

**INCLUSION:**  
Day to day strengths and challenges in an instructional setting: from a teacher's perspective

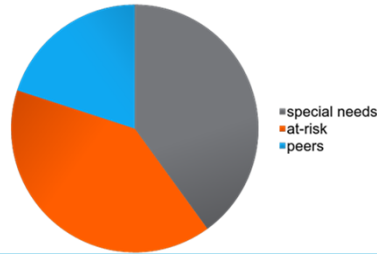


### An Overview of Our Program

- Blended classrooms comprised of children receiving special education, at risk students and peer models
- Ages birth through Pre-K
- Cohesive program including 3 classrooms in each elementary building
- Special Education services provided for those who qualify
- Transportation provided on an individual basis
- Certified Early Childhood Special Education teachers in each classroom



### Make-Up of Our Classrooms



Category	Color
special needs	grey
at-risk	orange
peers	blue

### Tuition Friendly

- At risk students and those with special needs attend free of charge
- Peer students pay a small tuition each month
- Participate in the food program, so those students that qualify may receive free or reduced meals
- Class schedules are:  
Monday - Friday 8:00-10:45  
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 11:45-3:15




### Services Provided in our Classrooms

- Kansas certified Early Childhood Special Education teachers
- Other services provided include: Occupational Therapy, Speech/Language Therapy and Physical Therapy
- Supportive staff includes highly trained paraprofessionals
- Allows teacher to child ratio not to exceed 1:6 at all times




### Curriculum

- Creative Curriculum designed for preschool
- Developmentally appropriate
- Aligns with Kansas Early Learning Standards
- Provides step-by-step foundation of skills to support Kindergarten readiness




### Environment

- Safe: physically, emotionally and mentally
- Plan and prepare room arrangement giving each child access to toys and materials.
- Print-rich environment
- Flexible to meet individual needs
- Clean, organized and free from broken toys/materials
- Representative of cultural diversity



### Day to Day Instruction

- Developmentally appropriate learning activities planned based on individual needs of each student
- Adapting and modifying activities to fit the needs of the students
- Consistent daily routine strategically planned to provide a balance of child and teacher directed activities



### Some Examples

Story time - Read-alouds or Singing

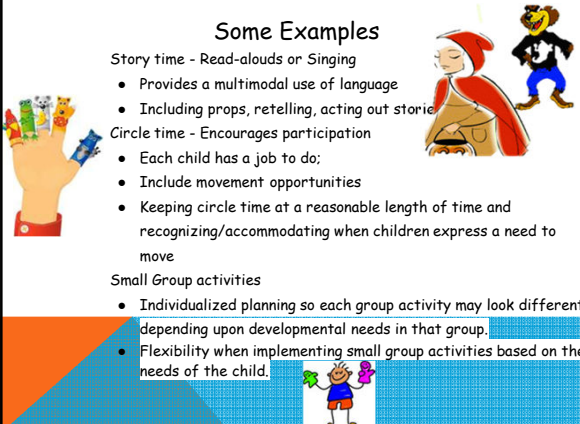
- Provides a multimodal use of language
- Including props, retelling, acting out stories

Circle time - Encourages participation

- Each child has a job to do;
- Include movement opportunities
- Keeping circle time at a reasonable length of time and recognizing/accommodating when children express a need to move


Small Group activities

- Individualized planning so each group activity may look different depending upon developmental needs in that group.
- Flexibility when implementing small group activities based on the needs of the child.



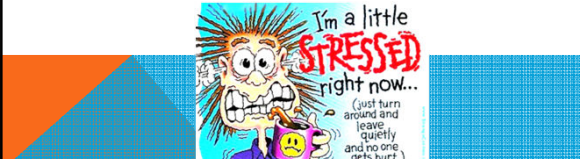
### Strengths of Blended Classrooms

- Acquiring and gaining language
- Developing relationships between home and school
- Familiarity with the environment
- Supports in place when transitioning to Kindergarten
- Social skills
- Teaching not tolerance but acceptance of differences in others.
- High quality early childhood education available to every family regardless of socioeconomic status.



### Struggles


- New students transitioning into program
- Students moving from one school to another
- Individualizing activities/materials/environment to meet all children developmentally.
- Time management/prioritizing
- Coordinating curriculum with other ECSE classrooms
- Training and resources for working with children who have unique needs are scarce.



### The Legal Rationale of ECE

Compulsory Education in Kansas

Under state statute, compulsory education applies to all students between the ages of 7 and 18. This would imply that preschool (and Kindergarten) are optional for most kids. However, state law also makes children identified with an exceptionality an exception to this rule, meaning that students identified under Part B of the IDEA as a student with a disability. This makes the LEA responsible for providing services to students with disabilities ages 3 and up.



### Federal Mandate

States are required to come into compliance with 20 indicators to maintain eligibility for federal funds  
Indicator 6A is the Least Restrictive Environment for Early Childhood  
Currently less than one-third of districts meet criteria for this indicator



### Best Practice is Achievable

**Current funding structure limits categorical aid for teachers and paras serving appropriate ratios**  
**However, the impact is not tremendous and can still be achieved with appropriate oversight**  
**Funding for current programs**  
**Categorical Aid**  
**Kansas Pre-Kindergarten Program**  
**Tuition program to offset loss of Cat Aid**

Questions???

