Rigor and Expectations
- Natural Opportunities to Practice



## Economic

- Costs less than Self Contained Program
- Promotes more Independence and the Need for Less Assistance
- More Community Involvement, Employment and Independent Living

# *Preschool Inclusion in Wisconsin*



# *Challenges, Hurdles and Barriers You Have Encountered*



# *Challenges to Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs*

- Attitudes and Beliefs
- IDEA Interpretation and Perceived Barriers
- Lack of Staffing, Training and Expertise
- Lack of Comprehensive Services
- Lack of Time and Commitment to Build Partnerships

# Resources and Support



*From your CESA  
Early Childhood  
Program Support  
Teacher*

*Someday we all will be here.....*



# THANK YOU



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