

## Provider Alert #15

The Coalition is requesting feedback from early learning providers regarding the attached DRAFT Inclusion Policy that will be proposed to the Advisory Councils in April. Please contact Tonya Hiers at [thiers@elc-naturecoast.org](mailto:thiers@elc-naturecoast.org) or toll free at 1-877-840-5437 with questions/recommendations regarding the proposed policy.

## Inclusion Mini-Grant Program Guidelines

### What Is Inclusion?

The Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children defines inclusion as: *A value that supports the right of all children, regardless of their diverse abilities, to participate actively in natural settings within their communities.* A natural setting is one in which the child would spend time had he or she not had a disability. Such settings include, but are not limited to, home and family, play groups, child care and preschool programs, Head Start programs, kindergartens, and neighborhood school classrooms.

Inclusive services help to ensure that children with and without disabilities experience the benefits of living and growing together. Inclusive practices help create an atmosphere in which children are better able to accept and understand differences among themselves.

### Program Overview:

The Inclusion Mini-Grant Program is intended to offer funding support to early learning providers serving children with a diagnosed special need identified with an active Individual Educational Plan (IEP) developed by the local school system. The Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast recognizes the importance of early learning providers enhancing their credibility as quality, inclusive child care providers. In some cases, it may be necessary to provide special materials or equipment for children with disabilities.

Funding for the Inclusion Mini-Grant Program is based on budget allocations determined by the local Advisory Council and further approved by the Board. The amount awarded to each applicant may vary according to the individual needs of each provider. Providers may be reimbursed for equipment or services previously purchased if payment was made during the current fiscal year. Requests will be presented to the local Advisory Council for approval at their next regularly scheduled meeting prior to disbursement of funds.

Funds may be requested as a need is identified, subject to availability of funds. There is no set deadline for application.

**Eligibility:**

The applicant must be an early learning provider contracted to provide School Readiness or Voluntary Prekindergarten services. The applicant must be in full compliance with contract deliverables and serving a child with an active IEP developed by the local school system.

## Inclusion Mini-Grant Program Application

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Early Learning Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner/Director Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility Type: (circle one) FCCH      Licensed Center      License-Exempt Center

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently implementing special accommodations for a child or children with disabilities in your early learning program?     Yes     No

If yes, could you provide documentation of a current Individual Educational Plan for the children in your care?     Yes     No

**Funds Requested:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Special materials or equipment needed to supplement daily routine

\_\_\_\_\_ Special training to support requirements listed on child's IEP

\_\_\_\_\_ Resources to assist teachers with understanding how to respond to certain behaviors/situations

**Please send completed application and supporting documentation (if applicable) to:**

**Citrus & Sumter Counties**

Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast

Attn: Ingrid Ellis

1564 North Meadowcrest Blvd.

Crystal River, FL 34429

**Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy Counties**

Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast

Attn: Tonya Hiers

122 North Main Street

Chiefland, FL 32626