



Sample Program Philosophy Statements for Preschools

Greene County Schools, Ohio <http://www.greeneesc.org/our-programs/preschool-programs/philosophy.html>

It is the philosophy of the Greene County Schools Preschool Programs that children be encouraged to learn and grow by providing a foundation of developmentally appropriate experiences where all children can succeed in a safe and nurturing environment.

We believe that each child is a unique individual and that all children can learn. Our preschool programs provide inclusive settings that recognize children's varied abilities, interests, needs, and learning styles.

We believe children learn best through meaningful play. Our play-based, child centered program reflects the integration of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, self-help and aesthetic areas for the total development of the child. Meaningful play encourages curiosity, discovery and problem solving which allows individual growth and development of a positive self-image.

We recognize that parents are the child's first teachers. Children learn best when parents are involved in their educational program. The primary bridge between home and school is the involvement of family and community.

The statement and beliefs in this philosophy reflect the position of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Bal Swann Children's Center, Colorado <http://www.balswan.org/philosophy.asp>

In this program the abilities rather than the disabilities of each child are emphasized, with particular focus on the "Three C's" basic for everyone:

- **Caring** for self
- **Coping** with his/her world
- **Communicating** with others.

The goal of the staff is to build an adequate foundation for the child's public school years. The program we pursue is geared toward helping children develop habits of observation, questioning and listening. We want to ease the transition from home to school - helping them to learn how to get along with other children and adults, to develop skills through active games and spurring emotional growth through group

activities. We want you, as a parent, to look into our busy, happy, noisy, creative classrooms and see your child at work and play. We want you to realize the validity of that play and the importance of what is being learned. Parents and teachers together can help the children to develop their full potential.

Total Inclusion Approach:

We feel that there is great benefit to providing preschool education to both children with special needs and typical children* combined in classes together as peers. The typical students* serve as models for the children with special needs inspiring language and creative play. The typical children* are gaining understanding and acceptance and building wonderful values.

Lincoln Public Schools, Massachusetts

<http://www.lincnet.org/Preschool/preschoolmain.shtml>

The Lincoln Public School system, including the Preschool Program, provides the educational services for the residents of the town of Lincoln and the Hanscom Air Force Base and operates under the philosophy of full inclusion. Inclusion is the process by which all children, including those with disabilities are educated together, allowing each child to excel and enrich the learning environment. Children who have been identified as students with disabilities receive additional support in the areas of speech and language, motor, sensory processing, cognitive and social-emotional development. In addition, there are therapy rooms for speech and language, occupational and physical therapies as well as behavioral consultation. These are provided for those children who require extended programming, individual or small group specific skill development, outside the inclusive classroom.

The Lincoln Preschool Program seeks to maintain an appropriate balance of typically developing students* and students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are identified through the Special Education Evaluation Process. The Evaluation Team determines eligibility, program, and placement. Parents of typically developing children* from Lincoln, Hanscom or surrounding communities may enroll their children, on a tuition and space available basis.

Our staff consists of Early Childhood Special Education Teachers, Tutors and Aides, therapists in the fields of Speech/Language, Occupational and Physical Therapies, a teacher of Intensive Special Needs and a Program Coordinator. These individuals and the parents of students work together as a team.

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The Program follows the preschool curriculum standards as implemented by the Early Childhood Center staff of the Lincoln Public Schools. These standards are based on the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks which includes the following areas: English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering, History and Social Sciences, the Arts and Health Education.

The Granby Preschool, Massachusetts

http://www.granbyschoolsma.org/west_street/preschool/program.htm

The Granby Preschool believes that play is a child’s work and that learning occurs during developmentally appropriate, child-centered activities. Children learn concepts best when they are meaningful and relevant to them. They acquire knowledge through the active exploration of their environment. Consequently, it is the teacher’s responsibility to provide a learning-enriched environment, which provides stimulating and challenging experiences for them. The teacher then acts as a facilitator: encouraging, promoting and reinforcing a child’s attempts, questions, skill development, and discoveries.

The Granby Preschool also strives to provide a coordinated and progressive program of services, which is responsive to the needs of individual children. A unique feature of the program is the inclusion of children with special needs with their peers.

* Although these philosophy statements are excellent models, the Inclusion Collaborative prefers person first terminology for all children. Please see “Person First” article.

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Sample Program Philosophy Statements for K-12 Schools

Pleasant Valley School District, Pennsylvania:

<http://www.pybears.org/Special%20Education/inclusion%20statement.htm>

Inclusion Statement

Inclusion is a philosophy that has as its central tenet "all children belong." The Pleasant Valley School District (PVSD) adopted this inclusion philosophy in 1991 in an effort to provide a better educational environment for students with disabilities. Along with adopting this philosophy, PVSD developed the inclusion belief statement, "All Children Can Learn in the Mainstream of School and Community: Diversity is Valued and Celebrated." Inclusion is the process of acknowledging people with disabilities as people first. Inclusion is very much in line with our mission statement, "Excellence in Education: A Community Commitment."

The way we treat people falls under the belief that we accept families, friends, neighbors, teachers, employers, and all others into everyday life. Inclusion assumes that every person is entitled to respect, dignity, equal rights under the law, and opportunities for fulfilling life within the community and its schools.

Inclusion involves the careful assessment of the needs of each student and the application of measures that will meet those needs. Properly implemented through teamwork, collaboration, co-planning, and co-teaching, inclusive practices benefit all students. Some of the many gains made through inclusive practices are in the areas of social interaction, language development, appropriate behaviors, self-esteem, and academic performance.

Inclusion means that students with disabilities are educated in supported, heterogeneous, age-appropriate, natural, student-centered classrooms, schools and community environments for the purpose of preparing them for their adult lives in a diverse and integrated society.

There are varying degrees of inclusive practices. Full inclusion means students, no matter what their needs, are in the regular education milieu. PVSD practices "responsible inclusion." Responsible inclusion means that a student will be placed in the regular educational environment if the student can be successful with or without supplemental aids and services, the student will benefit academically and/or socially, and the student's presence does not have an adverse effect on the rest of the class. Through inclusive practices, we develop patience, acceptance, helpfulness, diversity, and compassion.

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