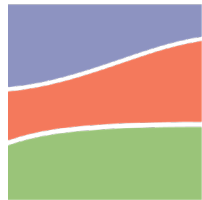
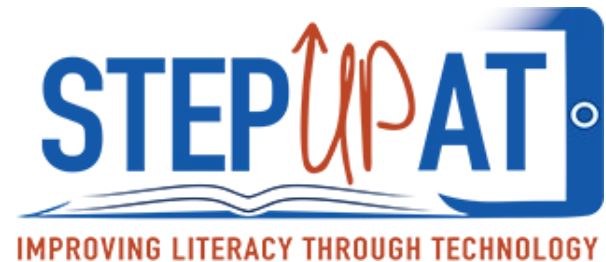


National and State Level Partnerships: Fostering Inclusive Early Learning Opportunities Through Accessibility Practices



National Center on
**Accessible
Educational
Materials**



ecta Early Childhood
Technical Assistance Center



**2023 OSEP LEADERSHIP AND PROJECT DIRECTORS'
CONFERENCE**





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(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3 and 3474)

Our Accessibility Commitment

(**Note to team:** customize this list for your content)

- Perceivable
 - Alt text on images
 - High color contrast
 - Readable font
 - Video with closed captions
- Operable
 - Distinct slide titles
 - Shortened links with descriptive back-halves
- Understandable
 - Clear structure and layout
 - Consistent formatting
 - Effective use of images
- Robust
 - Checked for accessibility using both the accessibility checker built into PowerPoint and a manual test by a user of assistive technology

Presenters/Hosts/Facilitators

- Cynthia Curry, MS.Ed.
- Jani Kozlowski, M.A.
- Michelle Schladant, Ph. D.
- Austin Garilli, Ph. D.
- Maggie Pickett, M.A., CCC-SLP

What is the difference between AEM and AT?

Homebase Doc

Materials & Resources



bit.ly/OSEP23_FosteringInclusion



2023 OSEP
Leadership and
Project Directors'
Conference

July 24-26, 2023
Crystal Gateway Marriott
Arlington, VA



Presentation Title

Cynthia Curry, MS.Ed.
Jani Kozlowski, M.A.
Michelle Schladant, Ph. D.

Austin Garjili, Ph. D.
Maggie Pickett, M.A., CCC-SLP

Session Description

While 41% of preschoolers with disabilities receive services in inclusive classrooms, not all have access to accessible educational materials (AEM) and assistive technology (AT) that could further promote access and participation in these inclusive settings. The implementation of evidence-based practices in early childhood education, including the use of AEM and AT, requires collaboration between state and district leaders in both early learning and accessibility-related roles. The National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (AEM Center), the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA), and [Step Up](#) AT are working together to provide training and guidance on using AEM and AT as levers for inclusive practices. Join us to learn more about this collaborative partnership!

Critical Questions

- How can AEM and AT foster inclusive practices in early childhood education experiences?
- What do the terms "inclusion" and "accessibility" mean?
- What does IDEA say about "inclusion" and "accessibility" requirements?
- In the classroom, what do inclusive practices fostered by accessibility strategies...Look like? Feel like? Sound like?
- How can our state systems foster inclusive practices supported by accessibility strategies?

Resources and/or References

- [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center website](#)
- [Step Up AT Website](#)
- [AEM Center Website](#)

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Goal for Today

Create a visual or tactile representation of how assistive technology and accessible materials foster inclusive practices in early childhood education settings.



Photo by [Dragos Gontariu](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Collaboration Between 3 OSEP Centers

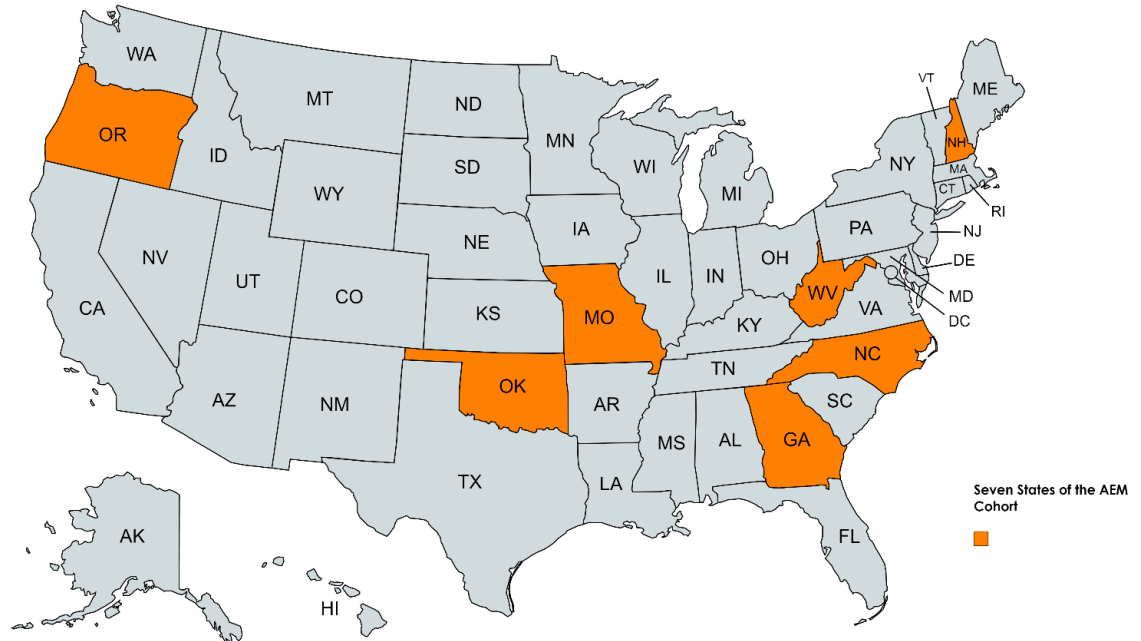
Goal of the AEM Center

To build the capacity of states, districts, and other agencies to provide and support the use of high-quality accessible educational materials (AEM) and accessible technologies – in a timely manner – for all learners who need them from PreK-12 to postsecondary.



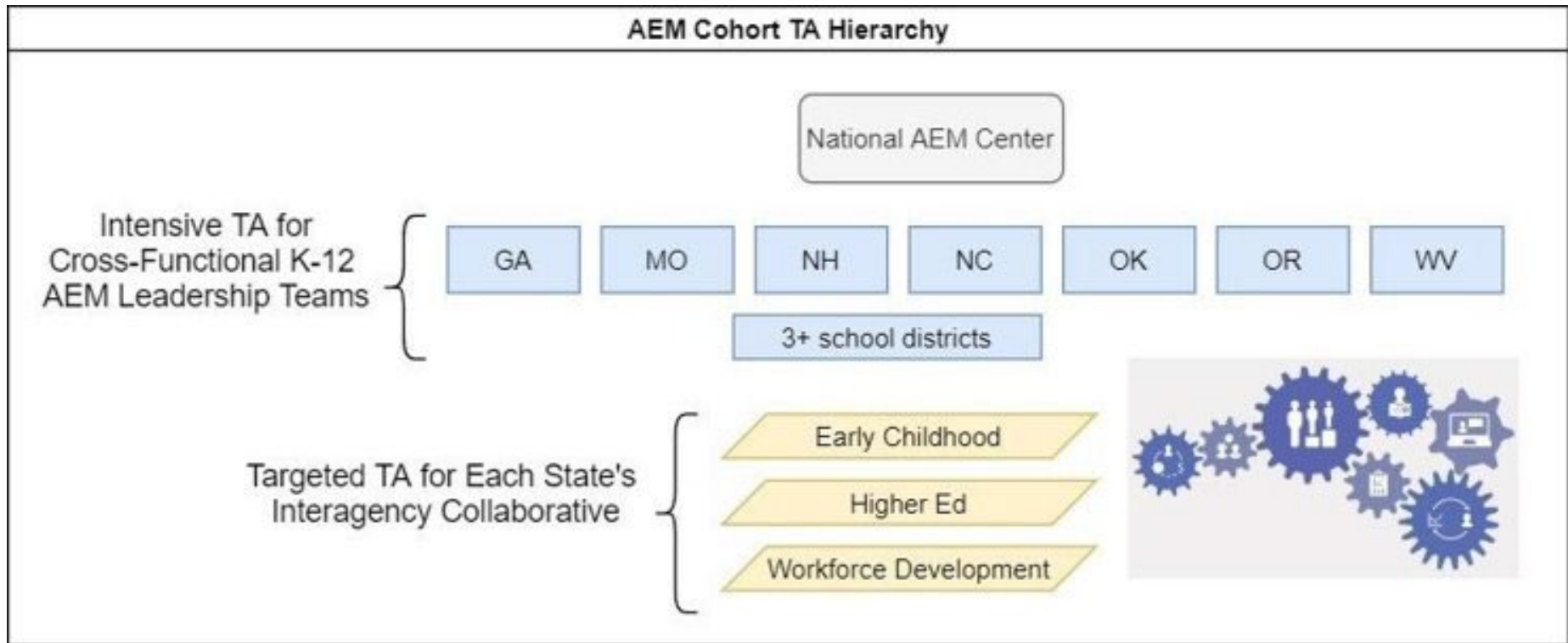
Seven States of the National AEM Cohort

- Georgia
- Missouri
- New Hampshire
- North Carolina
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- West Virginia

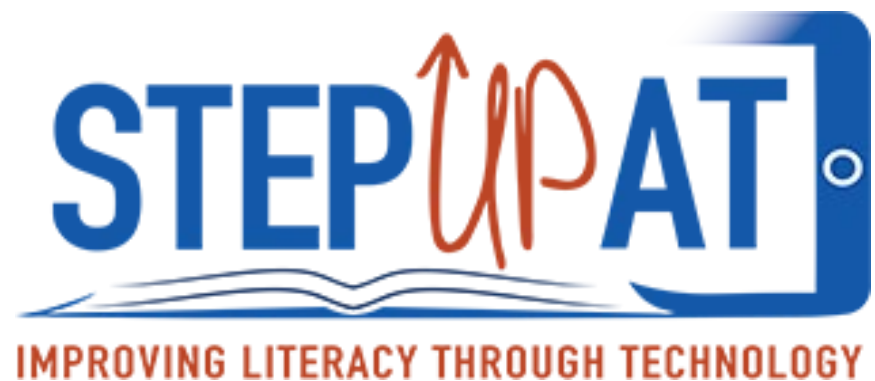


Created with mapchart.net

TA Structure for the AEM Cohort



Collaborations Around Early Childhood



Goal of the ECTA Center

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center supports state IDEA Part C and Part B, Section 619 programs in developing more equitable, effective, and sustainable state and local systems, that support access and full participation for each and every young child with a disability, and their family.



What do the terms “inclusion” and “accessibility” mean?





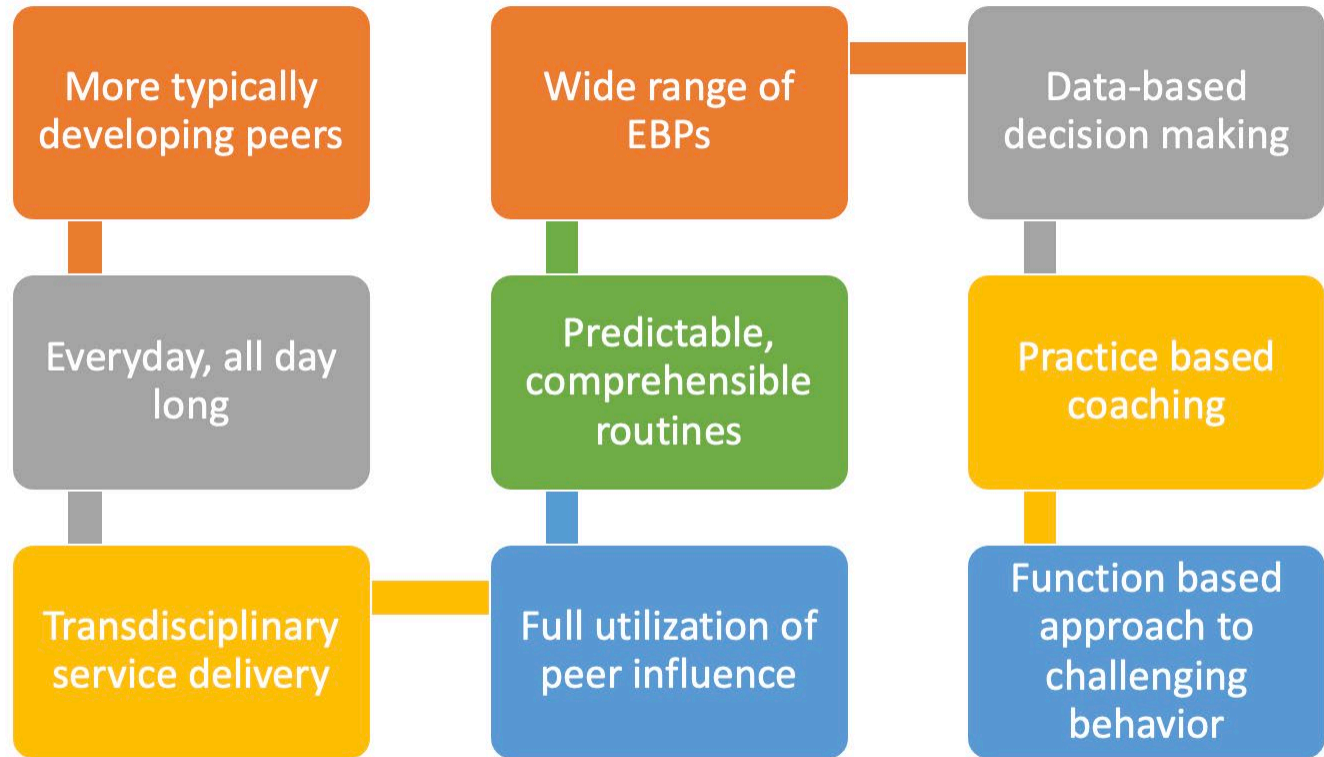
Early childhood inclusion embodies the **values, policies, and practices** that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to **participate in a broad range of activities and contexts** as full members of families, communities, and society.

Joint position statement developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC), 2009

Three Defining Features of Inclusion



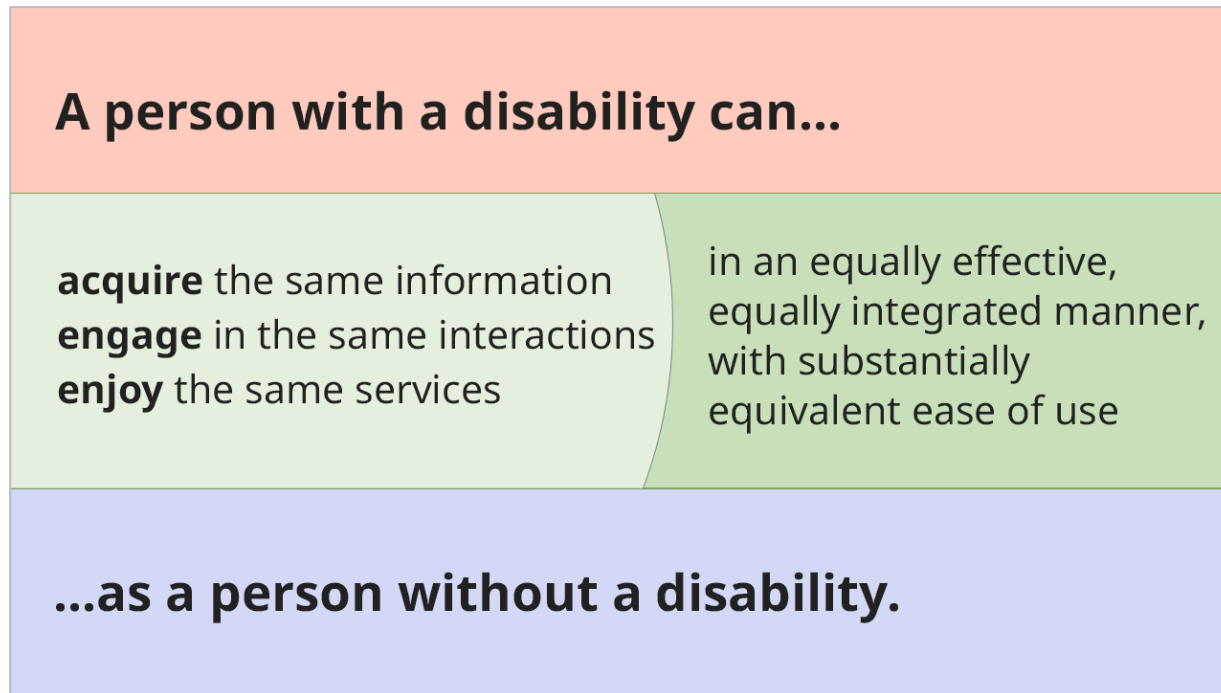
What do better inclusion settings look like and operate like?



Adapted from Strain, 2019

Functional Definition of Accessibility

Accessibility is shaped by what we need to do, our interactions with the environment, and our personal preferences.



U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice, 2010

What does IDEA say about inclusion and accessibility requirements?

Inclusion in IDEA

Part C: Natural Environments

- [34 CFR §303.26](#) — Natural environments.
- [34 CFR §303.13](#) — Early intervention services
- [34 CFR §303.126](#) — Early intervention services in natural environments

Part B: Least Restrictive Environment

- [34 CFR §300.114](#) — LRE requirements
- [34 CFR §300.115](#) — Continuum of alternative placements
- [34 CFR §300.116](#) — Placements

Accessibility in IDEA

Part C: Assistive Technology

- [34 CFR §303.13\(a\)\(8\)](#) –
Developmental Services,
natural environments

Part B: Assistive Technology & Accessible Materials

- [34 CFR §300.114](#) LRE
Requirements
- [34 CFR §300.105\(b\)](#) Assistive
Technology
- [34 CFR §300.172](#) Access to
instructional materials

**In the classroom, what do inclusive practices
fostered by accessibility strategies...
Look like? Feel like? Sound like?**

Scavenger Hunt

- What do you notice?
- What do you wonder?

How can our state systems foster inclusive practices supported by accessibility strategies?

ECTA Systems Framework



Collaboration

Engaging Critical Perspectives

Report provided evidence base for how and why to include various perspectives when designing systems.

Identifying and Engaging Critical Perspectives: The Process at a Glance

Identify

- Who will contribute to our objective?
- Who will be affected by it?
- Who can influence our objective, directly or indirectly?

Map

- What is the needed level of engagement from each collaborator?

Analyze

- What are potential barriers to their engagement?
- How can we mitigate those barriers?
- What are the rationales and/or facilitators of their engagement?

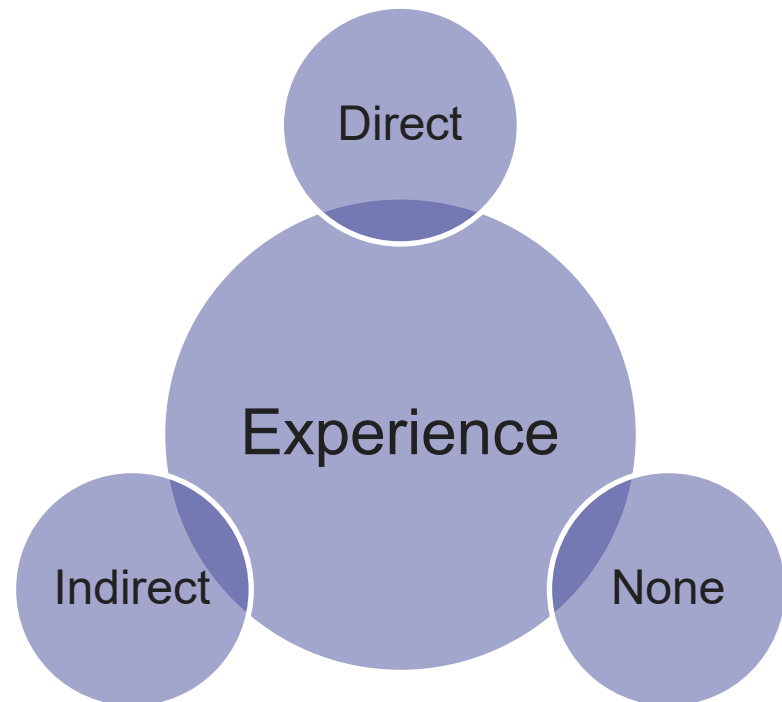
Plan

- What is our plan for engaging collaborators?
- Who is responsible?

Graphic: <https://sisep.fpg.unc.edu/>

Importance of Beneficiary Voice

- Not about us without us!
- Importance of including intended beneficiaries right from the start in these discussions
- Think about beneficiaries with diverse viewpoints of the issue including:
 - Demographic Relevance
 - Geographic Relevance
 - Issue Experience
 - Direct Engagement



Key Collaboration Takeaways

- Leaders must first become aware of the important partners within the early childhood field in their state or territory.
- Partners benefit from opportunities to build relationships and share knowledge, skills, and expertise.
- Leaders then can work together to leverage opportunities for aligning state policies and provide professional development that will foster inclusion and promote the use of AT and AEM in early childhood settings.

State Policies

State Profiles

Profiles offered a landscape analysis of the parallel systems in their states regarding inclusion and accessibility.

Missouri Landscape Review

- Landscape review of the Early Childhood policies for children served by early intervention and early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) in the seven states of the AEM Cohort
- Strengths and any areas of unique innovation for serving children with disabilities who need AT and accessibility of materials in early childhood education

Table of Contents

Broad Overview

Overall notes:

- The Missouri State Plan for Special Education is helpful in explaining the system.
- Flyers that explain the system to families in simple terms are helpful in understanding the processes in early childhood education.
- The relationship between early intervention and early childhood special education is well-defined.

AEM Quality Indicator notes:

- Quality Indicator 1: A Coordinated System
 - The Missouri Assistive Technology website has a comprehensive page with resources for educators. Additionally, they have developed their own resources to help schools develop their own text-to-speech/AEM programs.
 - The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education AEM page provides links to other providers and stakeholders.
 - The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education AEM page lists the Missouri school district partners.
 - The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education AEM page lists the names of those on the State Leadership Team.
- Quality Indicator 2: Provision in a Timely Manner
 - The Missouri Assistive Technology website defines "timely manner" and explains how accessible materials and technologies are delivered in a "timely manner."
- Quality Indicator 3: Written Guidelines
 - The Missouri Assistive Technology website includes a page on the IDEA requirements, determining eligibility for Electronic Source files, and accessing NIMAS File Sets.
- Quality Indicator 4: Learning Opportunities and Technical Assistance
 - The Missouri Assistive Technology website provides accessibility resources for educators.

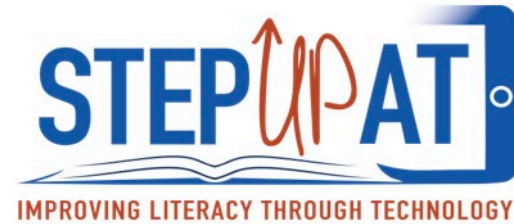
Key Policy Takeaways

- Folks need opportunities to become aware of resources and supports before they are able to make effective policy decisions.
- Partners benefit from opportunities to build and share knowledge and make connections to better understand potential policy levers.
- Leaders then are able to work together to consider key areas of policy alignment or misalignment and strategize together across sectors for the benefit of children and families.

Systems of Professional Development

RPP Case Study

The case study provided an example of how to use beneficiary voice to build professional learning systems.



Research-Practice Partnership Case Study:

Step Up AT TeleTraining

Michelle Schladant, Ph.D., Associate Professor
Austin Garilli, Ph.D., Program Manager

Key Professional Development (PD) System Takeaways

- Shared professional development provides opportunities to create innovative solutions to support children and families.
- Leaders benefit from including key partners as they design their PD system.
- Partners may find collaborative funding opportunities to enhance PD efforts across sectors. Recent examples in early childhood include the Preschool Development Birth through Five (PDG B5) grants, OSEP State Personnel Development (SPDG) grants.

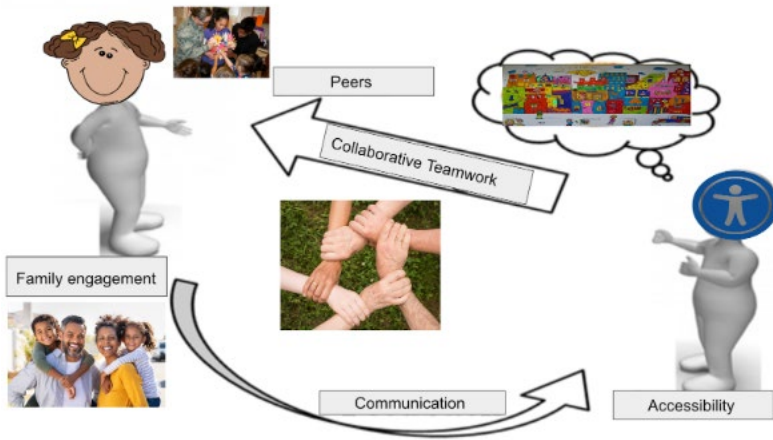
Let's revisit our session goal...

How are you coming along?

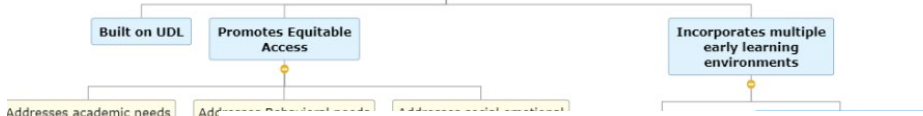
Create a visual or tactile representation of how assistive technology and accessible materials foster inclusive practices in early childhood education settings.



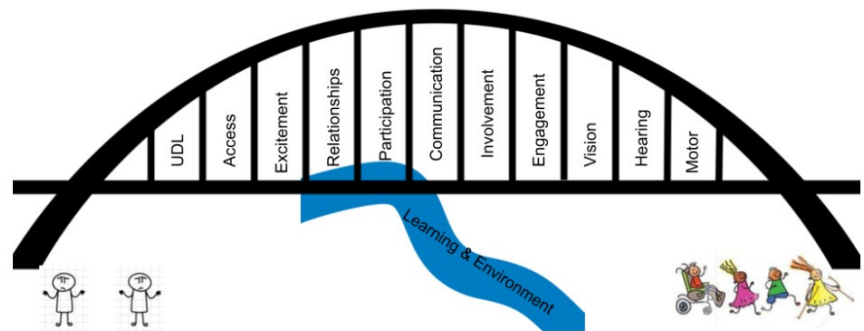
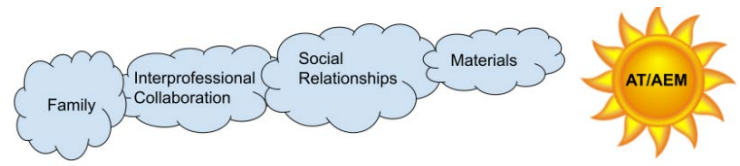
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AEM & Accessibility in Early Learning



Iowa



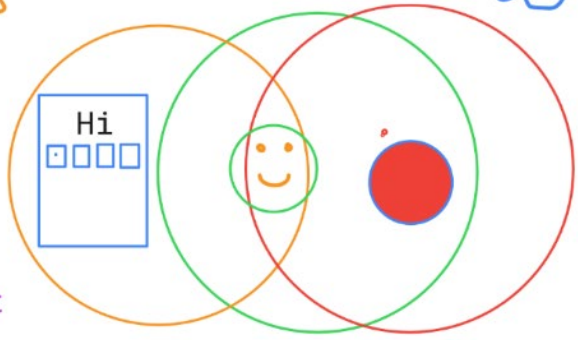
Families



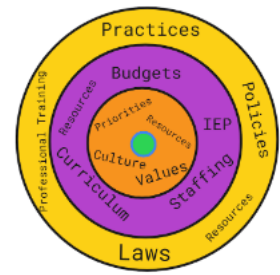
Comm



Schools/District



Child



State
School District
Family
Individual

AEM and AT



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What happens next?



AEM Quality Indicators

1. A Coordinated System
2. Timely Manner
3. Written Guidelines
4. Learning Opportunities
5. Data Collection
6. Data Use
7. Allocation of Resources



Coordinating Early Childhood Systems

AEM Quality Indicators with Critical Components for
Early Childhood

bit.ly/QI-EC



Indicators of High- Quality Inclusion

Indicators of High-Quality Inclusion

These four sets of indicators were designed by a group of [national partners](#) to support state leaders, local administrators and front-line personnel in the early care and education system providing programs and services to children, ages birth through five and their families.



[State Indicators](#)



[Community Indicators](#)



[Local Program Indicators](#)



[Early Care and Education Environment Indicators](#)

- ECTA Indicators of High-Quality Inclusion: <https://ectacenter.org/topics/inclusion/indicators.asp>
- Early Care and Education Environment Indicators and Elements of High-Quality Inclusion: <https://ectacenter.org/topics/inclusion/indicators-ece.asp>

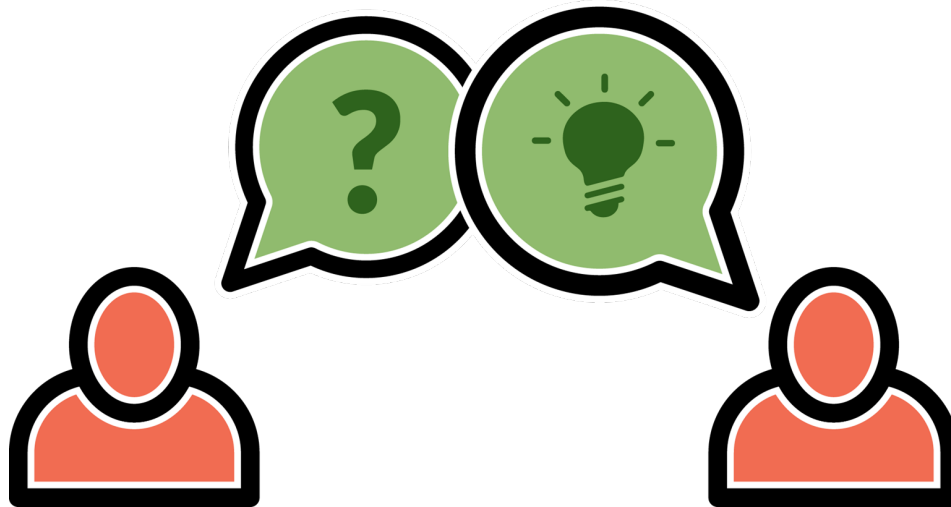
How does AEM and AT foster inclusion in early childhood education?



**Where there was once an
observer, let there now be a
participant.**

— Jerome Bruner, American psychologist and scholar

Q&A




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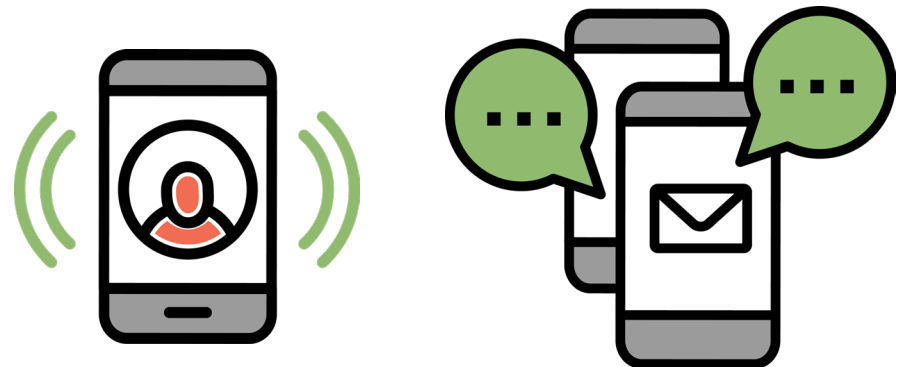
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 **Email:** aem@cast.org

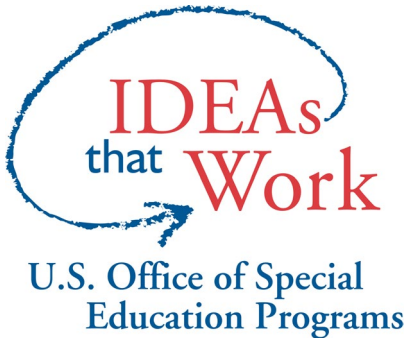
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