

Families & Professionals Say...

“...the fact that an occupational therapist comes into the classroom is great, because all the kids can benefit from it...”

—parent

“...pouring, measuring, stirring—this is all [fine motor] development. [Cooking in the classroom] ...allows me to do my job in a way that is very natural for the kids.”

—occupational therapist

“There are people from all different walks of life, all different races, ethnicities, kids who have special needs. ...I think it's just an eclectic bunch and it's a depiction of what the real world is. We really like that.”

—parent



The value of inclusive education is endorsed and supported by:

New Jersey Department of Education

Zero to Three

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)



**BEN SAMUELS
CHILDREN'S CENTER**

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The Ben Samuels Children's Center at Montclair State University is a model of excellence in the inclusive early care and education of children from birth through 5 years. The Center is committed to examining and implementing the best practices of teaching and learning in a nurturing environment where all children learn, play, and grow together.

What Does a High-Quality Inclusive Early Childhood Program Look Like?



The right of children of all abilities to participate fully in schools, communities, and society



**MONTCLAIR STATE
UNIVERSITY**

MEd Program in Inclusive Early Childhood Education
Early Childhood Autism Institute
Ben Samuels Children's Center



What does a high quality early childhood program for all children look like?

Environments that...

- foster the access, participation, and social relationships of all children
- reflect quality practices and high expectations for all
- are responsive to cultural, ethnic, economic and racial backgrounds and home language preferences of families
- have a wide variety of accommodations, modifications, and supports, which are unobtrusive and can be used by every child (paintbrushes wrapped with tape for easy grasp, posted visual schedules)
- reflect purposeful selection and arrangement of toys, books, furniture, and technology so that every child can participate actively and make choices
- provide predictable schedules, routines, and staff
- promote health and well-being (e.g. natural lighting, healthy snacks, relaxation strategies, plants)
- have places where children can rest or have private time (e.g. quiet reading space with pillows, use of headphones with soothing music)



Teachers and Staff who...

- make all children and families feel welcome and equal members of the classroom community
- work in partnership with families to consider and build upon family strengths, resources, and preferences
- work closely as a team of families, educators, and therapists to deliver coordinated services to children within the daily classroom routines and environment
- share responsibility with families and other team members for developing children's learning plans (Individualized Education Plans and Individualized Family Service Plans)
- implement individually-designed accommodations, instruction, and supports so each child can participate fully in every class experience
- encourage higher level thinking and exploration (comparing, contrasting, connecting, predicting, investigating, justifying)
- use high quality, age-appropriate curriculum to guide daily practice that is grounded in solid understanding of early childhood education and development
- present content in culturally responsive language and multiple, easy-to-understand formats (e.g. verbal, print, concrete objects)
- facilitate predictable routines and transitions intentionally and smoothly (e.g. signaling transitions by both visual and verbal cues)
- promote social competence and cooperative play with peers
- join in the magic of play and the joy of learning



Children who...

- have many opportunities for discovering, learning, playing, and communicating through varied approaches (e.g. use of pictures, role play, the arts, assistive technology, etc.)
- enjoy numerous opportunities throughout the day to express preferences, make choices, and voice their opinions
- are actively engaged in a wide variety of learning opportunities that are self-directed, open-ended, and encourage social relationships
- can show what and how they are learning in a rich variety of ways (e.g. artwork, dance, photography, block construction, science experiments) according to their individual preferences
- seek out and help peers to share, explore, and learn from one another
- are comfortable and confident in shared decision-making about the classroom environment, rules, routines, and activities
- have access to and participate fully in the general education curriculum
- are happy to be in school and feel like they are members of the classroom community
- are developing respect for personal space, materials, and each other

