Least Restrictive Environment: Family Resource Guide

How to Use the Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to support families of children with disabilities navigate the early childhood education system to ensure their child is included in the **least restrictive environment (LRE)**. Each resource is accompanied by links and guidance to help you understand and use them effectively. Whether you're just beginning your journey or looking for specific support, this toolkit will empower you to champion **inclusion** for your child.

- Definitions of **bolded words** can be found towards the end of the document under "Glossary"
- All links embedded throughout the document can be found as QR codes at the end of the document

Evidence of Benefits of Inclusion

Inclusion in early childhood settings benefits not only children with disabilities but all children. This section highlights key research showing how meaningful **inclusion** leads to better social, cognitive, and developmental outcomes. Understanding these benefits can strengthen your advocacy for your child's participation in inclusive settings.

Inclusion Brochure

This brochure provides a concise overview of what **inclusion** is. It highlights the broad benefits of inclusive education and explains how it supports the development of all children. Families can use this to learn more about the foundations of inclusion and its positive impacts.

Understanding Inclusion – On-Demand Learning Modules from Early CHOICES

This on-demand series includes six lessons, each focused on a different aspect of **inclusion**. Topics range from the legal foundations of **inclusion** to the benefits for all children. These modules provide families with essential knowledge to navigate the system and advocate for their child's **inclusion**.

Inclusive Schooling Strategies & Checklist

This article provides five key strategies for working with your school district to advocate for inclusive educational opportunities for your child. Families can also utilize this checklist to prepare for an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** meeting or use during the meeting to help guide the conversation on placement and support options.

Federal Guidance for Inclusion

Did you know that the federal government has guidance on how to include children with disabilities in early childhood programs? This guidance, called the Federal Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs, is a powerful tool for families advocating for their child's right to an inclusive early childhood education. This section equips families with knowledge about their child's rights under federal law, empowering them to ensure their child's needs are met in the **least restrictive environment (LRE)**.

Summary of Federal Guidance

This one-page summary outlines the federal government's policy on including children with disabilities in early childhood programs. It offers updated recommendations and resources to help families ensure their child transitions smoothly into elementary school and is supported by the latest research. Families can use this document to better understand their child's rights and advocate for their child.