

## INVITE, ENCOURAGE, INCLUDE....

Be warm and accepting. Children look to you and model what you do.

Invite another child to become involved in an activity with a child with a disability.

Suggest a child select an activity to include a classmate with a disability.

Encourage and facilitate interactions.

# STRATEGIES THAT FACILITATE COMMUNICATION IN INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

## TEACH POSITIVE INTERACTIONS

Teach children to direct comments and questions directly to their classmate – speak to the classmate, not about them.

Teach children to recognize and interpret nonverbal communication by their classmate – they may help you understand what the child is trying to communicate!

As much as possible, provide assistance without participating directly in an interaction – all children need to learn and practice social interactions.

Adapted from Thompson et al. 1993. Handbook for the Inclusion of Children with Severe Disabilities. Lerner Managed Designs, Inc., Lawrence, KS.

## ANSWER CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS ABOUT DISABILITIES...

Allow children to raise questions. You don't need to "prepare" children for a new classmate with a disability. It's best to follow the children's lead and give information when they need it.

Be honest and straightforward. Answer simply and in a way that a young child will understand.

Emphasize similarities among children.

Convey respect for the child with a disability and foster understanding.