

## Creating Inclusive Environments that Support All Children

Roselia Ramirez: Hi, everyone. I'd like to thank you for attending today's webinar. Our topic today is "Creating Inclusive Environments that Support all Children." This is a part of the "Education Manager" series. I'm Roselia Ramirez from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. I'm so thrilled today that we have a special guest that will be sharing with you this information on our topic. But before I introduce her, here are our objectives for today's session. Identify key factors that are critical to successful inclusive practices, identify differentiation methods to meet the needs of individual learners, discuss professional development as a strategy to support implementation of evidence-based practices, and identify and connect resources to support inclusive practices. I also want to share that we did share this webinar on the MyPeers inclusion community. We're hoping that we have some disability service coordinators as well as other staff members joining us today because we understand the importance of that partnership that exists between education managers and disability service coordinators. We also know, and I do remember from my work in Head Start in western Arizona, that many of you are in that dual role. So, we may have some education managers that are also disability service coordinators. So, we welcome you if you're joining us today. And we will be sharing this information on that community, as well. All right, well, without further ado, I'd like to introduce to you my colleague, Ms. Jani Kozlowski, and I apologize for butchering your name there, Jani, but we'd like to welcome you and thank you for joining us today to share this information. So, I will go ahead and turn it over to you, Jani.

Jani Kozlowski: Thanks, Roselia. Hi, everyone. It's so nice to be able to join you. You know, Roselia was talking about those ed managers out there that also are disability services managers or coordinators, and I know that you wear many hats. And actually, I was a disability service coordinator and ed manager at the same time, as well, many years ago. But one of the things I didn't do was work during a pandemic. So, I have so much respect for you all and the work that you're doing, and I hope that this webinar will be helpful to you as you think about how best to serve children with disabilities and include all children as we manage these uncertain times. So, as I said, I'm Jani Kozlowski. I'm the inclusion and professional development systems coordinator here at NCECDTL. And as we begin our topic for today, we want to bring the session – start with laying a foundation. We want to make sure that we're all on the same page, we have a clear understanding with what we even mean by "inclusion," and we want to identify some key factors for successful, inclusive practices.

Let's go ahead and get started. So, so much of what we strive to achieve in Head Start really happens through relationships, our values for how we should treat each other, our work to teach children about expectations and friendship, how they make friends ... Now, this image that you see on your screen, we typically use it in a social justice context, but it's also a message for how we think about inclusion with a widened lens. Supports for children and families in Head Start and Early Head Start, thinking about what we mean by equality versus equity. So, equality is what we see in the first image. I am a short statured, petite lady, and I have to say I really like this image because of the step stools. I'm very step stool oriented in my house. But as

you can see in the first image, all individuals are being treated equally with the same supports. So, they all have the same size of step stool. And as shown, not all start from the same position. Some have a height advantage. And the middle image depicts equity. It demonstrates that when different individuals are given different support, it makes it possible for all of them to have equal access. So, that's equality versus equity. And lately, we've been thinking about this third image, and that really shows what would it be like if no barriers were put up in the first place, if there wasn't even a need for step stools? You know, inclusion and Head Start in general is not about special treatment for a select group of kids. It's about finding ways to build supports where needed so that we can all share a common experience. And just figuring out the right supports for children with disabilities not only supports the child, but also provides the rest of the children with the experience of being with someone that overcomes challenges. So, in all cases, our goal is to remove barriers, not to fix children, to fit our preconceived plans. And during these unique circumstances, in particular, that we find ourselves in, we need to be especially creative to find ways to support equity for all children. And it comes down to the environment, which is our topic today.

But before we go into that, I want to start with laying the foundation around inclusion. We know from a large body of research that inclusion benefits all children, not just children with disabilities. Children with disabilities learn from their peers, their typically developing peers, for sure. But children without disabilities learn about empathy, they learn adaptability, and they learn from every unique individual they encounter in their very young lives. Young children seldom have the concerns that adults have about someone different than they are. And there's also a lot of evidence to show that children can learn effectively in inclusive settings if they're given the appropriate modifications and adaptations to the curriculum, and in some cases, to the classroom set up. So, we know that families of children, both with and without disabilities, generally feel really positive about inclusion. They might worry that their child might not get sufficient attention either because they have a disability or because they don't have a disability, and they think that the child with a disability might take all of the teacher's attention, or the child won't be treated equally by peers or treated well. But those are common concerns that really all parents have. When you send your young child out into the world, you worry about how well they'll be treated. So, the research shows that there are three key factors that have been identified as the defining features of inclusion: access, participation, and supports. And these three factors can be used to identify high quality early childhood programming.

Let's look closely at these three features. We'll start with access. So, it's more than just allowing children to attend Head Start by removing physical barriers to the environment. It's more than just ensuring that 10% of children are children that have been identified as having a disability. It includes using multiple ways to promote children's learning and development. As education managers, you'll want to work with your disability services coordinator; work together thinking about how you can support your staff to widen their lens and think about access outside of a classroom setting and the environment that the child is in. You know, our times have changed. How are you and your staff promoting children's learning in the classroom? How are you promoting it in family child care, in the home, or remotely? I know that's something that you all and all of us are thinking about a lot lately. The next defining feature is participation. So, what

do we mean by participation? Well, this suggests very active instructional and interactional strategies for providing all children with multiple learning opportunities and throughout the day to meet their goals and achieve their objectives, physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language and literacy, all of the domains in the ELOF. That's what we mean by participation. And finally, there are supports. Simply put, children with access to programs and the general curriculum is really important, ensuring that they are actively and meaningfully engaged in high quality learning opportunities is essential. But those two features are often not enough. Supports refers to the incentives that you provide and ensuring that education staff have what they need to provide high quality, inclusive programming, refers to your staff and their ability to collaborate with families. So, without those supports, high quality inclusion is not possible. In the Q&A box, if you don't mind, share some of the misunderstandings or confusions that you've had or you've heard from education staff when it comes to inclusion. I'll give you a few moments to share in the Q&A, and I think it will be helpful as we look at the questions that we'll discuss at the end. I'd like to have a discussion about these three defining features after we talk about some of the environmental pieces that we're going to explore in the webinar. So, take a moment, type in your thoughts.

OK, thank you. So, in the next portion of this presentation, we're going to talk about supporting individual learners. We know that all children benefit from individualized learning opportunities, and we really strive for those opportunities to be linguistically and culturally responsive. And we know that there are children that will require more specialized support in order to access and participate in the learning environment. You know, across our country, programs are faced with adapting the way we've been providing early care and education. That's true for all children. Whether education staff and disability services staff are supporting young learners in the physical classroom or remotely, we know that the environment is key. The environment is really more than just physical space. We can think about the environment in three different ways. First of which is the physical environment, which you're very familiar with. And by that, we are talking about the space, the equipment, the materials ... But then there's also the social environment, and for that example, we mean interactions with peers, siblings, adults, family, and members of the community. And temporal environment is the third type, and by temporal environment, what we mean is this ability to adjust the sequence and length of routines and length of experiences and activities. We don't always think about that, but that's a form of the environment that we can modify to make the program more accessible for all children. Individualized programming really depends on an engaging and accessible environment, and it depends on the relationships we have with each other. The environments also include developmentally appropriate schedules and lessons plans and experiences that the staff and family can alter to make necessary accommodations to support all children, including those with disabilities or suspected delays. So, you know, the physical environment can create a lot of excitement about learning, and it can offer a peaceful place for reflection and contemplation. Ultimately, the physical environment should be a place where children not only feel safe, but they're comfortable expressing themselves. "Is this environment a place where I feel creative, where I feel safe?"

Now, the environment should communicate to children that they are important and that their thoughts and interests and ideas really matter to those around them. So, as an education manager, as you go into environments, think about those things because the environment can be a powerful communicator. You can see in these photographs the environment communicates expectations and rules and desired behaviors. I want you to think about a classroom or a home that you recently visited and think about what did the physical space communicate to you. And now, think about that from a child's perspective. So, for example, you may have been in a classroom with labeled cubbies, and that might communicate to the child that there is a space for me, for my personal things. Or it may be a wide-open room, and that might communicate to a child that running is OK.

I think that, you know, go ahead, and share some of your ideas about this into the Q&A, and I'm really curious to hear what you think and what kind of things you've seen in a recent environment. I know that this is critically important now because in some communities, schools are opening back up, and so, you're setting up environments. So, thinking about that, and especially, from the child's perspective, is really, really important. So, while we're waiting for folks to respond, I want to make the point that while we've been talking about the indoor physical space here, it's just as important to ask these same questions about the outdoor spaces in your programs, as well. And think also about supporting home visitors as they reflect on the home environments they're visiting. Just the layout of the environment alone can really communicate to children and can have an impact on children's behavior. The environment can be set up to keep children safe, clarify routines and expectations, and also promote the feelings of ownership and belongings. The space really belongs to all of us. I remember years ago, I visited a program, and the toddler room just felt really sterile when I walked in. It seemed very bare. And it was funny because the teachers were showing me the electrical outlets that had covers on them and their hand washing practices were right on target. And gosh, we know how important that is today. But it just didn't feel like a cozy place where you would want to hang out, and I couldn't imagine that parents would want to linger there with their child or that toddlers themselves were very engaged in the space. Unfortunately, it didn't take much more than some child artwork, family photos, some plants, and soft cushions in the corner to make the space more inviting. We also had a child with a wheelchair in another space – in another classroom, and we had to make sure that not only did we make the space inviting, but we also made space for the wheelchair to maneuver effectively in between the different centers. Anyway, in this toddler room, the teacher got really into the transformation. She was just super excited about it, and she taught me some things, as well. One of the cool things that she did was she sprayed a light lavender scent along the door frame. And so, whenever the children came in, at the beginning of the day, they had that pleasant, calming scent to greet them. And I know that's not for everyone and certainly, not if we have children that are sensitive to scents, but it was something that really helped to kind of define her environment and make it a cozy place for all children.

So, if you take a look at this and what it might portray, just take a moment. Let this image of the table and chairs kind of sink into your thinking. And now, we turn it into this. So, where would you feel better about reading a book? Certainly, in the second photograph, right? I think many

of us working from home, we've been able to explore things about our environment and how we can make it the most comfortable for us as possible. And that's really, really good to think about that from the perspective of the child in the classroom, as well. "What can I do to make this place really comfortable and engaging, a place where I want to read, a place where I want to engage with materials?" So, when we think about doing that for children with disabilities, have to keep in mind that children with disabilities may or may not need modifications. They might not need anything done to the physical environment or adaptations of materials, but some children, however, do. And these are four strategies that you can suggest to education staff if they reach out to you about a program who is struggling.

And so, it's kind of four things that when you're trying to get creative about how to solve a problem that you're facing with an environment for a child or for any child in the classroom, with or without a disability, can kind of think about these four things. So, the first is optimal position. Think about the child who uses a walker to walk. Can she reach all of the materials in the classroom? And what about at home? Families and teachers can think about the position of materials as a way to promote access and engagement. I've gotten around this by having a step stool in pretty much every room of my house. But of course, you want to keep young children safe. And so, thinking about how they can access the materials without having to ask a teacher for help or ask their parents for help, and so forth. So, that's what we mean by optimal position. The second is modify response. Is there only one way to do things? Of course not. Some children find tying shoes really, really difficult. And so, there's Velcro. You know, you can individualize the environment by being open to that there's a variety of ways to do things and to use materials. There's also a variety of ways to show that somebody knows how to do something. And so, that's an important thing to think about, as well, modifying the response of the child, but also modifying your own response and expectations.

The third is stabilize. Some children with disabilities may not have good motor control, and that might not be a problem for many. But those that do, we want to make sure that items are stable, and that can help increase participation, as well. And so, thinking about what you can do to make sure that the puzzle pieces are easy to access and that they don't slide all around, or that toys that are on a table can be made stable either by rubber padding or some other way, clamping it down so that it doesn't move around, and the child is able to engage with the materials. So, the third thing is larger and brighter. And children also benefit from using materials that are larger and easier to grasp. That's why we have those chubby crayons for toddlers, because they don't yet have the fine motor skills to be successful with those small, skinny, tiny crayons. And so, a child who may be older than the toddler years that has fine motor control issues are fine. Motor skills that aren't quite developed might really benefit from those chubbier kinds of crayons. So, children with visual impairments might also benefit from brightly colored materials – another thing to think about. It's really just about being creative and adapting the environment to respond to those needs of the individual child, kind of like being a detective. Let's look at some more examples. A child with sensory issues, we know we have many kids in Head Start with sensory issues, they might not like finger painting, but painting with a cup or other implements instead of fingers might increase her comfort level with painting. So, again, it's not about there's only one way to do it. So, how do you think these

other examples could provide environmental supports for a child with a disability? You can use this if you want as a professional development activity with educators and see what they come up with. You know, I think you might get some responses, like helping the child participate in the dramatic play area, helping a child be more independent. You see that zipper pull on the jacket is larger so that it's easier to grab. Being able to eat independently. Those spoons and forks have handles, so they're easier to grab, and you can see the red spoons have foam stuff on them, so it doesn't have to be expensive. But those make it easier to grab as the child is working on those fine motor skills. And then you can see that bowl has a stabilizer underneath it. So, you might think about how you could engage with your education staff about supporting all children through the physical environment. Do they feel like they belong in the space? And think about the qualities of your own environment, your home, and workspace that you've modified so that it reflects your own needs. And, you know, we've adapted our home and learning environment over the past few months. So, think about what have you done to meet your own needs or the needs of others, and that can help you guide them. But ultimately, I want you to think about the child's perspective. That's just so important, because when we think about inclusive physical environments, we want to make sure that the education staff are considering the child's perspectives. As adults, we're responsible to nurture and care for children, and sometimes, we get all caught up in being the responsible one, and we forget that the child has their own unique perspective on the world, too.

And so, education staff can think about how the environment and learning activities are perceived by the child and make decisions based on your own sense of responsibility, of course, and safety, but also with the child's preferences, their thoughts, their feelings. You can ask the child, if they are verbal. And education staff might support families that are engaging remotely, and not be a question for families to talk about at a distance. You see in this picture, there's a child with a disability, and he's using a supportive chair at circle time. So, clearly that teacher took the time to consider his perspective and found a way for him to be included as part of the group. Teachers might want to offer several supportive chairs, like this one, in case some of his peers want to use one, as well. So, there's no reason that it just has to be for that one child. Engaging with families during this difficult time may only happen through remote service delivery and outside the box options. So, remember to consider families that don't have Internet connections, or they have limited data plans. We have to remember cost considerations. Do families have a computer so that they can access video lessons? I know many of you are thinking about those things and think about those needed modifications for remote delivery or summer programs. And again, think about the outdoor environment. Consider nature-based supportive environments can be especially helpful during this time. Keep it simple. We don't want families to feel overwhelmed or guilty that they aren't doing more to support their child, as well. But we've got lots of videos and online resources related to supporting IEP and IFSP, individualized family service plan and individualized education program goals. So, we did include a resources handout that you can download in the resources section. So, all of those things are important to remember.

Let's move on to the social environment. So, the second type environment is the social environment. And we know it creates a positive learning experience for children. It has a huge

role in our efforts to do that. Relationships are just important for all of us to feel safe and valued, special, happy, and loved. And in addition, the families are going to be more likely to engage with the program when they have an ongoing relationship with program staff. You know, I heard a research point a while back by Walter Gilliam, and he said that he had never met a parent who had a child that was suspended or expelled from a program that also had a good relationship with that child's teacher. So, those relationships are critical, and it really is something that we need to work hard. So, children benefit from having those close relationships, and they also benefit from adults having close and trusted relationships with each other. Those relationships are super important. So, we know that many of you are supporting education staff, and there are various circumstances that you're working under. You might be working in a physical building or maybe remotely. But creating intentional opportunities for relationships to happen with other children is certainly easier when we have the setting of the classroom. But we can also support how to set up situations that naturally reinforce relationships throughout the daily schedule. And I know that that can be challenging when you're working remotely, but we can nurture relationships even from a distance. So, think about those strategies that you've been using with education staff in your program to stay connected with them remotely. Might be Zoom video calls or other kinds of strategies, and those can be used to support learning at a distance with children and families, as well. So, give it a try, and you might be able to do a short video call with multiple children to share stories or read a book together, play a game together. Just want to keep those brief so that children stay engaged. And the infants and toddlers can also benefit from a video conference, believe it or not.

So, for children with disabilities, you want to make sure that we take the time to talk with families ahead of time before you do those kinds of activities to find out what you can do to make sure that you've thought about access, participation, and supports for the child so that they can participate just alongside their typically developing peers. So, observe. You know, we want to think about how children interact with peers, what their common interests are between other children. If you have a number of kids in your classroom that are interested in dinosaurs, for example, then bring dinosaurs to your Zoom calls to really get them engaged. And when they are able to connect, especially with each other, either in person or by video call, celebrate those attempts. You know, a lot of times we focus on what not to do, and it's really important that we teach what to do. And teaching those friendship skills is important, and we can do that in the virtual setting, as well. You know, "I like the way you came off of mute and asked Timothy a question." That kind of reinforcement. And you can set up situations in those activities that will serve as natural reinforcement. So, finding ways so that children get that reinforcement without having you say "Good job" is really the best. Just like any time we do something for the first time successfully, it makes us feel really good about it. So, when we think about the social environment, we're talking about friendship skills, emotional literacy, managing emotions, and problem-solving. Young children engage in positive interactions with adults in a variety of situations, including those everyday routines, and when they develop trusting relationships, they're more willing to explore the world. We know that adults in the lives of children might be experiencing stress and difficult times due to the impact and the adjustments caused by the pandemic, and we know that when adults yell or get wound up or

angry or frustrated, children know it or can sense it, even babies. Teachers and child care providers are the young child's secure base when they're away from family members. And so, when adults lose control, young children lose their rock, that person that, "I count on you to help me feel safe and calm." So, I know it's a delicate area, but I know it's also one that we really need to focus our time and energy as we support children, especially during this time.

Fostering those friendships between children because of the fact that the adult is typically the safe base, if you're able to foster friendships, those positive peer relationships provide another safe base. So, it gives relationships to a child that are different from adults to help them feel more positive in the learning environments. We know that as adults, right? I mean, if you're at work and you have a friend in the workplace, that makes it so much more fun. So, in our current context, we really need to get creative in order to make that happen for children and ask education staff to share their own ideas with one another. You might want to set up a one-on-one Zoom call if you're working, if you're providing services remotely so that each child has a chance to connect with just one other child, or even a small group might be a way to do it. Read a book together online with just a small group. Get families involved who can take turns with reading. You read a page, and mom reads a page, and grandma reads a page, and so forth. I wanted to share a resource that is really great. It's on the site of the National Center on Pyramid Model Innovations, and it's called "Tucker Turtle Takes Time To Tuck and Think at Home." And so, they've got some great online social stories, and you can download them for free, and they're really helpful to help children understand why we're spending time apart. And it helps to reinforce how important relationships are, that we need to stay apart in order to stay safe. And so, you know, we really rely on Tucker Turtle as a way to help with deescalating situations in the classroom. But it's also something that can be used with families, as well, and also for children as they're working to manage their own big emotions. You know, that's one of those social skills, that they're learning to manage those emotions. So, make sure to share these links with your staff. The link to this resource and others are available on that resource page that you can download and share with families so they can use them at home, as well.

So, another idea is a big feelings box. Some children with disabilities or suspected delays really struggle with regulating emotions, and now more than ever. So, children with disabilities might feel social isolation. And it's important for staff to give children an opportunity to discuss those feelings if they're verbal and express them and manage them in a different way if not, or even if they are verbal. So, a big feelings box can help children express their feelings in a safe way. Children with sensory issues might really like some of these strategies, as well. So, encourage staff to schedule coping and calming activities into the child's day, and find ways to introduce these calming behaviors. This is important for all age groups. Preschoolers might like popping the bubble wrap, while infants might benefit from the use of calming lotion during infant massage. And these opportunities are important to think about for staff, as well. Now, think about your team and what are some calming activities that you can bring to your team to engage with during this stressful time. So, the feelings box can be created when the programs reopen, but you can also give families the materials and talk about it on a Zoom call if you're providing services remotely, and families can pull together their own big feelings box, as well. So, I'm going to show a video clip, and I want you to watch this and jot down some of the things

that you see the teacher do and say to the child, and think about how this teacher is creating a positive social environment and how might you use the strategy as professional development for the educators you work with in your program?

[Video begins]

[Child babbling]

Teacher: Would you like some help? Help? You're working very hard on trying to put on your shoes. Would you like some help?

Child: Oh, sure.

Teacher: You're still trying. Corbin, are you rolling everywhere? Are you Mr. Rolly, Rolly, Rolly? Rolly, rolly. Help you do ship? Whoa! Emberley Ciccone! Push! Yeah?

[Video ends]

Jani: So, type into the Q&A box what kinds of things did you see. What teaching practices did she use to build and maintain those individual relationships? And how supportive was that environment? What did a little boy with the shoe learn about himself through the teachers practices? Did he learn that his teacher was going to rush in and help him right away? No. She made sure that he had multiple times before stepping in to help put his shoe on. It's really important, especially with children with disabilities, that we keep high expectations for our children, and we don't rush in to help. And that's important for families, as well. It can be hard to do, especially for children that require extra support.

So, to sum it up, the social environment is so important because, as we said, we need each other now more than ever. So, I can suggest to parents to reach out to friends and family members, work together on IEP or IFSP goals that don't require physical prompting. You can mail or drop off instructional materials and then follow up with a play date or with a phone call to see how families are doing, and talk about how they use the materials, creating the big feelings box. And make sure, as an education manager, you're working with your disability services coordinator to boost social connections by using some small group activities as part of the professional development that you provide. I know some of you are doing some of those small group activities with staff virtually. So, invite your disability services coordinator, if that's not you, and talk about what you see in the video that you watched together. So, the final environment that we're going to talk about is the temporal environment. And remember, the temporal environment refers to the sequence and length of routines and activities. So, thinking about how we can develop a daily schedule that's going to promote positive learning, how does routines make the child feel? How can we adjust the schedule or the length of activities to accommodate children's interests and ability to focus? You know, sometimes we have an idea about how long we want to circle time to be or how long we want to Zoom activity to be. But if a child is not focused or interested, and that might mean time to shut that down and cut it a little bit short. And so, making sure that we think about the setting, as well. How would a daily

schedule and center-based program vary in the family child care, or what the schedule looks like in the child's home?

The NCPMI site also has some great resources around creating schedules and visual cues to help children understand what comes first, what comes next, and so forth. So, in the classroom setting, we often use pictures to show children the daily schedule, and that's a way they know what to expect, which activity is coming next, and that strategy can give children a sense of control over their own environment and help them feel safe. This photo is an example of an individual's schedule in a classroom environment that the teacher created so children can manipulate the activities of the day and better understand which activities come first, which activities come later. For some children, just having the daily schedule and visuals posted or talking about it one time might be all they need. But for other children, they need extra support. They might need extra time to think about the schedule, to interact with the materials. There was a classroom that I visited where the teacher had the schedule on pieces of paper that were hanging from a clothesline. And so, every time something happened in the class, they moved the activity over on the clothesline. And so, by the end of the day, there were no more cards left. And for most children, just seeing one time was it. But there was one child that really struggled with that sense of time. And so, she engaged with that activity a lot more, and it was a way for her to kind of understand what's coming next, what the transitions are, and it can – it can really help with children feeling comfortable. So, it's important to use visuals with groups, but there's also importance of using them just with individual children. And so, I'm going to show you a quick video clip about how a teacher has used a visual to support an individual child.

[Video begins]

Teacher: Taran, five minutes, we're going to ring the bell. [Inaudible] There we go. Five minutes.

[Bells ringing]

Child: I don't know.

[Video ends]

Jani: So, you can see that that teacher started by coming up to the child and gently touching his shoulder and gave him a five-minute warning and showed him the visual, and then used the visual again as he was standing in line. So, how might you give educators a chance to show the strategies that they use to promote an individualized temporal environment? What could be a fun activity that you do with staff is to share all of the things that they do to promote those transitions and help children that may struggle with transitions. Maybe videotaping themselves. Using videotaping can be really effective, especially for home visitors, as well, because it can help the home visitor and the parent look together at the practice and have a conversation about what went well or what didn't go well. And the thing is, you can use those video clips in person, but you can also use them remotely, which makes them very flexible and accommodating for this time that we're in. Another strategy that you can use in place of

videotaping is peer to peer observation and feedback. And so, it can be really helpful in identifying teaching practices and responses to behavior concerns. So, for programs that are supporting learning remotely, those schedules, as I said, can be adapted to support schedules for home routines. We want to partner with parents and create a schedule and routine that will really work for them. Parents of children with disabilities or suspected delays might need a picture schedule of the home routine, and that can help their child transition through their daily routine. And parents are going to learn about how that process can support minimizing some challenging behaviors that they might be facing. You know, even if it's just posting some pictures on the mirror in the bathroom that say, "Brush hair, brush teeth, wash face, go downstairs for breakfast," and a picture of the child doing each thing can be really helpful in keeping children on task.

Another idea is to use a first-then schedule to make sure that children understand what comes next. "First, we'll read a book, and then you can play on the iPad. "First we'll get dressed, and then we can watch a show together." "First, I need a break, and then I can help you." So, individualizing for each family based on their needs and their child's needs is super important. So, whether in the classroom or in the home environment, those schedules teach children about expectations, and they can help with transitions and provide some individualized supports and cues, as well. So, wrapping up the temporal environment, these are the things that we're going to think about – routines and schedules, predictability, and simple, unstructured expectation. So, those routines can be important even when introducing new behaviors, as well, such as wearing a mask, such as hand washing, such as behaviors that relate to social distancing. Those are going to become part of our routines, and they need to be a daily habit. And so, we can use visuals to help children understand those. Also included in the resources links, some great social stories to help children think about those kinds of things that are scary to us right now, things about wearing a mask, understanding COVID-19, and so forth. So, we want to keep those routines simple and relatively unstructured. We want to involve children in planning the day, if possible, and that's important for parents to think about, as well. Asking children if they want to play with blocks or watch a show while I work. "Do you want to take a while before or after my phone call?" And so, giving those choices give children a sense of real control.

Maintaining consistent sleeping, eating, and physical activities are so important, as well. And encouraging families to plan fun activities for their child, things that they can look forward to, like watching a video together or going on a scavenger hunt, calling a friend or family member, having a friend go through some activities that are on the child's IEP can give that parent a break. And it can also ... You might see improved skills from that child as they work to do extra good for the friend or family member. We want to make sure that we're flexible even though we make a plan. We know that plans are made to be broken and that our stress reduction strategies are important. Let's keep those so we can learn from them even as our programs reopen. So, in summary, supporting individual learners are going to require intentional thought and planning around those adjustments to the physical environment, and that applies to home and classrooms, family child care homes, or the child care homes. And as ed managers, you can support your education staff by providing those resources and professional development to

enhance their understanding of how to turn those practices into reality for, you know, for their own well-being and for the well-being of the children and families they serve. I wanted to share a few resources before we go to questions. As you know, we have lots of inclusion webinars. We had an inclusion webinar series.

Our final one was done all about resources. So, we take you through a tour of inclusion resources, and this site in particular, in your resources handout, you'll see I've got these links up at the very top because we have all of the inclusion webinars linked together up at the top of this page. So, you can explore all kinds of content, including information about interactions, individualization. We have federal staff talking about the performance standards, information about supporting children with disabilities and how that relates to practice-based coaching and so forth. So, take a look at that, and then here is the NCPMI site that I've been mentioning. There's a special section of this site that you really need to check out on emergencies and national disasters, helping children and families cope. And so, those special resources that I have talked about, the "Tucker Turtle Tucks At Home," those are going to be in that special section that you can link to right on the cover page of the NCPMI site.

And I want to address the ECTA Center website, as well. ECTA is kind of serving as a hub for the Office of Special Education during this time. And so, all of the COVID-19 related resources for part C and part B or the early intervention and the special education staff within those programs know to come here to this site, and it's where they provide guidance about resources and how you really do it, how a remote service delivery and distance learning can happen. If you're an early intervention provider or a special education provider, it's a great place to find all of those resources. The connect modules is another resource that you want to make sure you go to. Great videos there to use when you're doing some interactive activities with staff. And there's, of course, practice-based coaching and thinking about how you can do it in a virtual environment. Now, you may have missed it, but we did have a session, and part of the education manager's live institute called practice based coaching virtual coaching considerations. So, if you're thinking about that and this is bringing you to think about PD for your staff, make sure you check out that session on the ed managers live institute site. So, that was a lot, and I'm not sure if there are questions for us. Here's Roselia back.

Roselia: Yes. Hey, Jani.

Jani: Do we have questions from the audience?

Roselia: You know, we did have a few questions that were primarily around some of that remote learning. So, I'm hoping that some of the strategies and things that you shared when you talked about Zoom and some of the resources that are available to kind of address that. So, we're hoping that those questions have been addressed. There is one question, though, that somebody had. And so, someone indicated that they've gotten a lot of pushback from their education team around using daily schedules, especially for toddler age. And so, they'd like to hear from you if you think visual schedules are beneficial for the whole class, not just for individuals with disabilities or behavioral needs.

Jani: Oh, my gosh, absolutely. They are definitely helpful for the whole class. And it's kind of hard for us as adults to understand why those visual schedules are so important, because we can kind of hear how we're going to structure everything in the beginning of the year and we know what's coming next. And so, we don't really understand it. But for a child, you know, they don't have a day planner, they don't have a watch. They don't even have pockets a lot of the times. And so, having that clarity is going to be really important for them, for all children, including children with disabilities, and yes, for toddlers, as well. Now, they understand so much more than they speak at that age. And so, talking about what's coming next can be really, really helpful. It gives them a sense of control over a world that might be feeling a little bit out of control. You know, I think about children as kites, that they fly off, and they can fly high, but they need to be tethered to us, you know, as they fly around, But they need that security of being tethered to us, until one day they fly away. But a visual schedule is one of those things that kind of makes us give that sense of grounding and support and tethering for children.

Roselia: OK. Right. Thanks, Jani. I like that response and that analogy of the kite. Having older children myself, I can definitely relate. You do get to that point where you have to kind of let them go and soar on their own.

Jani: I know.

Roselia: I know. We are coming to the end of our time together, but I did want to share another resource. For those of you that are not familiar with my peers, you can check that out on the ECLKC. The two communities – there are lots of communities that you can join, but we do want to highlight the education leader's community and then, also the Head Start Disabilities Inclusion Network. So, that's a great place where you can share ideas and ask questions of your peers and just kind of see what's happening across the country and in programs. And so, again, it's a great resource to kind of have that peer sharing and resources and those sorts of things. So, again, MyPeers, and that's on the ECLKC. So, we did want to share that with you.

Jani: If you're an educational manager, please join the inclusion community, as well, on MyPeers. It really is a great space to connect. We've got a pretty lively community, and a lot of those questions around this virtual learning have really been dived into in the inclusion community on MyPeers. So, it's a great place to go for some for some other ideas and strategies.

Roselia: Great, awesome. Thanks for sharing that, Jani. Jani, we'd like to thank you for joining us today for this session of the education manager's webinar series. Lots of great information and thank you for joining us today. And with that, we conclude.

Jani: Well, thank you, Roselia. It's been great. Bye, guys.