



---

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS STORY

---



**HOPE Infant Family Support Program,  
San Diego County Office of Education**

## Background

Through the auspices of the SEEDS Project, Sacramento County Office of Education supported by the CA Department of Education, Special Education Division, the following story highlights the efforts of a county infant program to create family centered services for young children with disabilities and their families. The story reviews the process of change embarked upon by county office staff to develop an integrated service delivery model. The key considerations for building natural environments surrounding early intervention services are reflective in guidance for interagency collaborative practice (Interagency Collaboration Handbook, 2007).

- Administrative support and involvement at the superintendent level
- Philosophical statement (mission, vision) for inclusion]
- Models of early intervention
- Flexible staff
- Program Manager as lead to the collaborative initiative
- Developing and Implementing an Action Plan for Success
- Fiscal support
- Professional Development
- Resources
- Public Awareness
- Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Furthermore, the impetus for considering natural environments in early childhood special education settings was in direct response to Part C of IDEA reauthorized in 2004 that requires “to the maximum extent appropriate, are provided in natural environments, including the home, and community settings in which children without disabilities participate”. In 2011, the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) reported on nationally recognized and implemented natural environment models across the states that include transdisciplinary approaches, coaching models, family-centered services, and everyday routines and activities among others. The work of a NECTAC workgroup on principles and practices in natural environments framed the responses concerning types of models considered and guiding principles adopted (NECTAC, 2008). The undergirding principle of all of the service delivery models emphasizes the needs and priorities of the family as central to the mission.

With the interagency collaborative approach as an interview guide and the NECTAC natural environment models as a framework, this story captures one program’s initiative for systems change in early childhood special education. In addition to describing the indicators of success toward rethinking and building a responsive early intervention program, the story provides information about how a county office used the resources available through their SEEDS Visitation Site status to access a variety of technical assistance offerings to support an action plan for program change.

## Introduction

In 1975, the San Diego, HOPE Infant Family Support Program began serving young children with special needs and their families through the San Diego County Office of Education. The HOPE program was one of the first programs of its kind to serve families and children, birth to three with special needs. HOPE provides services to over 350 families with staff covering the north and south areas of the county including North Coastal, North Inland, Poway, and the south County areas of San Diego County. HOPE staff embraced the home visiting model very early on in their program evolution. However, prior to 1999, approximately 20% of their services were offered in special education center-based toddler programs. HOPE as a program pursued the elimination of the center based program option during the 1999-2000 school year. Their story of how they accomplished the system change effort is well documented in a program report that was subsequently published (Brault, Ashley, & Gallo, 2001). The following story will highlight their process of creating a collaborative natural environment service delivery framework and include current information about their ongoing program initiatives. One of their eleven collaboratives, the MiraCosta College Child Development Center, also a new SEEDS Project Visitation Site, will be showcased in the story as an example of community outreach and cooperative work strategies. The background for the story was gathered from program documents and reports, focused interviews with staff and families, and a visit to one of the community partner sites during the spring of 2012.

Contributors to this article:

Program Managers: Linda Cella, Linda Scarpa

Special Education Early Intervention Teachers: Melinda Ashley, Mindy Laperdon, Rosemary Stein, Mary Jeffers, Jessica Mattson

MiraCosta Child Development Center Director/ Faculty: Mark Whitney

Families from MiraCosta/HOPE

## HOPE Program Overview

The HOPE program incorporates a family centered, coordinated intervention service delivery model that focuses on providing family guided services based on Carl Dunst's (2006) theoretical framework. HOPE resources include a website clearly delineating the type of services offered by HOPE staff. Program services include: a home program; consultant services for infants and toddlers; family support services, autism services, and HOPE services in natural environments other than the home (HOPE website, 2012). HOPE's revised vision during the initial phase of system change captures their belief in a participatory model where families are the center of the program, and staff is committed to inclusive and collaborative practice among all levels of program functioning. Additionally, the management structure includes ongoing program evaluation and exploration of evidenced based practices by staff teams. The HOPE program encompasses a reflective supervision model for staff to support communication and conflict management. Reflective facilitation, an outgrowth of mental health practice, is provided twice monthly in a private group setting for staff, and management receives individual support. Leadership at HOPE encourages professional development and skill building among staff and families through ongoing planned learning opportunities.

### **HOPE as a SEEDS Visitation Site:**

HOPE Staff conduct SEEDS site visits (i.e. other school districts, county office programs) that are strategically planned to address the visiting program's unique needs and program directions. HOPE staff considers the effort in a reciprocal way; they learn as much from presenting their techniques to others as the visitors learn from them and their exemplary practices. "As a SEEDS Visitation Site, you are inspired to continue to focus on program development and look at your program critically, with the intention of improving your program practices." (SEEDS Project Visitation Site application, 2011). The HOPE strengths highlighted in the SEEDS Visitation Site description include the reflective practice/supervision model along with the collaborative management model, leadership, autism services, relationship-based family model and services in natural environments.

### **Creating Collaborative Partnerships to Support Natural Environment Options:**

HOPE's commitment to embrace services in natural environments is based on its core values that state:

*"The core values most relevant to provision of service in the natural environment are: relationships are the foundation of all learning; a family's beliefs, values and child rearing practices are acknowledged and important in the development of our working partnership; each family is unique, with its own resources, coping skills, obligations and expectations; and each family must determine their own natural environment and how and where early intervention services will be delivered" (Brault, et al, 2001).*

This commitment has led HOPE staff to continually explore issues and concerns related to research-based recommended practices and services in natural environments for young children and their families. The moment that HOPE staff step into a family's home, conversations begin about interests of the child and family and what they like to do together. Natural environments are viewed as any place where parents want their children to be and learn within their home, neighborhood and community.

Community partnerships have developed as a natural outgrowth from families expressing an interest in their children participating in the same activities as other young children, and HOPE'S commitment to the idea that ALL children and families have the right to belong. The process evolved from families' interests and HOPE's program philosophy and service mandates. HOPE staff has developed a framework for establishing community partnerships to support inclusive learning opportunities that have been built on collaborative relationships with both parents and professionals over time. HOPE staff recognize that relationships at all levels take time to develop and have intentionally built and adapted plans to meet the unique and changing needs of parents, professionals, and programs. As commented by one of the focus group members, "We have grown this inclusion piece over time and it is relationship based." (Interview 2012).

***What is glaringly evident in HOPE's program success is their passion for families and children and their dedication to forging new relationships with community partners.***

HOPE initially developed partnerships with Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church preschool (RBCPC), a private preschool, and with MAAC Project Early Head Start, an early childhood and family education program funded by the federal government, based on long-standing relationships in the community. Each partnership followed a unique journey through expansion and change as the partners learned and grew together over time. These two programs are the foundation from which HOPE learned how to approach and develop meaningful collaborations. As the relationships with the initial partners deepened and grew over time, additional opportunities with other community partners blossomed, thus creating a web of support that helped programs deal with opportunities and challenges. The participation of HOPE children, in these two programs has increased within a ten-year period, from six to thirty-five children. Currently over 50 HOPE children and families are participating in the 11 programs that HOPE has developed partnerships with. Central to the expansion of the collaboratives were: 1) a shared commitment to provide inclusive services with the focus on family choice; 2) respect for each other's agencies; 3) time, both formal and informal; and 4) to work together to achieve shared goals. The initial two program commitments became formalized in the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU.) The agreement, which is now utilized with all partners, establishes a shared vision and outlines the scope of work for each program. MOUs function as a guide and promote sustainability through establishing time commitments, outlining specific service model approaches, and providing in-kind services and consultations. Each MOU is reviewed on a regular basis and adapted to meet the changing needs of both programs and families.

## **Examples of Collaborative Partnerships**

### ***1) Private Community Preschool Partner-Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church Preschool (RBCPC)***

Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church Preschool provides developmentally appropriate preschool and parent/child classes for children ages 1-5 that encourage active relationships and celebrate the uniqueness of the individual child while strengthening and supporting families in the communities (RBCPC Program Mission). HOPE staff has been building relationships with the preschool for over 20 years. Support and services have evolved and changed over the years but MOA's have been in place since 2000. Currently scholarships are provided for 9 HOPE children to participate in three 2 year old year classes that are co-taught by a HOPE staff member. Six HOPE children also attend the parent/child classes that utilize a consultative monthly visit. The teachers at RBCPC Preschool warmly welcome all children, and naturally adapt to the needs of individual students. Staff set an example of appreciation and celebration of each child and family, and in doing so, create a community of support that extend past the preschool years.

### ***2) Public Early Childhood and Family Education Program Partner-MAAC Project, Early Head Start***

MAAC Project Early Head Start, one of the original community partners, is a bilingual/multicultural early childhood and family education program funded by the federal government. HOPE Infant Program staff participated on the planning committee before the first Early Head Start sites were opened. In 1998, HOPE and EHS initially co-taught at a co-located site, which included 4 HOPE children and 4 EHS children and their families. Although the program is no longer co-located, there are currently 20 HOPE children and their families in North County San Diego who participate in a variety of EHS programs (center-based, family child care, combination option with parent participation, and home programs). The children and families are supported by HOPE staff utilizing a variety of collaborative models depending on 1) the type of program in which the child is enrolled; 2) family choice; 3) child and program need; and 4) other agency agreements. HOPE administration has supported one staff member to act as the HOPE/EHS liaison in order to coordinate referrals, staffings, trainings, and ongoing collaboration between the two agencies.

### ***3) College Lab School Partner-MiraCosta Child Development Center***

The Child Development Center at MiraCosta College, located in the North Coastal area prides itself as a well-documented and highly reputable program model for full inclusion at the infant/toddler and preschool levels. The partnership began due to a long-standing relationship between HOPE staff and Mark Whitney, faculty in Child Development and initial Center Director. Although infants and toddlers from the HOPE program were welcomed over the years, the waiting list for families sometimes limited the opportunity for inclusive classroom options. In 2008, an MOU was formulated to share a vision of inclusion and set aside four scholarships for children from HOPE. The HOPE staff employs a consultation model and visit the campus laboratory school two times per month for 2 hour time periods. The consultation model provides support for young children with special needs and their families while offering Center staff in-kind support and assistance.

According to Dr. Whitney, the approach underscores the need for a formalized MOU to codify the commitment among partners and obtain board approval to identify the program as exemplary at the community college site. The MOU is used to insure longevity beyond personnel and receive board sanctions of the effort in a formal way.

### **Parent Perspectives from the Focus Interview at MiraCosta College**

During the focus interview component of information gathering for the HOPE program, parents were invited to share their perceptions of the MiraCosta Child Care collaborative. When asked what they most valued about the program, families reflected on how the HOPE and MiraCosta staff embraced their child and family and most importantly provided kindness and guidance throughout their child's attendance at the MiraCosta program. ***The true meaning of both program's commitment to relationships was evident in the discussion that ensued.*** Families indicated that they learned about what inclusion meant for their children in multiple settings. They found support from staff and families to "blaze a trail" of inclusion and learned how to advocate for their children during the critical stage of program transitions. The families and general education staff present during the interview emphasized HOPE staff's commitment to each individual child and the forging and maintaining of supportive partnerships when working together. One of the parents commented that HOPE staff "made her feel that at that moment in time you feel that your child is the only child in the universe. It is good to have someone to understand." The families present reiterated how encouraged and supported they were during their child's enrollment in the MiraCosta program and how the partnerships continued as they moved into school district programs. The HOPE staff acted as liaisons for families as they entered the preschool phase of the child's school career which families emphasized was critical to achieving an inclusive option in preschool. The families provided multiple accolades about the HOPE partners and their journey with families.

## **Program Suggestions for Creating Community Partnerships:**

- Develop a program philosophy and vision for providing service in Natural Environments/Inclusion
- Obtain management/director support from all programs in order to develop, build and sustain + services. +
- Acknowledge and understand that natural environments/inclusion is not a place but a belief that ALL children and families have a right to learn and participate in their community
- Initially look toward individuals/programs with shared visions for inclusion and grow and develop the relationship.
- When sharing a vision and fostering strong relationships obstacles become points of discussion not barriers (funding options/resources, etc.)
- Acknowledge staff jobs that are responsive and flexible to the unique needs of families and partners.
- Together with parents and partners share the inclusion journeys in the community, at the college level and with other early education providers and agencies
- Be open to act upon opportunities when they arise. Possibilities are often spread from existing ones.
- Strive to provide seamless and collaborative service delivery between family and community agencies
- Make the effort to let go of your own agenda to make room for a new common vision with partners
- Appreciate and celebrate the strengths and creativity that families, partners and staff bring to the program
- 

## **Summary**

In summary, the HOPE program provides an exemplary approach to creating natural environments through a collaborative team process both within their County Office and with outside community partners. Key to their success has been their thoughtful exploration of possibilities for serving children and their families by organizing staff teams to research and consider recommended practices in the field and how to best apply those practices within their local milieu. Staff pride themselves in adhering to their guiding principles emphasizing family-centered considerations and fostering ongoing partnerships with colleagues and families. Leadership skill development is encouraged across all staff through personnel development opportunities and access to regular reflective consultation. Families and their young children with disabilities are truly considered at the center of the program and benefit from staff dedicated to meeting their needs.



## **Key Components for Developing Collaborative Partnerships in Natural Environments:**

### ***Administrative support and involvement at the superintendent level***

Administrative Support in the beginning provided a program direction that was supported by the legal mandates for service in natural environments. When, HOPE center based toddler programs were closed to meet the mandate, administration supported staff in the change process. Staff time was provided to build a consensus statement on natural environments and a process for formulating community partnerships process. Staff was actively involved in the change process. Administration represented the concepts at the superintendent level, board meetings and community meetings she attended.

### ***Philosophical statement (mission, vision) for inclusion (see Appendix 1)***

#### ***HOPE is committed to:***

- Affirming families as they define their goals and aspirations for their child and family
- Supporting families as they in turn support the successful participation of their children with disabilities in home and community life
- Providing services in environments that reflect family routines and activities
- The belief that children do not need prerequisite skills to participate in activities with age peers. They do not need to be “fixed” before they can be included.
- Supporting the right of children with disabilities to access the same environments as any other + children. +

### ***Models of Inclusion***

Staff approach collaborations with community partners in the same way they approach them with families; one size does not fit all and it is important to develop the relationship and create a service model to meet the unique needs of each partner.

#### ***Consultative model:***

Consultative models vary from weekly to monthly service depending on the needs and agreements with program and families. An Early Intervention teacher, assigned to the specified program, provides observations of the child in the program and meets with staff and parents on a regular basis. IFSP's are shared with the staff, with parent permission, and suggestions to embed outcomes into the daily activities are discussed. HOPE consultants specified on a child's IFSP also provide support in the program when requested. Specialized equipment and materials are supplied if needed. Children may also receive home services based on a family's desire. In kind services to promote staff development are provided each partnership is unique and the MOU specifies the unique agreements between each program. The following partners utilize variations of the Consultative Model.

- Early Head Start (MAAC, Easter Seal, Episcopal Community Services which include center based and family childcare homes)
- Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church preschool (Parent /child classes)
- MiraCosta Child Development Center
- South County First United Methodist Preschool of Chula Vista
- Center for Children and Families at Cal State San Marcos
- Escondido Union School Adult Education
- Palomar Community College

***Co-Teaching Model:***

A co-teaching model typically involves programs that meet two days a week. HOPE early intervention teacher, assigned to the program, works alongside early education staff with all children in the classroom. Time is provided for planning, discussions and opportunities to meet with families. IFSP's are shared with the staff, with parent permission, and suggestions to embed outcomes into the daily activities are discussed. HOPE consultants specified on a child's IFSP also provide support in the program when requested. Specialized equipment and materials are also supplied if needed. Children may also receive home services based on a family's desire. In kind services to promote staff development are provided. Each partnership is unique and the MOU specifies the agreements between each program. The following partners utilize variations of the Co-Teaching Model.

- Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church preschool
- Escondido Community Child Development Center
- MAAC Early Head Start

***Flexible staff***

In order to team with families and community partners, flexibility is essential. HOPE staff recognizes a family-centered service delivery model by adhering to a relationship-based approach. Teaming occurs among staff, families and community members and is interwoven in the guiding principles and program philosophy. When working with community partners who follow different rules, regulations, and calendars, etc., flexibility is key to developing and sustaining the relationships.

***Program Manager as lead to the collaborative initiative***

HOPE program director and managers have been instrumental in supporting staff to forge new relationship with communities that creates a system of service, reflecting current recommended practices. Designated staff members, with a dedication and passion for inclusion, were selected to form a workgroup and focus their

efforts on developing and building community partnerships. The workgroup members meet on a monthly basis and are the primary service providers in the community programs.

### ***Developing and Implementing an Action Plan for Success***

HOPE has a clearly defined Strategic Direction from which action plans are developed yearly. The topic of natural environments/inclusion has been a focus of the action plans for several years. The plan supports staff development and provides time to explore, develop and build community partnerships. In addition HOPE meets annually with each of its partners to review their agreement and reflect any changes that are needed.

### ***Fiscal support***

Partnership agreements are supported through the exchange of in-kind services (teaching staff, consultation, trainings, specialized materials etc.) for tuition. **HOPE does not provide direct funding to secure spaces for children in community programs.** Each agreement is based on the needs and resources of the program and may change due to shifting fiscal constraints. MiraCosta receives support from the college foundation and the program currently relies predominantly on general funds. RBCPC provides scholarships based on an extensive fundraising campaign and The Center for Children and Families receives corporate support. Head Start participation is based on financial eligibility and/or special needs qualification. In the North County San Diego Region, Head Start waives the income eligibility requirements for children who enter with active Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP). Although not exhaustive, the examples are just a few of the creative funding sources available.

### ***Professional development***

HOPE has a professional development planning team that schedules training for staff throughout the year on specific topics. Professional development for HOPE and community partners occurs in a variety of ways. When HOPE initially created its vision for service in natural environments, HOPE staff and members of community programs participated together in many trainings such as SEECAP, Special Quest, PITC/Beginning Together and All of Us Together. HOPE staff and the community promotes shared training and teaming opportunities including Round Table Discussions, brown bag lunches with partners, monthly meetings and PLC's (professional learning communities) and community events. The scheduled meetings, discussions and trainings cover a variety of topics including disability information, transition, behavior, program practices review of current research and best practices.

### ***Resources***

The relationships with program staff and families are the program's greatest resource. Staff shares their experiences with each other and the community both formally and informally. In addition, HOPE consultants are available to share their knowledge with community program staff. Other resources utilized to support access and participation in the various programs includes: assistive technology devices, adaptive positioning equipment, communication supports and various materials, which exemplify universal design for learning (UDL) for all children. See the Appendix for other useful resources.

### ***Public awareness***

HOPE inclusion efforts are shared through workshops and training provided to families and partners within the local communities. Efforts are made to include families and professional from both agencies when sharing our inclusion stories. Partners are encouraged to explore and promote inclusive practices with their families and instill the guiding principles in their brochures and websites. In addition, many of HOPE experiences have been shared at SEECAP, Beginning Together, Head Start conferences, etc.

### ***Evaluation and continuous improvement***

Programs and services are constantly evolving as HOPE Staff work together with families and community partners. Family and staff questionnaires are generally obtained annually to gather information on how the collaboration is working. MOU's are typically written for 2 years and reviewed annually with changes made as necessary. In addition, HOPE recently began documenting their partnerships utilizing the Partner Update Form (see Appendix 2).

### ***Grass roots level-community discussions at round table***

HOPE facilitated meetings initially and were held 3-4 times a year to learn about agency activities including sharing successes and orchestrating possibilities focused on inclusion. The meeting site location rotates allowing different agency staff to host and take ownership of the event. Most recently the meetings have focused on transition. HOPE co-facilitators take the responsibility of sending out an agenda each time. This year, community members have assumed responsibility for scheduling and facilitating the events.

## Statistics

**Number of children served per year:** 350 - 375

### **Type of staff required for program functioning-**

- 62 Instructional Staff including: Teachers, Early Intervention Assistants, Behavioral Support Assistants, and Consultants (Nurses, School Psychologist, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Therapists, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consultants, Educational Audiologist, Vision Consultants, Special Ed Resource Assistant (parent) and Social Workers).
- 6 Support Staff
- 2.5 Managers

### **Number of interagency committees to support the effort-** differs by partnership

- Community round table-inclusion
- EHS committee
- Interface with four SELPAs: Poway (single SELPA), North Inland (7 districts), and North Coastal: (14 districts such as Oceanside, Vista, and Carlsbad)
- The South County community does not have a specific interagency meeting but staff has been attending meetings already established through the SELPA infant preschool transition committee and EHS. The First 5 committee in the South County has a HOPE representative participate in the meetings.

### **Number of MOUs and with which agencies**

All community partners have MOUs. There are a total of seven MOUs currently.

- MiraCosta Child Development Center
- MAAC Project Early Head Start/Head Start, Easter Seals Head Start
- Palomar College Children's Center
- Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church preschool
- Center for Children and Families at Cal State San Marcos
- Early Head Start/Head Start Episcopal Community Services-ECS
- Escondido Community Child Development Center
- South County First United Methodist Preschool of Chula Vista
- Escondido Union School Adult Education

### **Number of agency representatives involved in the initiative-multiple agency representatives across programs and community partnerships**

Innumerable

### **Number of meetings required for planning and implementation annually**

- Monthly Inclusion Workgroup meetings
- 2 year agreements-consultative model is ongoing with staff and then meeting with directors once a month
- Inclusion workgroup in the North County meets once a month with community liaisons. Staff providing services meet with their supervisor to refine worksheets and procedures at each site.

## References

Brault, L. M., Ashley, M., & Gallo, J. (2001, October). One Program's Journey: Using the change process to implement service in Natural Environments. *Young Exceptional Children*, 5 (1) 11-19.

Workgroup on Principles and Practices in Natural Environments (2008). *Agreed upon practices for providing early intervention services in natural environments*. OSEP TA Community of Practice- Part C Settings. <http://www.nectac.org/topics/natenv/natenv.asp>

Sadao, K. C. & Robinson, N.B. (2007). *Handbook on Developing and Evaluating Interagency Collaboration in Early Childhood Special Education*. Sacramento, CA: CDE Press.

San Diego County Office of Education, HOPE Infant Family Support Program, Visitation Site application. Supporting Early Education Delivery Systems (SEEDS). January 18, 2011

San Diego County Office of Education, HOPE Infant Family Support Program, 2010-2011 Community Partner Updates. June 2011.

San Diego County Office of Education HOPE Infant Family Support Program Website. Retrieved May 18, 2012. <http://www.sdcoe.net/student/eeps/hope/?loc=home>

## Appendices

- 1) HOPE Natural Environment Philosophy
- 2) Community Partner Update
- 3) HOPE Action Plan
- 4) STAFF Survey for HOPE Collaborative community partners
- 5) HOPE Parent Survey
- 6) Checklist for Students in community settings
- 7) MAAC Project Head Start Referral Process

## Appendix 1

### Natural Environments Philosophy HOPE Infant Family Support Program November 1999

“Natural Environments are settings that are natural or normal for the child’s age peers who have no disabilities.” [US Code of Federal Regulations 303.12 (4)(b)(2)]

Early experiences in the natural environment lay the foundation for the child, the family and the community to expect participation and involvement in the life of the community by all members.

#### **BENEFITS OF PROVIDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

By having children with disabilities and their families participate in home, neighborhood and community activities children have the opportunity to:

- ❖ Learn through the routines and activities of family life
- ❖ Learn from peers who have skills and abilities across a continuum, enhancing learning in areas of difficulty and nurturing areas of strengths.
- ❖ Become problem solvers and develop empathy and understanding of individual difference.
- ❖ Have the opportunity to experience the typical activities of childhood and develop lasting friendships
- ❖ Maintain their rate of developmental growth and possibly show gains in social or communication abilities.

By having children with disabilities and their families participate in home, neighborhood and community activities **families** have the opportunity to:

- ❖ Gain new perspectives about what is typical about their child and what can be attributed to the disability
- ❖ Begin to create a history of participation for themselves and their children, which helps to guide future decisions



- ❖ Broaden their social relationships, form ongoing genuine friendships, and experience a sense of support in being a parent (feel supported in their parenting experience)
- ❖ Gain an understanding of the issues of raising a child with a disability within the context of typical parenting activities
- ❖ Become familiar with disability through participation, which creates comfort and acceptance within communities
- ❖ Become better advocates for the inclusion of all children in typical and age appropriate activities in school and in the community

By having children with disabilities and their families participate in home, neighborhood and community activities **early childhood professionals** have the opportunity to:

- ❖ Appreciate that all children are children first and that disability is of lesser importance
- ❖ Broaden their professional experiences through expanding on techniques for individualizing activities and learning more about available resources
- ❖ Contribute to children’s acceptance of individual differences as they “set the tone” in the setting in which they work
- ❖ Advocate for responsive services for all children
- ❖ Share their knowledge and experiences with others who are exploring the possibilities of including children with and without disabilities in shared environments/activities
- ❖ Support children and families as they make choices for continued participation in neighborhood and community

## HOPE IS COMMITTED TO:

- ❖ Affirming families as they define their goals and aspirations for their child and family
- ❖ Supporting families as they in turn support the successful participation of their children with disabilities in home and community life
- ❖ Providing services in environments that reflect family routines and activities
- ❖ The belief that children do not need prerequisite skills to participate in activities with age peers. They do not need to be “fixed” before they can be included.
- ❖ Supporting the right of children with disabilities to access the same environments as any other children.

## Appendix 2

### \* 2010-2011 Community Partner Update

1.	<i>Name of community partner:</i>	
2.	<i>What type of program (i.e. university based, private, parent education, etc.):</i>	
3.	<i>How did the partnership evolve initially?</i>	
4.	<i>What has changed over time (how long)?</i>	
5.	<i>Is there an MOU in place?</i>	
6.	<i>What did you define as the purpose of the partnership (key elements of this partnership)?</i>	
7.	<i>What is the model of this partnership (i.e., co-teaching or consult)?</i>	
8.	<i>How many HOPE children are included at this site?</i>	
9.	<i>How much staff time is involved with this partnership (include meeting time with staff, families, and classroom time)?</i>	

10.	<i>How do children enter this program (describe the ideal process)?</i>	
11.	<i>What does your ongoing work look like?</i>	
12.	<i>What has worked well in your collaboration with this site?</i>	
13.	<i>What have been some challenges with this partnership?</i>	
14.	<i>Have you seen an impact as a result of our partnership with this site?</i>	
15.	<i>What is your future vision for your work with this program?</i>	
16.	<i>Does the community program offer activities/opportunities for families to get together? Give a few examples</i>	

***\*Please attach a copy of the current MOU, sample forms that are used, and any other procedure***

## Appendix 3 +

<b>2011-2012 Action Plan</b>			
<p><b>Strategic Direction I:</b> Design and implement learning experiences guided by developmentally appropriate, evidenced-based and inclusive practices that are responsive to the diverse needs of children and families.</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Facilitate positive relationships for children and families by integrating services into naturally occurring activities and building community partnerships that promote inclusion.</p> <p><b>Key Activity:</b> A. Support and develop quality and accessible social and educational options for children and families.</p> <p><b>Action 1:</b> Develop vision and procedures for establishing community partnerships</p>			
<b>Steps:</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Update</b>
a) North County and South County regional inclusion teams will meet and document what is currently happening with current community partnerships by completing the attached document.	North and South county inclusion teams	11/11	
b) North County and South County inclusion teams will share compiled information via email or notebook.	North and South county inclusion teams	11/11	
c) Key members from each regional inclusion team will review data and develop and write guidelines.	North and South county inclusion managers will select members for inclusion guideline workgroup	1/12	
d) Workgroup will complete guideline draft and present recommendations to PD.	Inclusion Guideline Workgroup	6/12	

## Appendix 4

### STAFF Survey for HOPE Collaborative Community Partners

Dear Preschool Staff:

We at HOPE have been collaborating with multiple partners in the community to provide inclusive educational opportunities to meet the needs of ALL children. Your agency has been a valued partner in this endeavor. In an effort for HOPE to continue to grow and learn, we ask that you take a few minutes to complete this brief survey. Please reflect on the experiences of the last year and think about what would be useful in the future to strengthen our partnerships. Your in depth comments and feedback are appreciated.

Did you find this collaboration beneficial?

What worked?

What has been challenging?

**Has our mode of communication supported an exchange of ideas and information (i.e. meetings, attending staffings, notes, informal conversations, etc.)?**

- What has been most helpful?
- What was challenging?
- Is there something you would do differently?

**What adaptations or suggestions might you have for the coming year?**

## Appendix 5

### Parent Survey

May 3, 2010

Dear Parents,

HOPE has been partnering with a variety of community agencies to provide inclusive educational opportunities to meet the needs of ALL children. Your feedback, as participants would be greatly appreciated and help us plan for the coming year. Please take a few moments and provide us with your valuable insights and feedback.

Thank you for your time!

Please share what factors impacted your decision to enroll your child in this program?

What do you see as the benefits of this inclusive opportunity for your child?

What do you feel are the benefits of this inclusive opportunity for you as a parent

Has this inclusive educational opportunity influenced what you want for your child educationally and throughout life?

Is there anything you would like to see added or done differently in this program?

## Appendix 6

### Checklist for Students in Community Settings

CHILD'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTHDATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_  
HOPE TEACHER: \_\_\_\_\_ CONSULTANTS: \_\_\_\_\_

- Registration completed
  - HOPE release signed and filed
  - HOPE photo permission signed
  - Parent visit  Premeeting if needed
  - Outcome and service added to IFSP, home visit scheduled changed as needed
  - Home visits (dates & initials) \_\_\_\_\_
- IFSP Outcomes to be addressed in setting:

Medical/safety considerations:

Feeding/Snack:

Mobility/Positioning/Access-Equipment:

Mode of Communication/Vocabulary:



## Appendix 7 +

### **MAAC Project Head Start Referral Process**

- When parents bring up the topic of inclusion, the need for day care, socializing with other children, participating with their child in the community, etc., and the family has limited resources, discuss the Early Head Start/Head Start Program as one of the options available.
- Share Early Head Start/Head Start Brochure
- If parents are interested, discuss making a formal referral
- Discuss the type of program the family is interested in (combination option, family child care program, center based day care, etc.)
- Have parents sign a collateral release form allowing us to communicate with Head Start regarding their child.
- Fill out the MAAC Project Head Start Agency Child Referral Memorandum. (see next page and make a copy)
- FAX referral to Early Head Start/Head Start at (760) 471-9320
- Keep one copy of the referral for your records. Give another copy of the referral to the secretary to be placed in the cumulative file. Give one copy to the Head Start Liaison so that she/he can follow up with the referral with Head Start staff.
- Parents will then be contacted by Head Start staff to fill out an application. They will be asked to bring in their child's birth certificate, their IFSP, records regarding their income, and other documents. Even though the income requirements will be waived based on their child's eligibility for our program, parents will still need to show proof of income.
- Encourage families to make a copy of their application and all of the documents shared just in case things get misplaced.
- Once eligibility is established, families will be placed on a waiting list.
- HOPE staff may contact Head Start staff or the HOPE/Head Start liaison to follow up on the status of the referral.
- Head Start staff encourages us to make referrals at any time during the year and early enough so that children and families can participate for a least a full school year in the EHS program. Referrals made after September will most likely not result in placement until the following school year.