



Summary Report for the 16th National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute

Summer 2016

The National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute has become one of the premier educational opportunities for anyone involved in the care and education of young children with special needs in inclusive settings. For 16 years, the Institute has drawn people from across the nation and from foreign countries to Chapel Hill:

- to learn about the latest research findings, models, and resources to guide inclusive policy, professional development and practice;
- to develop collaborative relationships and cross-agency systems to support early childhood inclusion;
- to have the opportunity to meet, learn from, and problem solve with peers.

Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute is the major sponsor and organizer of the Inclusion Institute.

“There is a rainbow in your heart.”

For those who attended the federal panel plenary at the Institute this phrase is probably one you remember when Amanda Bryans spoke about her daughter’s rendition of what

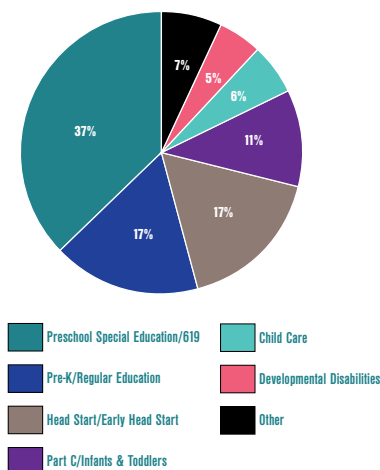
happens to rainbows when they disappear: they go into the hearts of kind people. Once again, we were surrounded by people with rainbows in their hearts at this year’s Inclusion Institute. The plenaries and keynotes set the tone for an Institute that combined stories, evidence, tools, resources and connections throughout the three days. One of the most powerful messages was that inclusion is a high priority at the federal agency level and that the collaboration across health and education, evident in newly released policy statements, will continue to be a strong factor in building a workforce capable and confident in implementing high quality inclusion.



Your feedback, as summarized below, demonstrates the powerful impact that three days of working together can have to motivate, inspire and fuel the momentum forward. The Institute theme, *More than an Event: Extending the Learning* is one that you took to heart; and we delighted in hearing ways you intend to share and implement Institute ideas.



Figure 1.
Percentage of Participants Representing
One of Seven Sectors



Program

The 2016 program included a record number of sessions:

- ◆ 4 pre-institute, ½-day workshops
- ◆ 1 keynote
- ◆ 2 plenaries
- ◆ 12 reflection sessions (at the beginning and the end of the Institute)
- ◆ 53 concurrent sessions

In addition, as part of the 2016 *More than an Event: Extending the Learning* theme, all Institute participants received free access to eight self-guided CONNECT courses, each focusing on a specific research-based practice, for a six-month period.

The following quotes begin to tell the story of this year’s conference:

“The materials received and the access to online resources after the conference, in particular the CONNECT Modules (were very helpful).”

“My first session . . . was profound. My last session . . . was profound. Some individuals just captivate you, light up a room, touch your heart strings, and then open your mind and heart to the possibility of whatever is imagined.”

“Incredible presenters. Rich resources. Keynotes struck an inspiring theme. Great in every way.”

Participants

This year’s Institute was the largest yet, selling out in just over a month after opening registration with more than 560 registrants and a waiting list of

over 100 people. Voices and perspectives from 40-plus states and several countries contributed throughout the institute, with the balanced representation of early childhood and early childhood special education participants that makes this conference so unique and powerful. In addition, the balance in participants representing administrative or supervisory positions and those on the front line providing direct services to children and families provided opportunities for sharing and learning



across roles as well as sectors. (See Figures 1 & 2).

Participant Ratings of the Institute

We used an online survey of participants to obtain feedback about the Institute as a whole as well as collecting ratings from participants for each pre-Institute workshop, plenary, and concurrent session. Based on these two data sources, we are glad to report that participants once again rated all aspects of the Institute highly. Mean ratings of the overall Institute were based on a 61% response rate to the online survey, on a 1–5 scale with 5 being highest. The overall quality of Institute was rated as 4.59, the quality of presenters and resource people rated 4.56, and the relevance of Institute was 4.59.

In addition, participants felt the keynote and plenary sessions got the Institute off to a strong start.



On the Federal Plenary:

“WONDERFUL! Also really enjoyed the discussions with the other states and brainstorming new ideas.”

“Access to and interaction with federal partners was one of the best things about the conference.”

On the parent Plenary:

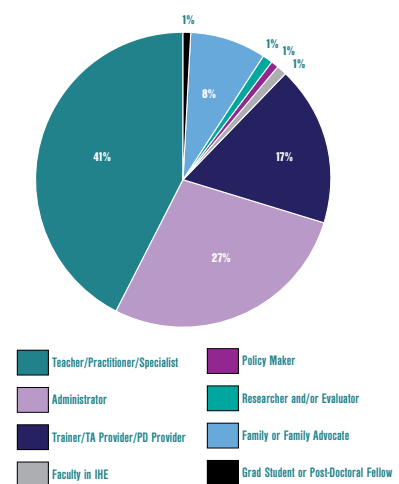
“Loved this session so much! So powerful to hear a parent’s perspective with your background and experience.”

“Beautiful example of inclusion ensuring ongoing inclusion. Lydia will insist on it herself. Lydia’s mom embodies the essence of the parent as not just the first teacher but the permanent teacher, and the best teacher. I’m sad when I think of all the children who would respond and thrive like Lydia if they had their own Team Lydia Rose.”

The individual ratings collected at the end of each session provided additional data on how the Institute hit the mark on topics and presenters. The summary means across all sessions on a 1–5 scale with 5 being highest were extremely positive: 4.60 for quality, 4.64 for organization and clarity of content, 4.57 for usefulness, and 4.70 for relevance.

“The variety of highly knowledgeable speakers was great. I appreciated that many of them were from national organizations so we could hear information directly from the top.”

Figure 1. Percentage of Participants Representing One of Seven Roles



“The variety of topics was great. I like the fact that the handouts and resources are online so that I can view the materials even if I couldn’t attend that session.”

“The materials were excellent and will continue to be good resources for me. The long breaks gave sufficient time for me to meet with my team and do a quick debrief about our learning.”

The Institute is a grassroots effort, which is supported through registration fees, our partnering projects who contribute by covering the time and travel of our presenters, and our sponsors who contribute to key parent speakers. We thank you all for partnering with us in this important endeavor, we could not have done it without you. We look forward to hearing about your work on behalf of inclusion over the next year and seeing you in 2017!

Sincerely,
Tracey West (Institute Chair and Coordinator) and
Pam Winton (Institute Chair Emerita)

save the date!

May 9–11, 2017



**2017
National Early Childhood
Inclusion Institute**

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suggested citation

Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. (2016).
Summary report for the 16th Annual Early Childhood Inclusion
Institute. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, author.

