



Inclusion in California Early Learning and Care

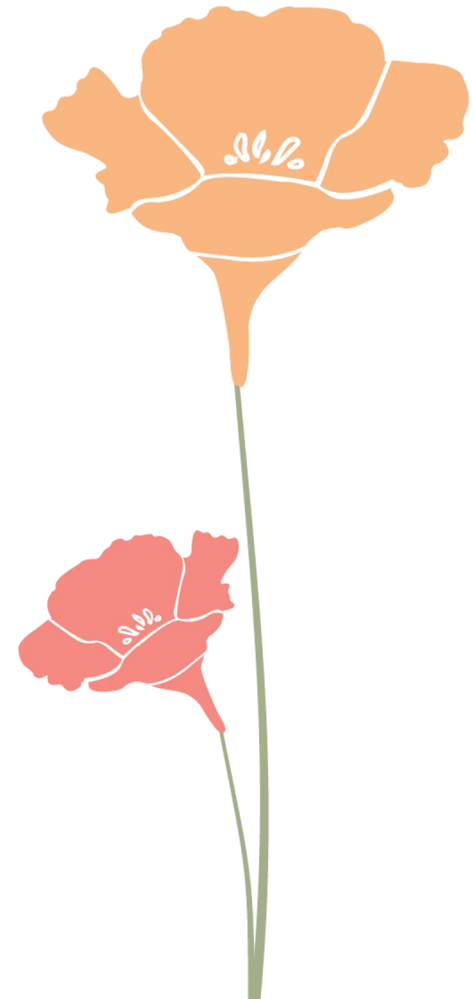
Considering the Principle of Minimal Disruption in Inclusive Placement and Service Delivery Decisions

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Study Overview



- Child Care Policy Research Partnership Grant
 - Collaboration between Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) lead agencies and research entities
- Objectives
 - Describe the status of children with disabilities in subsidized early learning and care in California
 - Identify the facilitators and barriers to the inclusion of children with disabilities in subsidized early learning and care and strategies to increase facilitators and decrease barriers



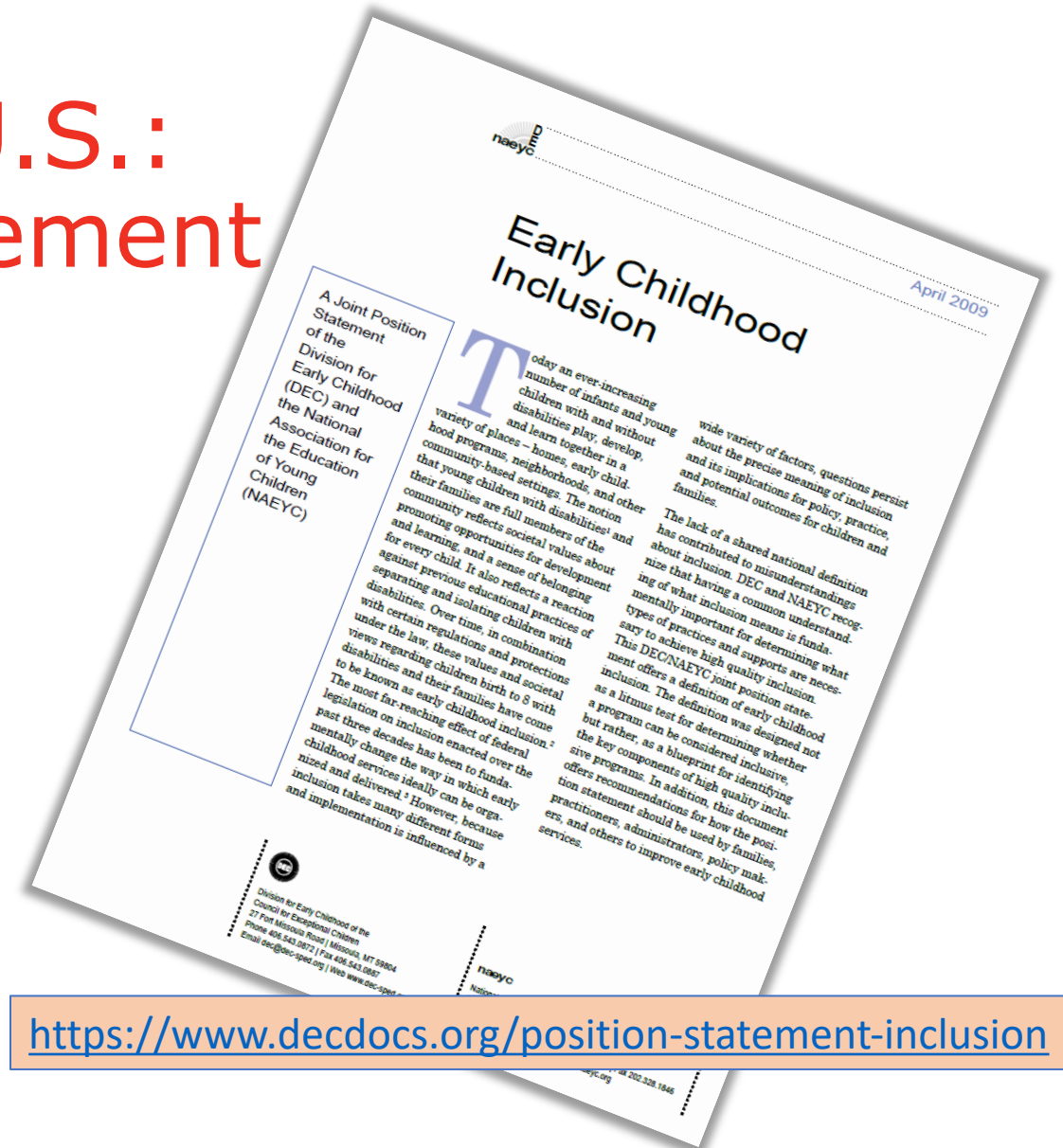
Study Design

Method	Data Collection	Sample
Administrative Data	Subsidized early learning and care Special Education	All children ages 3-5 with disabilities
Key Informant Interviews	Interviews	23 professionals in a variety of roles in early childhood and early childhood special education
Case Studies (5 communities; 10 children and their families in each)	Interviews	50 families and their associated child care providers, directors, special education providers and administrators
	Document Analysis	50 families' IEP
Statewide Survey	Surveys	Child Care Local Preschool Special Education Administrators

Facets of Inclusion in the U.S.: DEC/NAEYC* Position Statement

Definition:

- **Access** to a wide range of learning opportunities
- **Participation** promoted through individualized accommodations and other supports
- System-level **supports** for individuals and organizations (e.g., professional development)

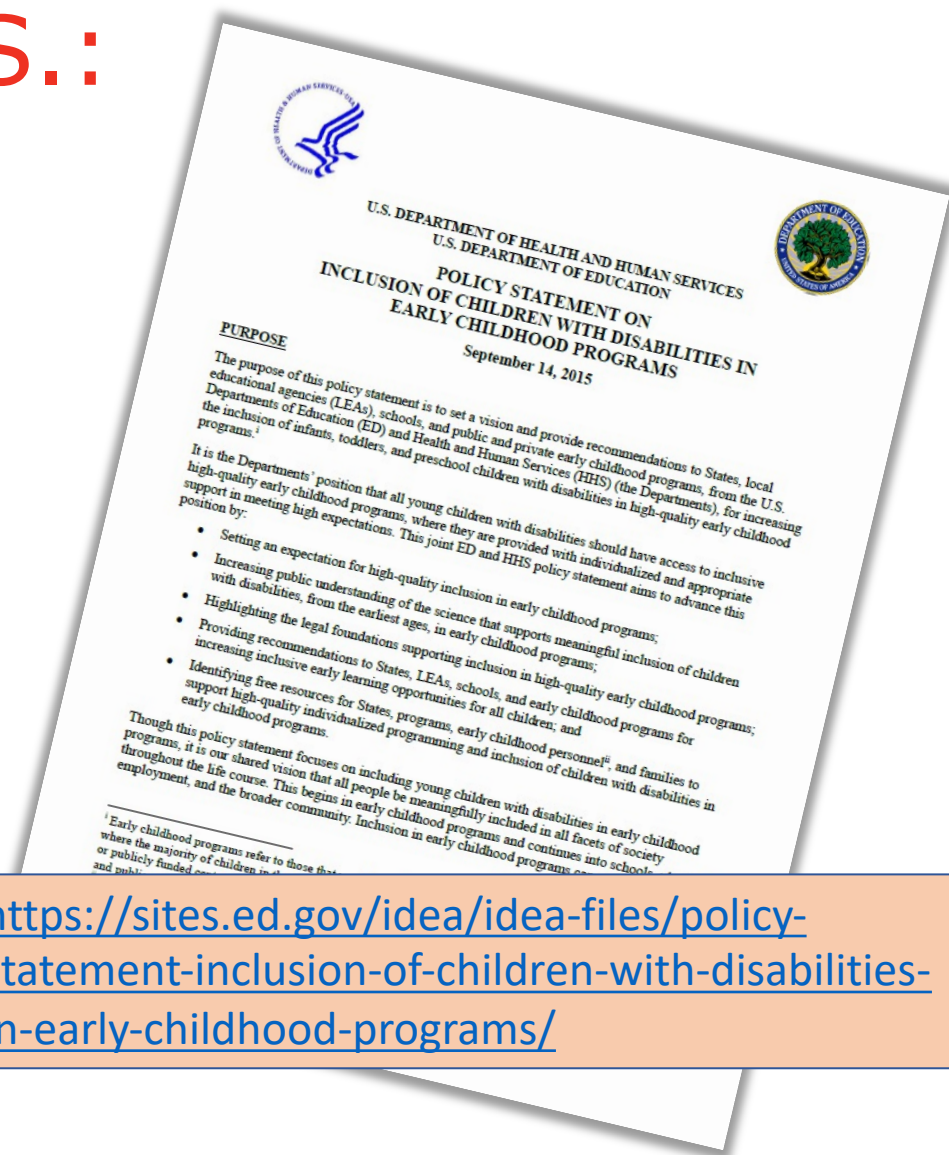


<https://www.decdocs.org/position-statement-inclusion>

Facets of Inclusion in the U.S.: Joint Policy Statement

- ***Inclusion in early childhood programs*** refers to including children with disabilities in 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 (cognitive, language, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional), friendships with peers, and sense of belonging.

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/idea-files/policy-statement-inclusion-of-children-with-disabilities-in-early-childhood-programs/>



Facets of Inclusion in the U.S.: Federal Reporting Requirements

- States must report annually on number of preschoolers who:
 - Attend regular EC program **at least 10 hours week**; receive services in **other location**
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 - Home
 - Residential facility
 - Separate class
 - Separate school
 - Service provider location

Facets of Inclusion in the U.S.: Federal Reporting Requirements

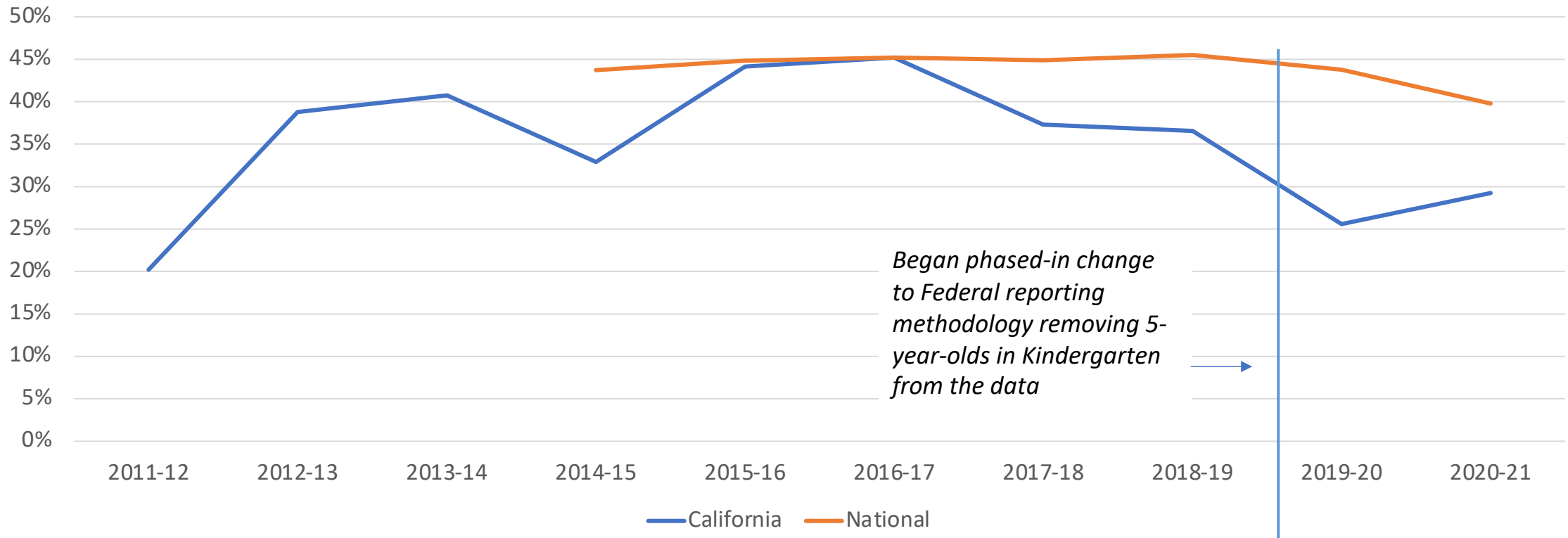
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Note: The national data do not get at

- Access to the curriculum
- Participation and engagement
- Use of evidence-based practices
- Supports for teachers

Trends in Inclusion

Percentage of Preschoolers with Disabilities Who Attend an Early Childhood Program and Receive a Majority of Their Special Education and Related Services in that Location



Inclusion Challenges in the U.S.

- Early learning and care “system” is made up several programs operated by and funded by different entities
 - Examples: State funded preschool, locally funded preschool, child care, Head Start
- Coordination across these programs varies across and within states
- Special education for 3-to-5-year-olds is provided by local school districts.
 - Federal law stipulates that decisions about where children receive special education services are made by a team consisting of the school system staff and the child’s parents.
 - Only some school districts provide general preschool programs and these tend not to be full day (7 am to 6 pm) or full year programs.

Inclusion Challenges in the U.S.

- Heavy reliance on self-contained classrooms
- Options presented to families may be based on what the school district has available, which may or may not meet the family's need for child care
- Families who need child care may have to piece their child's day or week together supplementing a school district EC program with another EC program in the community
- Attending multiple programs is not optimal for learning and development

Which of these is inclusion?

Child with a disability is in preschool but does not have an IEP.

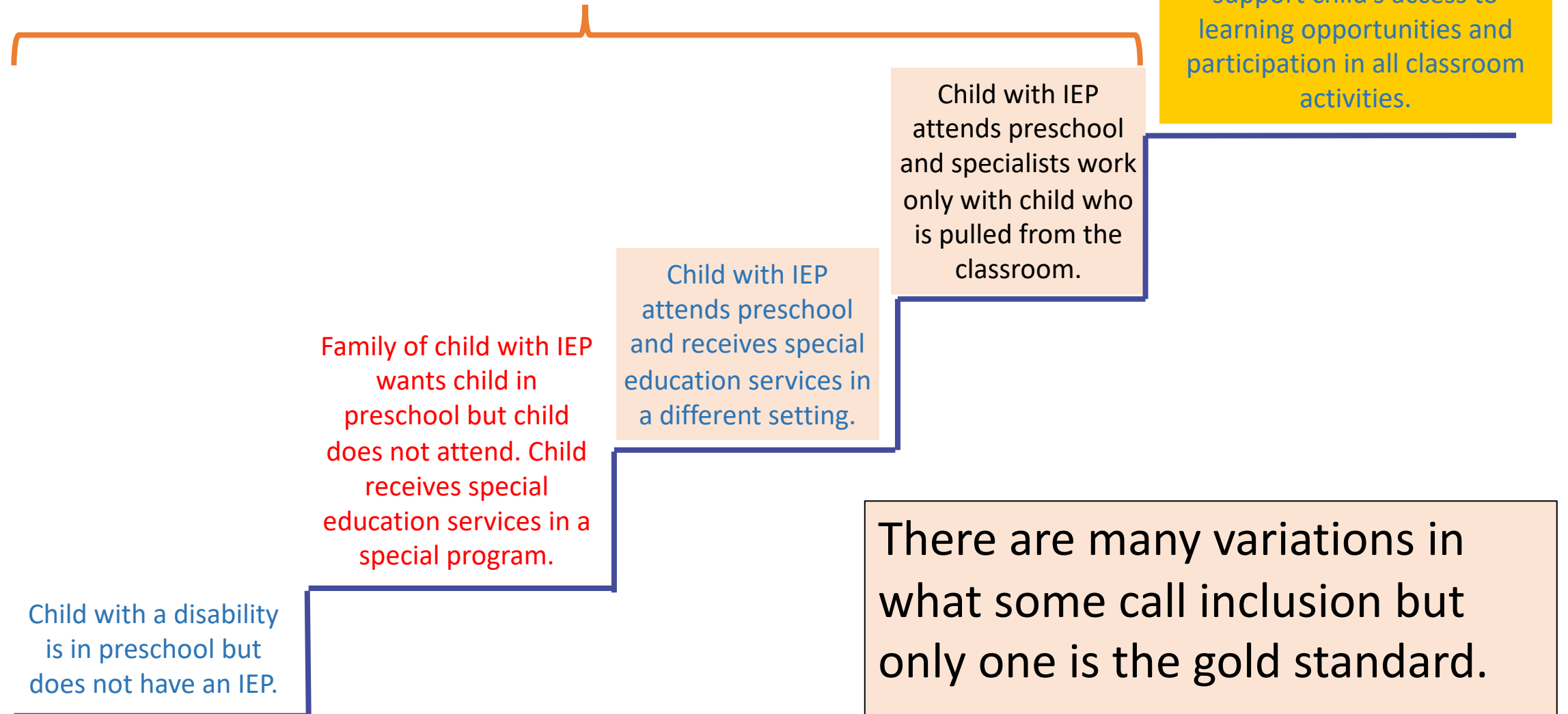
Family of child with IEP wants child in preschool but child does not attend. Child receives special education services in a special program.

Child with IEP attends preschool and receives special education services in a different setting.

Child with IEP attends preschool and specialists work only with child who is pulled from the classroom.

Child with IEP attends preschool and specialists work with child and teachers to support child's access to learning opportunities and participation in all classroom activities.

System is not operating as it should to meet the child's needs.





But then our
thinking
changed based
on what we
were learning...



Normalization Principle

- People with disabilities should have lives that are as similar as possible as those without disabilities.
- How would this apply to families of a child with a disability who needs child care?
- Their choices for child care should be the same as any other family in their community
- But are they?
- Do they experience disruptions that other families do not experience because they have a child with a disability?

What do we mean by “disruption”?

- Examples

- A child attends a child care program that the family loves, but then the child is discovered to have a disability and found to be eligible for special education services. Now the family has to leave the original program to attend an EC program the school district offers.
- A family needs full-day child care, but the school district only offers a part-day EC program. The family must piece together two programs and transition the child in the middle of the day from the school district program in the morning to another program in the afternoon.

System is not operating as it should to meet the child and family's needs.

This may not be the best option for the family (and therefore the child)

Child with IEP attends preschool and specialists work with child and teachers to support child's access to learning opportunities and participation in all classroom activities **AND family and child disruptions are minimized.**

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Family of child with IEP wants child in preschool but child does not attend. Child receives special education services in a special program.

Child with a disability is in preschool but does not have an IEP.

We have a new gold standard.

Conclusions

- Definitions of inclusion that focus only on meeting the needs of the child may not fully meet the needs of the child
- Providing special education to young children must also recognize normalization
- Which means
 - meeting the family's need for child care AND having specialists working with child and teachers to support child's access to learning opportunities and participation in all classroom activities WHICH ALSO
 - minimalizes disruptions in the child and family's daily and weekly routines

Thank you

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