

## **Transcript from Circle time Interview with Taylor on Inclusion**

### Q. What does inclusion mean to you?

Inclusion to me means that an individual feels accepted, respected, and valued by those around them. And it may mean that those are people they see every day and interact with or it might be someone they've just met for the first time. But it is important to me that someone who feels included feels like they can be exactly who they are in that moment and they don't need to change in order to feel accepted by those around them, in order to feel respected for what they are currently capable of or what they want to be capable of one day. And feel valued for who they are, what they bring to the room, what they might say, what they might think, all of those things they feel accepted, respected, and valued for being just who they are.

### Q. How do you plan for positive peer interactions?

I plan for positive interactions starting day one as soon as I get my class list. So, I think what happened last year was so beneficial to me was really taking the time before the school year started getting to know families, getting to know students before they entered my room. So I was lucky enough to have the time to be able to commit to a 30 minute home or center visit with almost all my students before the school year began and that was really powerful because I got to know their interests, I got to know their strengths, I got to know how to support them when challenging behaviors began occurring at the start of the year, and knowing those interests and strengths going into the year I was able to put so many toys in the classrooms that represented them and the diversity of their interests. And so we had students who really liked pop up toys and we also had students who were starting to write so we had a card making center area and trying to make sure there was at least one or two things in each of the classroom areas that would draw students in so we could start building those friendships from the first day.

### Q. Tell us more about the activities you plan for - that support friendships and working together in the class.

One way we planned for including all of our peers in the classroom in one area was in the music area. So, at the start of the year when I was talking with families, I knew there were three really big songs that were going to be hits in our classroom, Baby Shark being one of them. I also knew that we had one student who music didn't seem to be as entertaining to her but she loved light up toys, anything that she could light up or cover or that would spin was really exciting. So, I added a disco ball to the music area. And we would have disco dance parties where one student would get to pick out the song, she would get to be in charge of the disco ball and get to turn it on and off as she pleased. And then we had



another student who was coming over and would be in charge of the CD player because she knew how to read the different pictures and different labels. And so, in one activity we were able to get three different levels of play and they were really engaging with each other. So, it became a game of she is going to cover up the light and we would all have to freeze, and the disco party would stop and when she took her hands off, we could play. And it was including everyone in play that was really fun.

