

Inclusive Beginnings

A video-based training resource
for early childhood educators



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Version 1.

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Contents

The Inclusive Beginnings package contains four documents:

Introduction

**Inclusive early childhood development and education:
trainer's manual**

Inclusive transition: trainer's manual

Inclusive beginnings: video advocacy guide

Introduction



Introduction

What is this training resource?

Inclusive Beginnings is a video-based training resource that looks at two topics. 'Inclusive practice in early childhood development and education' focuses on foundational skills and ideas for play-based, family-friendly, quality, inclusive early childhood development and education. 'Inclusive transition' focuses on ideas for supporting learners through periods of transition in education.

The package consists of:

- 2 videos
- 2 trainer's manuals
- a guide for using the videos for advocacy purposes.

Who is the training for?

The training is aimed at all educators working in all types of community early childhood development and education settings, where they are trying to become more welcoming and supportive of diverse learners. It is also aimed at educators in other settings supporting inclusive transition. It recognises that these educators may be untrained or may have received limited, narrowly focused, and/or outdated pre-service teacher education.

Many of the skills and ideas that educators need to become more inclusive and support transition are skills and ideas for good teaching and planning, for reflective thinking, and for effective communication, rather than complex technical skills. Unfortunately, these foundational skills and ideas are often not covered effectively in teacher training. The video-based training resource in its current format is likely to be used as an in-service training tool, but could easily be adapted to help introduce pre-service teachers to practical ideas for inclusive education and transition.

The video footage is mostly from the Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland) and Ukraine. The resource is therefore aimed primarily at educators in low- and middle-income contexts. The videos feature home, early childhood and primary school settings.

What will this training do, and not do?

This video-based resource presents simple ways in which early childhood educators, in any setting, can improve their day-to-day practice and become more inclusive. It uses real-life examples to illustrate inclusion challenges. It suggests achievable practical actions that an educator can take to address these challenges. It also introduces important theoretical issues in a bite-size way, rather than overwhelming participants with lots of theory at the start of the training, as often happens.

The workshop activities that accompany the video encourage participants to think reflectively about what they have seen in the videos and about their own situation and experiences. This foundational training will not provide all the answers. For instance, it does not discuss specific techniques related to disability, such as using sign language or assistive devices.

How to use this training resource

The resource has two videos lasting 38 minutes (video 1) and 26 minutes (video 2), and two training manuals. Video segments have titles which match with the workshop sessions in the manuals. The suggested workshop activities will help trainers facilitate both short, basic trainings and much more detailed trainings.

The activities are grouped into three categories:

- **Basic workshop activities** – these are simple activities that encourage participants to think about their own experiences and practices. The focus is on building participants' skills and confidence as reflective practitioners, rather than on conveying detailed facts or technical information about inclusive education and transition.
- **Important theoretical issues to discuss** – these activities introduce key concepts and theoretical debates. They help participants to understand some of the ideas that underpin transition, inclusive education and quality early childhood development and education.
- **Digging deeper into specific issues** – these activities offer opportunities for participants to learn more about issues raised in the videos, and to think about what they could do in their early childhood setting or school in relation to these issues. The focus remains on discussing easy-to-achieve actions, rather than setting expectations of complex, technical interventions that are likely to overwhelm most educators, at least initially.

Trainers are free to use the resource in whatever way suits their timeframe and the needs of their trainees. You do not have to facilitate the workshop activities in the order presented. For instance, in a particular session, you may prefer to start with an 'important theoretical issue' before doing the 'basic workshop activity'.

The resource is intended to be used in sequence. However, if time is limited you can miss out sessions on issues that seem lower priority in your context, or you can watch all of the video but only carry out a few workshop activities.

Options for organising a training include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Full length training** – You could spend a full day on each session. This allows plenty of time for participants to reflect on their own experiences, look at theoretical issues, and dig deeper into certain issues. You may also have time to include some observations in an early childhood setting, or hold discussions or do activities with parents, children or community members as part of the training.
- **Short training** – You could use half a day for each session. This gives participants time to cover the core discussions around each issue. To build on this you could set them some follow-up, self-study or action research activities to carry out over the next few weeks or months.
- **One-day training** – You could watch a whole video and facilitate a very brief (e.g. 30 minute) discussion about each topic, using or adapting some of the shorter workshop activities. You may also decide to schedule follow-up training sessions where participants can spend more time working on any topics that they find most interesting or challenging in their context.
- **Ad-hoc training** – You could show the video and have discussions or do related activities at any available opportunity during the year. For instance, you could include a 30-minute session during monthly staff meetings. Or, if educators are experiencing a specific problem in their early childhood setting or transition plan, you may find there is a session that is relevant to that issue. Educators could watch a segment of the video and discuss, as it may provide them with enough ideas or motivation to tackle their own problem.

Adapting and updating this resource

The Inclusive Beginnings documents are printed in an open file format. You should feel free to insert into the file your own ideas for activities, local case studies, notes about and photographs of workshops you have facilitated, and so on.

EENET will learn from our own and other facilitators' experiences of using the training resource. We may in the future publish revised sections of the manuals or additional activities. These can simply be inserted into the file.

If you would like to discuss any ideas for using and adapting this resource in your context, please contact EENET. We may either be able to offer some direct advice or put you in touch with another trainer, with whom you could exchange ideas.

EENET also has a team of consultants available if you are interested in commissioning more detailed support with adapting and delivering trainings.

Facilitation ideas to help you link sessions

If you choose to run a longer training course using most or all of the sessions provided in the manuals, there are various ways in which you could help participants track their progress through the course, and help them remember key messages.

Idea 1: Reminder of an opening line

You could choose a line from one of the videos, write it on a large sheet of paper and stick it on the wall, so that it is constantly on display during all the workshop sessions. At various points in the training, you could invite participants to look at this statement and say what it means to them.

The introduction segment of the first film includes this line:

“All young learners – girls and boys, whatever their race, language, religion, disability refugee or other status – should be able to learn together in their local community.”

Reflective questions for participants could include: Are you now interpreting ‘all’ in a different way? Do you have a clearer understanding of what learning together looks like? What do you still not understand?

The introduction segment of the second video includes this line:

“Inclusive education systems must make sure that every transition period is well planned and supported, with the full involvement of parents and caregivers, so that no child becomes excluded from or within education during this difficult time.”

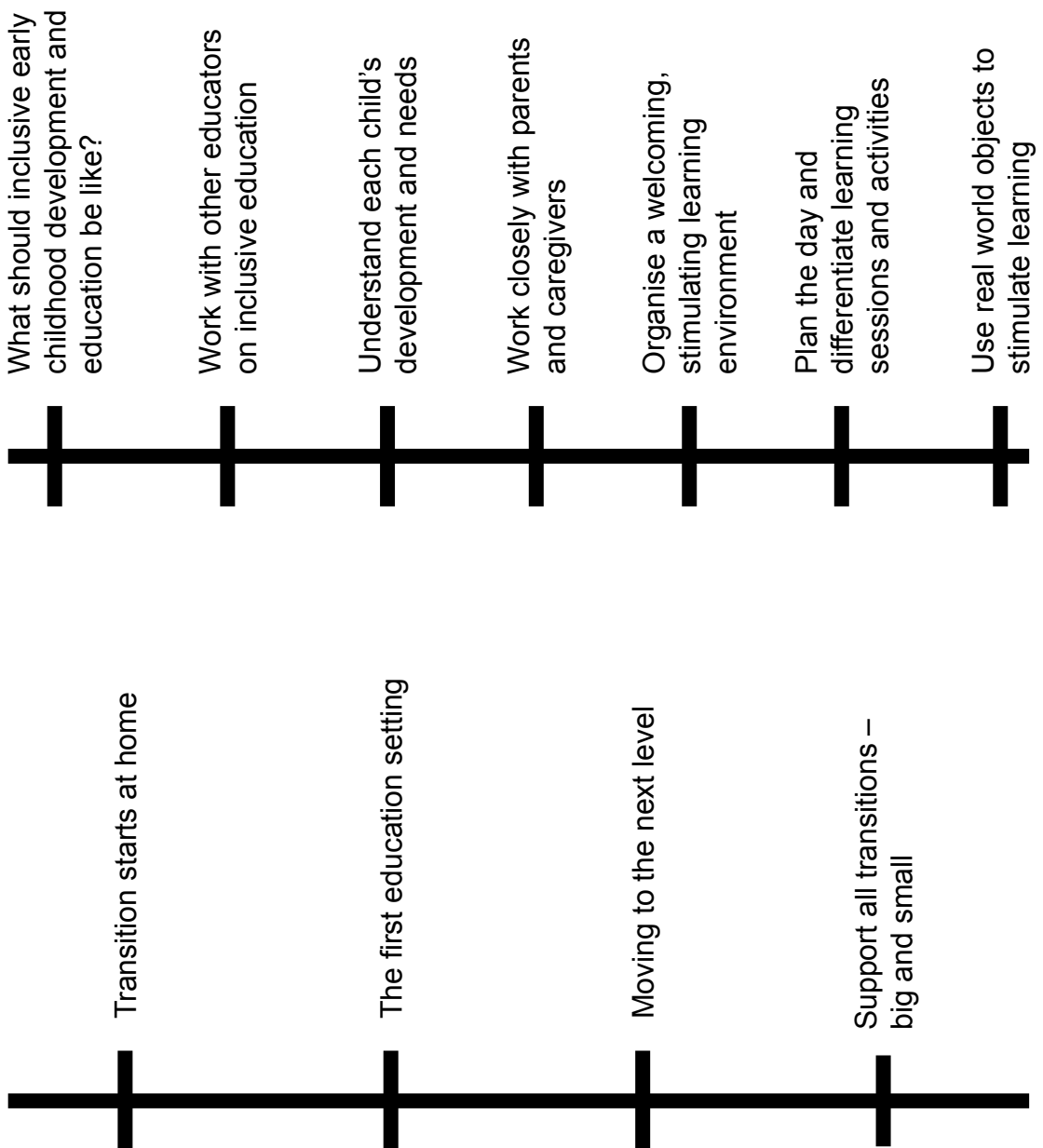
Reflective questions for participants could include: Has your understanding of this line changed since you first heard it in the video? Are you now interpreting ‘transition period’ in a different way? Do you understand more about planning and supporting transition now? Do you have a clearer understanding of why transition can be a difficult time? What do you still not understand?

Idea 2: Contents

The workshop sessions are structured to match segments in the videos. The video segments present key areas of focus within inclusive early childhood development and education and within inclusive transition.

You could use a contents sequence to help participants document their experiences and revise their learning throughout the training. Below is a suggestion for how to do this.

Draw a huge contents list on flipcharts on the wall, showing all the important segments in the video. Here's a simple example:



You could then use these contents sequences in different ways:

- Ask participants to stick notes under each segment. They could do this at the end of the related workshop session, to **summarise the key messages** they are taking away from the session. Or they could do it at the start of the next session, to help them remember what they previously learned and discussed.
- Ask participants to **document their own experiences** in relation to each of the topics. For instance, above the line they could stick notes about the positive things they already do, the inclusive experiences they have, the actions they have taken that have made transitions or their early childhood setting more inclusive. Below the line they could stick notes about the challenges they experience, the things that happen in transitions and the early childhood setting that are not very inclusive, the actions they have tried that did not work or that were not inclusive. If you are working with the participants over a longer period of time, you could encourage them to revisit their notes periodically to see if they have managed to address any of the issues that were below the line. Have they managed to move more experiences to above the line? If so, how did they do this? What changes did they make?
- Use the contents sequence to help participants **record their commitments**. At the end of each session, ask each participant to stick one note that says what action or change they will make in relation to that topic. For instance, “I will look for the strengths that children with disabilities have by ...”, or “I will learn more about each child’s home and community by ...”. They can revisit these over a period of time to see if they have taken action to implement their commitments.
- If you have the facilities, participants could take and print photos from their own early childhood setting and communities to **illustrate challenges and positive** practices in relation to the topics. They could even extend this activity and facilitate children or parents and caregivers to take photos or draw pictures to show what they think is inclusive and not inclusive in their transition activities or early childhood setting, in relation to the topics. These images could be stuck on the contents sequence for education staff and families to look at and discuss.
- You could use the contents sequence to help you **evaluate the training**. Participants could draw or stick smiley or sad faces, or put more detailed comments, on the contents sequence to show what they think of each session.

Giving feedback to EENET

We really want to hear about your experiences of using the video-based training resource. Please contact us and let us know:

- how, where and with whom you used it
- what worked well and what did not work well
- what adaptations or improvements you made to the training
- what improvements you think we should make when we update the training.

We would also love to see photos or videos of your trainings, to illustrate the things that went well or less well. Please remember to ask permission from the participants before sending us photos or videos.

Good luck and enjoy the training!

The EENET Team
July 2020