

# Key Principles Underlying the IEP Process:

*Supporting Family Participation,  
Inclusive Practices and Positive Outcomes  
for Preschool Children with Disabilities*

Developed by the NECTAC Workgroup  
on Principles and Practices for the IEP Process

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The overarching **goal** statement is intended to reflect the broad purpose of services provided under Part B, Section 619 of IDEA to support positive outcomes for children with disabilities, ages three through five, and their families. The **principles** are the foundation necessary to support the system of services and supports and are intended to reflect key values for the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process.

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| <b>Goal</b>        | Preschool special education is to enable young children to be active and successful participants in home, school, and community settings resulting in positive outcomes for children and their families.                                       |
| <b>Principle 1</b> | Preschoolers learn best through meaningful everyday experiences and interactions within developmentally, linguistically and culturally appropriate routines, play, and activities in inclusive settings.                                       |
| <b>Principle 2</b> | All families, with appropriate supports and resources, promote their children's learning and development.                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Principle 3</b> | The primary role of preschool special educators and related service providers is to provide and support high quality services in collaboration with families, teachers, and caregivers to promote positive outcomes for children and families. |
| <b>Principle 4</b> | Throughout the preschool special education process, the child's individual strengths and needs, along with the family's culture, priorities, and preferences, are respected and reflected.                                                     |
| <b>Principle 5</b> | IEP goals based on multiple sources of information, including family concerns and authentic assessment, support and promote access to and participation in the preschool curriculum.                                                           |
| <b>Principle 6</b> | Professionals build partnerships with families and support them as the primary decision makers for their children.                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Principle 7</b> | Preschool learning experiences are developmentally appropriate and based on recommended practices.                                                                                                                                             |

**Background:** NECTAC convened a workgroup of diverse stakeholders including researchers, higher education faculty, state policy makers, regional and local program administrators, family representatives, service providers, and technical assistance providers to develop through a consensus process an overarching goal statement and related principles for preschool special education services.

**NECTAC Workgroup on Principles and Practices of the IEP Process:** Hilary Bonnell, Kimberly Brancato, Linda Brekken, Janet Cornwell, Sandra Erickson, Kate Gallagher, Sherry Halley, Vivian James, Jennifer Kalis, Robin McWilliam, Phyllis Mondak, Cindy Ramagos, Ruth Ann Rasbold, Sandy Smith, Pat Snyder, Judy Swett, Verna Thompson, Carol Trivette, Gaye Tylka, Gwen Van Ark, Lisa Wagley, Pam Winton.  
**Facilitators:** Debbie Cate, Shelley deFosset, Martha Diefendorf, Kathi Gillaspay, Joicey Hurth, Christina Kasprzak, Grace Kelley, Mary Peters, Robin Rooney, Kathy Whaley

**Resources:** The preschool principles build upon the work and products developed for early intervention services: Agreed Upon Mission and Key Principles for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments, Workgroup on Principles and Practices in Natural Environments, November 2007. Other resources guiding the work include: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), DEC Recommended Practices, NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice, and Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO).

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