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# What is Inclusion?

All classrooms at We Care Services for Children are inclusive classrooms serving children of all abilities. Inclusion is the active participation of young children with special needs and children without special needs in the same activities. We Care's program philosophy ensures that young children of all abilities and their families are members of the total early childhood community, and that children have multiple opportunities to learn, develop, and form positive relationships.

**Benefits of inclusion for children with special needs:**
- Role models to help learn new skills and practice existing skills
- Interaction with other children to learn and practice social and communication skills
- Real-life experiences to prepare for school and community
- Opportunities to develop new friendships
- A sense of belonging

**Benefits of inclusion for children without special needs:**
- Increased appreciation and acceptance of individual differences
- Increased understanding and acceptance of diversity
- Respect for all people
- Opportunities to master activities by practicing and teaching others
- All students' needs are better met, greater resources for everyone (occupational therapist, speech therapist, and specially trained staff overseeing the development of all children)
- Low student-to-teacher ratio

**Participation in life has little to do with ability or disability** – **it is about equal access:**
- We are all part of one world

**During the first few years of life, children construct their view of themselves and their world:**
- Foundations are laid for the way in which a child will get along in her or his environment, make friends, and deal with life's successes and challenges

**A young child's sense of reality is formulated through experiences of both belonging and acceptance:**
- Children are more alike than different
- All children deserve opportunities to participate in typical childhood experiences to feel accepted and develop a sense of belonging