



INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PLAN

FOR PLUMAS COUNTY

JULY 2025



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List of Abbreviations

AAP | American Academy of Pediatrics

ADA | Americans with Disabilities Act

ASQ | Ages and Stages Questionnaire

CalECSE | California Early Childhood Special Education Network

CCIP | California Childcare Initiative Program

CDE | California Department of Education

CSPP | California State Preschool Program

DEC | Division for Early Childhood

DDS | Ca. Department of Developmental Services

DREDF | Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund

ECE | Early Childhood Education

ECSE | Early Childhood Special Education teacher

ECTA | Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

ELO-P | Extended Learning Opportunities Program

ES-FRC | Early Start Family Resource Center

FAPE | Free and Appropriate Education

FEC | Family Empowerment Center

FNRC | Far Northern Regional Center

FRC-CDC | Feather River College Child Development Center

IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Act

IEP | Individualized Education Program

LEA | Local Education Agency

LPC | Local Child Care Planning Council

LRE | Least Restrictive Environment

MTSS | Multi-tiered Systems of Support

NAEYC | National Association for the Education of Young Children

PCOE | Plumas County Office of Education

PIEEW | Plumas Inclusive Early Education Workgroup

PIEET | Plumas Inclusive Early Education Team

PRS | Plumas Rural Services

PUSD | Plumas Unified School District

QCC | Quality Counts California

QRIS | Quality Rating Improvement System

SCFO | Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities

SDP | Self-Determination Plan

SELPA | Special Education Local Plan Area

SPED ADR | Special Education Alternate
Dispute Resolution

TK | Transitional Kindergarten

UDL | Universal Design for Learning

WFP | Workforce Development Pathways
Grant



Purpose

This plan offers a clear, organized framework focused on addressing barriers, leveraging resources, and fostering collaboration to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood education in Plumas County. It balances immediate actions with a long-term vision to build a more inclusive community.



Workgroup Beginnings

The Plumas Inclusive Early Education Workgroup (PIEEW) began by meeting as a group from August 2024 to begin conversations related to Child Find, defining inclusion and identifying barriers to inclusion that could be resolved quickly. The process followed the framework outlined by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) for Community Indicators and Elements of High-Quality Inclusion.^{[1](#)}

Shared Definitions



Defining Inclusion

To define inclusion, we used the definition from the California Department of Education's (CDE) publication, "Inclusion Works!"^{[2](#)}

Inclusion is the full and active participation of children with disabilities or delays in community activities, services, and programs designed for typically developing children, including childcare. If support accommodations, or modifications are needed to ensure full, active participation, they are provided appropriately. Participation results in an authentic sense of belonging for the child and family.

CDE based this definition on the Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).³ According to the statement the defining features of high quality inclusive early childhood programs and services are **access**, **participation** and **supports** (Fig. 1)

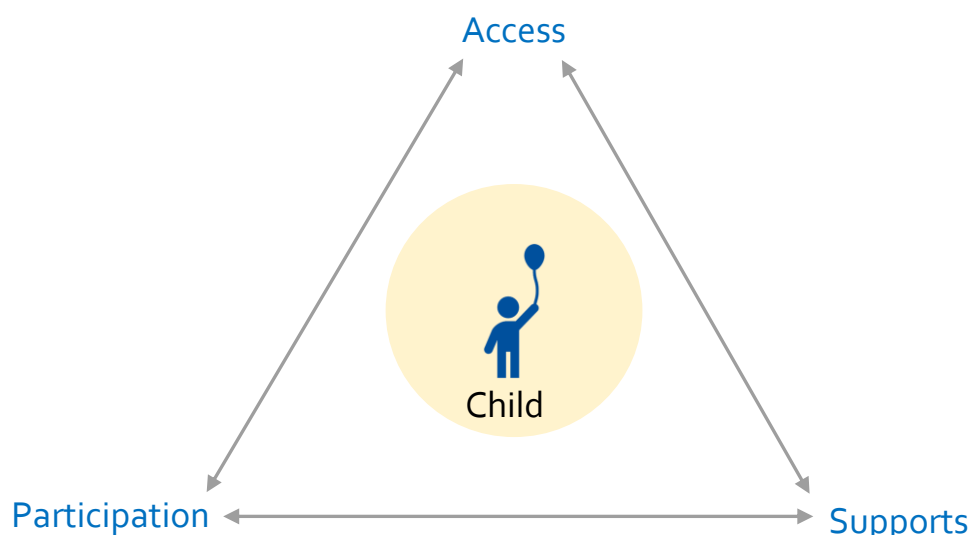


Figure 1

Access. Providing access to a wide range of learning opportunities, activities, settings, and environments is a defining feature of high-quality early childhood inclusion. In many cases, simple modifications can facilitate access for individual children. Universal design is a concept that can be used to support access to environments in many different types of settings through the removal of physical and structural barriers. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) reflects practices that provide multiple and varied formats for instruction and learning. UDL principles and practices help to ensure that every young child has access to learning environments, to typical home or educational routines and activities, and to the general education curriculum.

Participation. Some children will need additional individualized accommodations and supports to participate fully in play and learning activities with peers and adults. Depending on the individual needs and priorities of young children and families, implementing inclusion involves consideration of a range of approaches, from embedded instruction and routines-based

teaching to more explicit interventions such as scaffolding learning and participation for all children.

Supports. A well-planned infrastructure of systems level supports must be in place to undergird the efforts of individuals and organizations providing inclusive services to children and families. Additionally, specialized services and therapies must be implemented in a coordinated fashion and integrated with general early care and education services. Throughout the service and support system, the goal should be to ensure access, participation, and the infrastructure of supports needed to achieve the desired results related to inclusion.

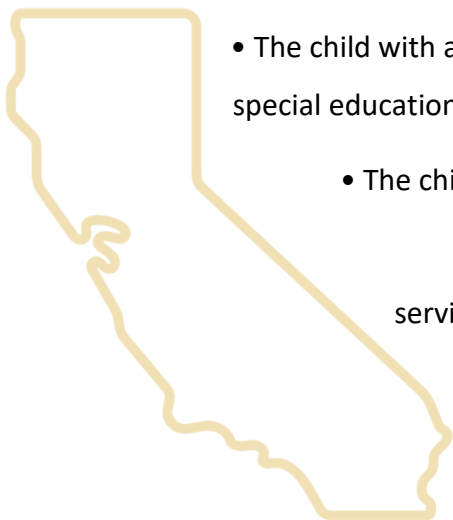
The Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion synthesis points highlight key findings about including children with disabilities in early childhood settings.⁴ These points emphasize that inclusion is about belonging, participation, and reaching full potential, not just about placement. High-quality inclusion requires specialized instruction, collaboration, organizational supports, and benefits for all children, not just those with disabilities.



- Inclusion is a process, not just a placement.
- Inclusion benefits all children.
- Specialized instruction is crucial.
- Collaboration and teamwork are essential.
- Adequate resources and supports are needed.
- Universal access is the goal.
- Continuous learning and improvement are necessary.



Findings from the Inclusion in California Early Learning and Care Study (Feb. 13, 2024) define the ‘gold standard’ of inclusion as:



- The child with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is receiving special education services with same-aged peers without disabilities
- The child with an IEP has access to the general curriculum
- The child with an IEP receives their special education services in (not pulled out of) the classroom
- The proportion of children with IEPs in the classroom is similar to the proportion of children with disabilities in the general population

- Specialists support the teacher in working with the child to achieve their IEP goals
- Specialists include the child’s peers in service delivery
- Child and family transitions during the day or week are minimized⁵



This standard should be our benchmark for effectively supporting children with disabilities in our communities.

Historical Background and Current Context



Special Education

The origins of disability rights in education began in 1954 with the Brown vs. Board of Education decision which found that segregated education was inherently unequal. Twenty years after this decision, children with disabilities gained the right to a public education with the passing of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

While children with disabilities, no matter how ‘severe’, were entitled to a public education, they were educated in separate classrooms and facilities. After 15 years of providing education to children with disabilities in separate settings, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was amended and effectively changed to Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1990. In 1997

and again in 2004, additional amendments to the IDEA were passed to ensure equal access to education.

According to the IDEA of 2004, school districts must ensure that children with disabilities, ages 3-21, are educated with children without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.⁶ The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) requires that students with disabilities remain in general education settings whenever possible. Before removing a student or limiting their access to general education, schools must first consider whether additional supports—such as accommodations, modifications, or specially designed instruction—can be provided within the regular classroom.



In 2017 the United States Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, released a Dear Colleague Letter related to the Preschool LRE.⁷ The US Department of Education occasionally issues “*Dear Colleague*” letters as guidance to clarify miscommunications and/or trends in special education that are causing numerous complaints or failure to follow the law as intended. This letter reaffirmed the position of the U.S. Department of Education that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized and appropriate supports to enable them to meet high expectations.

Section § 300.116 Placements of the IDEA states “In determining the educational placement of a child with a disability, including a preschool child with a disability, each public agency must ensure that—

(a) The placement decision—

(1) Is made by a group of persons, including the parents, and other persons knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options; and

(2) Is made in conformity with the LRE provisions of this subpart, including §§ 300.114 through 300.118;

(b) The child's placement—

(1) Is determined at least annually;

(2) Is based on the child's IEP; and

(3) ***Is as close as possible to the child's home;***

(c) ***Unless the IEP of a child with a disability requires some other arrangement, the child is educated in the school that he or she would attend if nondisabled;***

(d) In selecting the LRE, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services that he or she needs; and

(e) ***A child with a disability is not removed from education in age-appropriate regular classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general education curriculum.***

(emphasis added)

According to E. Barton & B. Smith (2015), the agency responsible for providing a free and appropriate education (FAPE) to a preschool child with disabilities must do so in the LRE that meets the child’s needs, as described in their IEP—even if the school district doesn’t have

preschool programs for children without disabilities.⁸ The school district can offer special education and related services in different settings, such as a regular kindergarten class, public or private preschool, community child care, or the child’s home. The US Department of Education defines a Regular Early Childhood Program as a program that includes the majority (at least 50 percent) of non-disabled children (i.e. children who do not have IEPs).

In 2023 the US Department of Health & Human Services and the US Department of Education issued a Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs.⁹ It emphasizes the importance of including all children with disabilities in high-quality early childhood programs, alongside their peers without disabilities. This statement reaffirms the commitment to ensuring that children with disabilities receive individualized support and accommodations to fully participate in learning and social activities, ultimately reaching their full potential.



In June 2024 the US Department of Education listed the State of California as “Needs Assistance” (two or more consecutive years) for Part B and “Needs Intervention” with implementing the requirements of Parts C of the IDEA.¹⁰ Part C provides early intervention programs for children from birth to age 3, while Part B offers special education services for children and youth ages 3 to 21. The California Department of Education has been working with the SWIFT Education Center at the University of Kansas to improve implementation of the IDEA and recently issued a “*Dear Colleague*” letter affirming Rightful Presence and Inclusive Early Education Programs as the First Consideration for Children with Disabilities (2024).¹¹ “Rightful presence refers to the intentional effort to ensure children with disabilities are fully included, valued, and supported in the educational settings they would attend if they did not have a disability. It emphasizes belonging, equitable access to resources, and active participation in learning and social opportunities alongside peers without disabilities.”

In 2022–23, the number of students ages 3–21 in the U.S. who received special education and/or related services under the IDEA was equivalent of 15 percent of all public school students, and 14% in the State of California. Among students receiving special education and/or

related services, the most common category of disability was specific learning disabilities (32 percent).¹² According to KidsData.org, in California, Special Education enrollment is trending upwards.¹³

The expectations for educating young students with disabilities alongside their nondisabled peers are well established. However, in 2020–21, only 29 percent of California students 3-5 years old with disabilities received special education in regular settings, while 38 percent of California preschool students with disabilities received special education in separate settings.¹⁴ According to the California Department of Education Dear Colleague letter on Rightful Inclusion (2024), in the 2022–23 academic year, only 20 percent of preschoolers with disabilities attended a regular early childhood program and received most of their special education and related services there. This highlights significant room for improvement in inclusive practices.



Early Intervention

California’s Early Start program was created based on federal and state laws to help infants and toddlers with disabilities. The federal law (IDEA, Part C) began in 1986 and allowed states to set up early intervention services. In 1993, California passed its own law, the California Early Intervention Services Act (CEISA) to put this system in place, choosing the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to lead the program. Compared to the long history of disability rights, this program is relatively new.



Disability Rights

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), passed in 1990, made it illegal for childcare centers, preschools, and family child care providers to discriminate against people with disabilities. They cannot deny admission and must provide reasonable accommodations for children, parents, and employees with disabilities.

In addition to having the same rights as other Californian’s, individuals who qualify under the Lanterman Act are entitled to the services and supports they need to live independent and

meaningful lives. The Lanterman Act is a California law that affirms the right of people with developmental disabilities to make choices and receive individualized supports that reflect their needs and preferences. To carry out this responsibility, the state established the Regional Center system. Far Northern Regional Center, which serves Plumas County, supports individuals of all ages with intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, and similar conditions. It provides intake, assessment, diagnosis, and ongoing service coordination to help individuals and families access appropriate resources throughout their lives.

It is important to note that the Lanterman Act requires Regional Centers to first explore and use available generic resources before using Regional Center funds. This is meant to avoid duplication of services, ensure responsible use of public funds, and help individuals access the full range of supports available to them. (examples of “generic resources” are Medi-Cal, In-Home Supportive Services, and school services)

Community Profile



133

ANNUAL BIRTHS FOR
PLUMAS COUNTY¹⁵



572

CHILDREN 0-3*
YEARS IN PLUMAS
COUNTY¹⁶



502

CHILDREN 3-5 YEARS
IN PLUMAS
COUNTY¹⁶

In February of 2025, Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC) reported serving:



10

CHILDREN 0-3
< 2% OF 0-3
POPULATION¹⁶



9

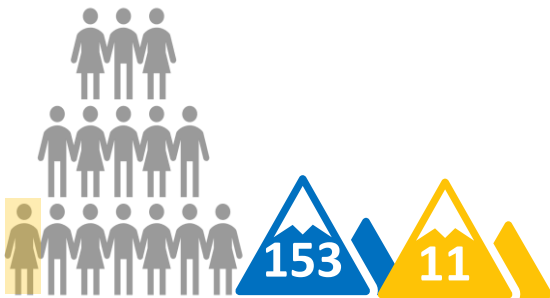
CHILDREN 3-4



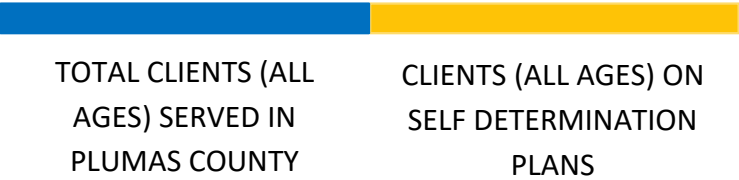
9

CHILDREN 3-5
< 2% OF 3-5
POPULATION¹⁶

*0-3 is defined as birth until third birthday

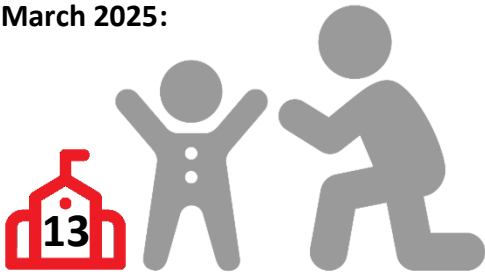


At their March 14, 2025 meeting, FNRC presented data from December 2024.



Plumas Unified School District (PUSD) shared data in March 2025:

The Infant Developmental Specialist at PUSD was providing Early Start Services to 13 families.



5 remaining children with IEPs- educational setting unknown, possibly receiving services at home.

Reported Barriers



The Plumas Children’s Council collected 233 survey responses from parent/guardians in May 2024 at the Children’s Faire event. Eleven percent of respondents had a child with a disability. Of these 11% of respondents, 47% said they did not know how to access services for their child.

First 5 Plumas collected surveys from 72 parents of children 0-5 years in May 2024. Responses indicated that 50% of parents who have children with disabilities do not know where to find resources. This is consistent with the responses obtained from the Children’s Faire survey during the same point in time.

To help assess inclusion needs, an [inclusion assessment survey](#) was sent to stakeholders in November 2024 to help identify key barriers impacting inclusion. The questions asked were adapted from “Barriers and Supports to Early Childhood Inclusion” by Wesley, P. & Buysse, V. and “Teachers’ Attitudes to Inclusion Scale Validation Questionnaire” by Daniela, I., & Ecaterina, V. [17,18](#) The responses collected showed the barriers were highest in the following areas:

- **Readiness Concerns:** 75% of respondents feel many children with disabilities are not ready for inclusive settings, often due to lack of adequate support.
- **Lack of Expertise:** 75% reported that non-school district childcare and preschool providers lack the necessary training and expertise to provide care to disabled children.
- **Insufficient Planning Time:** 75% cited limited time for service planning and coordination as a major obstacle.
- **Poor Collaboration:** 75% noted inadequate coordination among private, public, and school district early childhood agencies.
- **Insufficient Staff Support:** 75% identified insufficient staff support in non-school district programs as a barrier to providing inclusive care.
- **Liability Concerns:** 66.7% expressed worries about legal liability in childcare settings.

- **Transportation Gaps:** 66.7% identified transportation as a barrier.
- **Resource Shortages:** 66.6% pointed to a lack of materials, supplies and assistive technology.
- **Misunderstanding Laws:** 58.4% indicated inaccurate interpretations of federal inclusion laws were present.
- **Family Resistance:** 58.3% reported resistance from families of children with disabilities.
- **Lack of Program Awareness:** 58.3% noted poor coordination due to unawareness of available programs.

Results of the Workgroup Change Process

For the second half of the fiscal year, the group worked through the stages of complex change (Fig. 2) using the Ambrose Model of Complex Change as adapted in the Beginning Together: Caring for Young Children in Inclusive Settings curriculum created by WestEd.¹⁹ The outcomes of the change process are shown below.

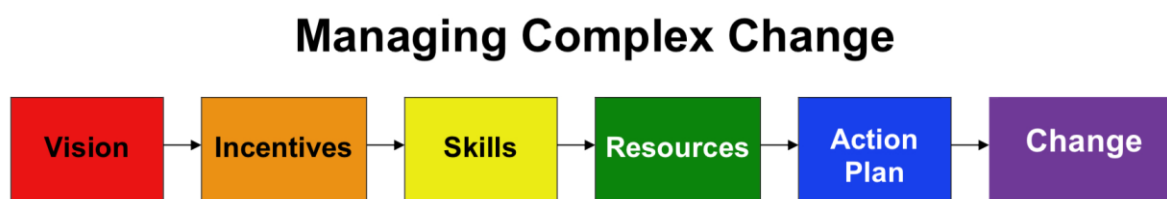


Figure 2

Vision

All children in Plumas County have the right to belong and actively participate in high-quality, inclusive early childhood environments. With individualized support, welcoming spaces, and collaborative community partnerships, children with disabilities and their families are empowered to access opportunities that foster growth, learning, and meaningful engagement in their home communities.

Incentives

Benefits of Quality, Inclusive Early Education

For Children with Disabilities:

They are seen as children first, gaining confidence, strengthening independence, and increasing access to age-appropriate learning and social experiences. They benefit from peer models, are given higher expectations, resulting in improved communication and problem-solving skills.

For Typically Developing Children:

They learn to appreciate differences, develop empathy, build self-esteem by helping others, and prepare for a diverse world through shared learning and social growth.

For Families of Children with Disabilities:

Families experience greater involvement, community inclusion, support, and access to resources. They gain a hopeful vision for their child's future and develop emotional safety and trust.

For Families of Children without Disabilities:

Families gain awareness of diverse experiences, foster positive attitudes toward differences, and support inclusive communities.

For Staff and Teachers:

They expand skills, improve confidence, increase understanding of diverse needs, and improve teamwork and individualized teaching methods.

For Specialists:

They deepen their understanding of child development and see their impact integrated into daily activities.

For the Community:

Inclusive education builds acceptance, breaks stereotypes early, promotes equality, and creates a stronger sense of belonging for everyone.

Skills Needed to Support Inclusion

- Trained home visitors
- Highly qualified early childhood staff (directors, teachers, teacher aides, family childcare providers)
- Early Childhood Education Coaches trained in Beginning Together and the Early Childhood Pyramid Model
- Quality early childhood education program evaluators & raters
- Transitional Kindergarten (TK) teachers with the required 24 Early Childhood Education (ECE) units
- Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) teachers
- Infant Development Specialists
- Speech therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical therapists
- Behavioral therapists
- Assistive technology specialists
- Psychologists
- Advocates highly knowledgeable of the law, best practices, and the individual child's needs
- Marketing specialists

Resources Available to Support Inclusion

Early Start	The information requested from FNRC for Plumas County data was not provided within the required timeframe.
General Education funds managed by PUSD	
Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), Federal, State and Local Revenues Multiple Object and Resource Codes	According to Willis et. al. 2020 federal funding accounts for only about 11 percent of the spending on special education, leaving the remaining spending to state and local funding. ²⁰ State special education funding accounts for approximately 28 percent of the total cost, with local education agency (LEA) unrestricted funds accounting for the majority (61 percent) of special education spending. The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) report provided in April 2025 revealed that \$3.6 million from general education was used for special education at Plumas Unified, equal to 50% of the costs of special education services. The 24/25 Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) plan estimated drawing 56.59% of total special education funding from the General Fund. ²¹
\$40,088,020 (\$29,684,742 unrestricted)	
Extended Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P) Revenue Object Code 8590 Resource Code 2600	The Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P) provides funding for afterschool and summer school enrichment programs for transitional kindergarten through sixth grade. These funds can support inclusion by funding Special Education staff in addition to Extended School Year (ESY) services to students with IEPs to provide meaningful access to the ELO-P Program.
\$875,806	
Title 1 Part A Funds Resource Revenue Object Code	An LEA may use Title I funds to improve the quality (which includes providing support services for early childhood educators), extend the day, increase the number of days, or increase the number of children

8290 <i>Resource Code 3010</i>	served in State preschool, Head Start, childcare programs, or other community-based early learning programs for eligible children. ²²
\$82,624	
Educator Effectiveness Funds <i>Revenue Object Code 8590</i> <i>Resource Code 6266</i>	These funds were allocated to allow LEAs to provide professional learning and to promote educator equity, quality, and effectiveness. One allocation was provided for 21/22-25/26 program years. One of the five allowable use of funds listed for these funds was “Strategies to improve inclusive practices, including, but not limited to, universal design for learning, best practices for early identification, and development of individualized education programs for individuals with exceptional needs.” PUSD received \$531,000 in 2021. The presented plan proposed spending \$21,000 in 24/25 and \$20,000 in 25/26 under the following CDE category “ <i>Practices to create a positive school climate, including, but not limited to, restorative justice, training around implicit bias, providing positive behavioral supports, multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), transforming a school site’s culture to one that values diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and preventing discrimination, harassment, bullying, and intimidation based on actual or perceived characteristics, including disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, language, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.</i> ” Listing MTSS and Culture and Climate Activities and Training under this budget category, PCOE budgeted \$9,500 for this category of activities for the 24/25 and 25/26 program years, totaling \$19,000. ²³
\$531,100 PUSD \$44000 PCOE	
Special Education funds managed by PUSD	
Special Education Master Plan <i>Revenue Object Code 8311</i> <i>Resource Code 6500</i>	The Special Education Program, also known as AB 602, provides funding to SELPAs based on the SELPA members funded average daily attendance (ADA) and other data elements. The Special Day Preschool in Quincy is partially funded by this revenue source.

\$1,759,148	
IDEA, Part B, Section 619, Special Education Federal Preschool Grant <i>Revenue Object Code 8182</i> <i>Resource Code 3315</i>	IDEA Part B Section 619 preschool funds must be expended in the provision of service to eligible students aged 3 through 5. The funds must be used only to pay the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities, such as costs for special education teachers and administrators; related services providers (speech therapists, psychologists, etc.); materials and supplies for use with children with disabilities; professional development for special education personnel; professional development for regular education teachers who teach children with disabilities; and specialized equipment or devices to assist children with disabilities. Expenditures must benefit eligible students who are receiving special education services. Locally, a portion of these funds are used to support the operation of the Special Day Preschool in Quincy.
\$21,900	
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 611, Local Assistance Entitlements <i>Revenue Object Code 8181</i> <i>Resource Code 3310</i>	IDEA Part B Section 611 funds may be used in the provision of service to all eligible students aged 3 through 21. The funds must be used only to pay the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities, such as costs for special education teachers and administrators; related services providers (speech therapists, psychologists, etc.); materials and supplies for use with children with disabilities; professional development for special education personnel; professional development for regular education teachers who teach children with disabilities; and specialized equipment or devices to assist children with disabilities. Expenditures must benefit eligible students who are receiving special education services. Locally, a portion of these funds are used to support the operation of the Special Day Preschool in Quincy.
\$489,501	
Special Education Early Intervention Preschool Grant (EIPG) <i>Revenue Object Code 8590</i>	This funding has the following allowable uses: 1. Early intervention services for pupils that are not meeting age-appropriate developmental milestones and are at risk of being identified as eligible for special education and related services 2. Support for Pre-K children with exceptional needs which the district has determined will positively

<i>Resource Code 6467</i>	impact a young child 3. Supporting inclusive educational practices, strategies, and activities to ensure a pupil's right to placement in the LRE 4. Wraparound services for Pre-K children with exceptional needs not required by federal or state law 5. Professional development for preschool staff on evidence-based practices to build capacity to provide education in more inclusive settings; on the development of physical, social, emotional, and academic skills; and on developing appropriate IEPs for Pre-K children in the LRE. The current balance is \$486,000 as these roll over.
\$204,104	
Preschool Staff Development Grant <i>Revenue Object Code 8182</i> <i>Resource Code 3345</i>	Preschool Staff Development funds provide for local staff development opportunities for those who work in infant and preschool programs. Preschool Staff Development funds can be used to provide local staff development opportunities for those who work in infant and preschool programs. Local staff development includes, but is not limited to, registration for conferences and training, substitute pay, travel per diem associated with conferences and training, training for all staff including parents of infants and preschool children, and supplies, materials, and/or equipment related to trainings. The funds are disseminated on a pro-rata basis based on the prior year December student count, ages three through five. The minimum grant per SELPA is \$1,000.
\$1,000	
Part C, Early Education Programs <i>Revenue Object Code 8182</i> <i>Resource Code 3385</i>	In 1986, the federal government enacted PL 99-457, which authorized grants to states to plan and implement a comprehensive, community-based interagency system of early education services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The lead agency for Part C of IDEA is the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS). State legislation (The California Early Intervention Services Act - Government Code [GC] §s 95000 et. seq.) enabled California to participate in the Part C program and created a statewide mandate for LEAs to serve all infants and toddlers with solely low incidence

\$48,030	disabilities. It also required changes in procedures and services for all infants served by LEAs. The CDE receives funds from the DDS for local assistance through an interagency agreement to address the cost impacts experienced by LEAs in implementing the new federal and state requirements (Budget Act, Item 6100-161-0001, Schedule 3). The grants fund each SELPA based on their specific cost impacts. Allocations are based on an Interagency Agreement with the DDS and the CDE. The funds are used to support the following positions: Infant Development Specialist, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher.
Quality Child Care Improvement Funds <i>The Plumas STARS Consortium works to develop plans for these funding streams.</i>	
First 5 IMPACT Legacy	IMPACT is a continuation of the innovative approach of First 5 IMPACT program that partners First 5 California (F5CA) with First 5 county commissions to increase access to high-quality, early learning and care programs and services for children and families. These funds are managed by First 5 Plumas and subcontracted to Plumas Rural Services (PRS) to support our local Quality Counts California (QCC), Plumas STARS program. Funding is expected to sunset June 30, 2026.
\$63,595	
Quality Counts California (QCC): Quality Rating and Improvement System Block Grant (QCC-QI)	The goal of this funding is to increase quality across the continuum of early learning settings ranging from family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) to licensed family childcare homes and centers.
\$35,384	
California State Preschool Program (CSPP) Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) Block Grant.	This grant is used to support implementation of quality childcare improvement plans in all CSPP classrooms in Plumas County. This grant was previously managed by the Plumas County Office of Education. Currently, Feather River College manages this grant in collaboration with the QCC Plumas STARS consortium.

\$37,866	
Quality Counts California Early Learning and Care Workforce Development Pathways Grant (WFP) <i>Revenue Object Code 8290</i> <i>Resource Code 5035</i>	This grant focuses on improving the quality of care and professional development for the early learning and care workforce. PCOE manages this grant. In the past financial stipends were provided to childcare providers working in licensed facilities. Currently it is unclear how PCOE is spending these funds as any changes to the grant plan were not brought to the local Plumas STARS consortium for approval of changes as required.
\$27,284	
Other Early Childhood Funding	
Local Child Care Planning (LPC) funds <i>Revenue Object Code 6065</i> <i>Resource Code 5055</i>	This funding is overseen by Local Child Care Planning Council whose members are jointly approved by the Plumas County Superintendent of Schools and the Plumas County Board of Supervisors. This contract is funded by the California Department of Social Services and locally managed by the Plumas County Office of Education. Annually approximately 40% of LPC funds are used to support staffing. In recent past the council has voted to subcontract with PRS to support our local QCC program Plumas STARS. The 24/24 subcontract was \$35,000. This has helped cover the funding reductions to the IMACT 2.0 program.
\$120,340	
California Child Care Initiative Program (CCIP)	The Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP) focuses on capacity building and quality improvement of family childcare & license-exempt child care. CCIP is funded through the California Department of Social Services Child Care and Development Division. These funds are managed locally by the Child Care Resource & Referral Program at Plumas Rural Services.
\$40,575	

California State Preschool Programs (CSPP)	These funds allow for the operation of 5 State Preschool Classrooms in Plumas County. Feather River College Child Development Center (FRC-CDC) receives \$178,507 to operate one classroom. Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities (SCFO) receives \$1,285,498 to operate 4 classrooms (one in each of the four major communities in Plumas County).
\$1,464,005	

Missed Opportunities

- Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP): This California grant aimed to increase access to inclusive early care and education programs for young children with disabilities. It focused on expanding inclusive settings and increasing the enrollment of children with disabilities in subsidized programs. The current grant cycle is from 2024-27. If PCOE had applied, it would have brought in \$150,000 which would have been matched by the 5 CSPP sites.
- Supporting Inclusive Practices Preschool Grant- The Supporting Inclusive Practices Preschool (SIPP) This non-competitive grant specific to increasing access to the general education environment for students with disabilities was designed to LEAs to: (1) improve educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities; and (2) ensure that LEAs meet compliance and State Performance Plan program requirements specific to LRE. Awards were ~\$25,000 for the 24/25 program year.
- Alternative Dispute Resolution Grant- Funds are used to develop and test procedures, materials, and training to support special education alternate dispute resolution (SPED ADR). Parents or guardians of students with disabilities, LEAs, and SELPAs may utilize the SPED ADR program to resolve disputes at the local level. Funding for this grant was \$15,157 for each of the grant applicants.

Barriers by Goal Area

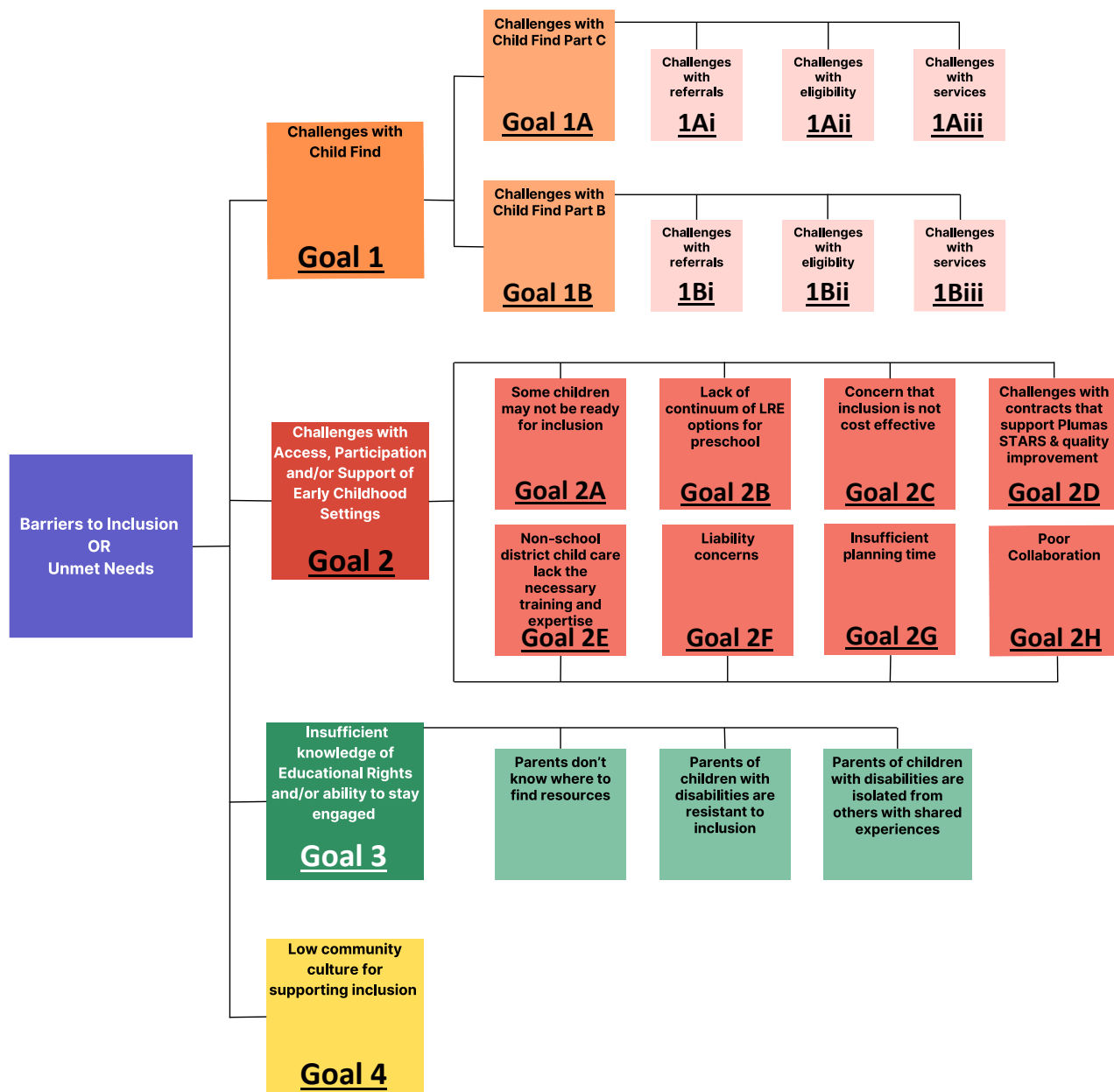


Figure 3



With the presentation of this action plan, it is recommended that the PIEEW transition into a team, rather than a workgroup, and incorporate work on improving Child Find activities.

Goal 1: IMPROVED CHILD FIND OUTCOMES (PARTS C & B)

1A. Improved experiences and outcomes for Child Find Part C (Ages 0–2)

Current Child Find Part C services can be improved.

- First 5 Plumas is positioned to be an engaged partner for Child Find through their Help Me Grow Program efforts.²⁴

	SMART Goals
Goal 1A: Improved Child Find Part C (Ages 0–2)	The Plumas Inclusive Early Education Team (PIEET) will conduct assessments of the local Child Find system using the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) and Child Find Self-Assessment tools for Part C on an annual basis. Based on the assessment results, the team will implement identified best practices to improve the identification of children ages 0–3 who may need additional developmental support. A subset of the PIEEW completed an assessment on 6/17/25 and the recommended actions are contained in Goal 1A of this plan.

i. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part C referrals

Rate of developmental screenings is insufficient

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends children be screened for general development at 9, 18 or 30 months old.²⁵ Screenings for autism are recommended at 18 and 24 months. In addition to this, screenings are recommended whenever a parent or provider has a concern.
- The State of California reports that in 2022 only 29.8% of children 0-3 years old on Medi-Cal were screened for risk of developmental delays.²⁶
- According to KidsData, only 28.5% of children ages 1–11 in Del Norte, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Sierra, Siskiyou, and Trinity Counties received a standardized developmental and behavioral screening between 2021 and 2022.²⁷ Furthermore, the percentage of children being screened is showing a downward trend.
- In the Family Strengthening model, knowledge of child development is a key protective factor that promotes family well-being and helps prevent abuse and neglect.²⁸ ASQ helps parents of children 0-5 years old strengthen their understanding of their child's development. It provides information and activities based on current levels of development, whether typical or atypical, to aid development. All children benefit from early child development screenings, and it is an ECTA recommended best practice
- In 2024/25 131 Ages and Stages Questionnaire screenings (ASQs) were completed for 84 children (0-5 years), approximately 7.8% of the 0–5-year-old population in Plumas County. Only 12 of the 131 surveys were completed online, the others were completed on paper versions which appears to be the preference of parents. SCFO Head Start sites also complete bi-annual screening using the Early Screening Inventory (ESI) tool. The students enrolled in their CSPP sites in Greenville and Chester are not routinely screened unless concerns develop. Forty-three children at the Head Start locations were screened twice during the 24/25 year and one child at a CSPP site was screened. This

brings the total screened by ASQ and ESI to 128 children or 11.91% of the 0–5-year-old population.

Early Start Referrals and Enrollments for Plumas County fall below state averages

- Baseline referral data for Early Intervention to FNRC show 14 referrals in 2023 and 15 referrals in 2024, representing approximately 2.45% of the 0-3 age population.
- In February 2025 FNRC was serving 10 children, 1.75% of the 0–3-year-old population in Plumas County. The State average for Early Start enrollment is 4.44% of children 0-3. The national average is 3.66% of children 0-3 years old being served through Early Intervention.^{[29](#)}
- In 2023, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released survey results showing 53% of children referred for Part C services ultimately enrolled.^{[30](#)} FNRC believes their referral to enrollment percentage is much higher (above 95%).
- In 2023/24 FNRC completed 96.81% of referrals, determining eligible for Early Start services with an initial IFSP completed with services in place within 45 days of initial referral.^{[31](#)}
- Before the PIEEW was established, parents faced difficulties submitting referral requests at FNRC. First 5 Plumas and FNRC resolved this issue, and results were shared at the fledgling PIEEW meeting in August 2024. FNRC fully staffed the intake line and created new internal procedures to improve the referral process. At the March 2025 PIEEW meeting, FRC-CDC reported a two-week turnaround time for families at their center to begin Early Start services, well within the 45-day requirement.
- Fillable online referral forms are now available on the FNRC website, allowing for electronic submission in a single step.
- First 5 Plumas has created marketing materials which emphasize the importance of early intervention on long term developmental outcomes.

- Contact with Child Find referral sources (such as hospitals, health clinics, county health departments and social services, school districts, childcare resource and referral agencies, and childcare providers) has been limited.

	SMART Goals
Goal 1A: Improved Child Find Part C (Ages 0–2) i. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part C referrals	a. By June 2026, increase developmental screenings to 50% of the 0–5-year-old population (~250), including screenings through medical clinics, screenings by CSPP sites, and Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) provided by First 5 Plumas.
	b. By June 2026, create a local data system to track all ASQ and other developmental screenings conducted by First 5 community partners within the county: home visiting programs, community health workers, childcare providers and online submissions.
	c. By June 2026, create a local data system to track all developmental screenings conducted by medical providers within the county: Plumas County Public Health clinics, Plumas District Hospital (PDH), Seneca Healthcare District (SHD) and Eastern Plumas Health Care (EPHC).

Goal 1A: Improved Child Find Part C (Ages 0–2)**i. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part C referrals**

d. By June 2026, increase annual Early Start referrals to 5% of the 0–3-year-old population (~25 referrals). This will impact the workload of the PUSD Infant Development Specialist, steps should be taken to ensure the hours of the position support growth in this area.

e. By June 2026, increase outreach by launching a targeted marketing campaign to raise awareness about the importance of developmental screening and early intervention. The campaign should aim to reach at least 80% of families with children aged 0–5 in the community through social media, digital and printed materials, and partner organizations.

- Emphasize the AAP screening recommendations, screening helps parents support their children with the most developmentally appropriate activities and highlight that Early Start is temporary, with most children reaching age-appropriate milestones by program exit.
- Ensure inclusion of childcare populations by collaborating with the local Child Care Resource & Referral and Child Care Alternative Payment Programs at PRS.

Goal 1A: Improved Child Find Part C (Ages 0–2) i. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part C referrals	• To reach underserved populations, provide Child Find resources and outreach materials at agencies they frequently access, such as the Crisis Center, Domestic Violence Program, Plumas County Department of Social Services, and WIC. • Identify and engage cultural brokers in the four communities in Plumas County to help expand the reach of the message. f. By June 26, in coordination with the Child Find Part C agency (FNRC), conduct outreach to all primary referral sources as defined by [34 C.F.R. Sec. 303.303(a) & (c); 17 C.C.R. Sec. 52040], including agencies supporting Native American children [Roundhouse Council (Greenville), Maidu Summit Consortia (Chester), Susanville Indian Rancheria (Susanville)]. • Ensure referral sources understand the benefits of releases of information (ROI) in the referral process, how to submit referrals, and that referrals are free and easy to make. • Promote strategies for sharing concerns with families while reducing stigma associated with Early Start services. • Inform primary referral sources that they can request FNRC to provide staff training on Early Start referrals.
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ii. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part C eligibility

Clear eligibility definitions are key to effective Child Find practices

- Early Start eligibility materials were created for First 5 Plumas in partnership with FNRC and will be available on the First 5 Plumas website.

	SMART Goals
Goal 1A: Improved Child Find Part C (Ages 0–2) ii. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part C eligibility	Continue collaborating with FNRC to update Early Start eligibility information on the First 5 Plumas website at least annually.

iii. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part C services

Child and family outcomes for Early Start are below state targets

- The FFY 23 Early Start Local Performance Materials reports on FNRC’s performance.^{[32](#)}
 - Indicator 1 Percentage of Infants and Toddlers Receiving Timely Services **90%** (Ca. target is 100%).
 - Indicator 2: Percentage of Infants and Toddlers Receiving Services at Home or In Community Programs **95.51%** (Ca. target is 94.10%, Ca. average is 94.38%)
 - Indicator 3a: Child Outcomes Social Emotional- Percentage of children who entered below age expectation and substantially increased rate of growth **71.06%** (Ca. target is 68.00%, Ca. average is 64.58%)
 - Indicator 3a: Child Outcomes Social Emotional- Percentage of children who functioned within age expectations by program exit **57.99%** (Ca. target is 67.30%, Ca. average is 61.87%)

- Indicator 3b: Child Outcomes Knowledge and Skills- Percentage of children who entered below age expectation and substantially increased rate of growth **71.50%** (Ca. target is 76.90%, Ca. average is 72.71%)
- Indicator 3b: Child Outcomes Knowledge and Skills- Percentage of children who functioned within age expectations by program exit **42.89%** (Ca. target is 53.44%, Ca. average is 48.96%)
- Indicator 3c: Child Outcomes Self Help Behavior- Percentage of children who entered below age expectation and substantially increased rate of growth **53.40%** (Ca. target is 58.50%, Ca. average is 49.87%)
- Indicator 3c: Child Outcomes Self Help Behavior- Percentage of children who functioned within age expectations by program exit **53.17%** (Ca. target is 61.00%, Ca. average is 55.20%)
- Indicator 4a: Family Outcomes- Percentage of families that know and understand their rights **76.88%** (Ca. target is 72.50%, Ca. average is 81.48%)
- Indicator 4b: Family Outcomes- Percentage of families who effectively communicate their child's needs **77.60%** (Ca. target is 84.34%, Ca. average is 86.31%)
- Indicator 4c: Family Outcomes- Percentage of families who are able to help their child develop and learn **71.88%** (Ca. target is 83.61%, Ca. average is 83.60%)
- Indicator 5 & 6: Percentage of children with IFSPs Ages 0-1 **1.47%** (Ca. target is 1.10%, Ca. average is 1.22%) Ages 0-3 **5.37%** (Ca. target is 3.48%, Ca. average is 4.97%)
- Indicator 7: Percentage of Children whose IFSPs were held within 45 days **96.67%** (Ca. target is 100%)

- Indicator 8a: Percentage for whom IFSPs contained transition steps and services at least 90 days prior to their third birthday 100% (Ca. target is 100%)
- Indicator 8b: Percentage for whom notification to the LEA occurred in a timely manner 100% (Ca. target is 100%)
- Indicator 8c: Percentage of whom a transition conference was held in a timely manner 100% (Ca. target is 100%)
- It is unclear whether client satisfaction is regularly surveyed for Infant Developmental Services and other part C services.
- All children birth to five years of age with individualized education programs (IEP) or individualized family service plans (IFSP), serviced by local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to have the DRDP completed on them.³³ This addition should improve performance of indicators 3a-3c.
- Lack of contingency plans if key staff (e.g., infant specialist) become unavailable.
- FNRC does not reimburse for early intervention staff travel time and neither PUSD nor FNRC provide a supply budget to the Infant Development Specialist. In 24/25 PUSD used 65 hours for staff time and mileage required for traveling they could not be reimbursed for. PUSD may not be fiscally able to continue providing this service if they aren't compensated for the full cost of providing EI services in the required natural environment.

	SMART Goals
Goal 1A: Improved Child Find Part C (Ages 0–2) iii. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part C Services	a. By December 2025 partner with FNRC to improve performance on program indicators.
	b. Annually monitor the compliance rates for Early Start Referral timelines as reported in the Far Northern Regional Center Annual Calendar Performance Contract presented each year in June. DDS does not currently collect county specific data. Work with FNRC and/or DDS to obtain county specific results for these figures.
	c. By June 2026 coordinate with FNRC to create local implementation of regular client satisfaction surveys for Part C services for individual service providers. This information will help inform changes related to indicators 3a-3c.
	d. Review reimbursement policies for travel time, materials, and supplies for FNRC service providers, and advocate for solutions to address funding gaps. Collaborate with FNRC and DDS to support changes to these reimbursement policies by June 2026.
	e. Work with FNRC and PUSD to develop contingency plans by June 2026 for loss of key Early Start positions serving Plumas County.

1B. Improved experiences and outcomes for Child Find Part B (Ages 3–5)

Current Child Find Part B services can be improved.

- First 5 Plumas is positioned to be an engaged partner through their Help Me Grow Program efforts.
- A meeting regarding Child Find Part B activities was scheduled with the SELPA Director but was canceled, due to time constraints.
- According to Willis et. al. 2020 the average unfunded percentage of Special Education costs after Federal and State contributions, is 61%, meaning LEAs can expect to pay this percent of the total costs of Special Education.³⁴ The percentage drawn from general education fund in 23/24 was 50% according to the April 6, 2025 FCMAT letter to management. The 24/25 Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) plan estimated drawing 56.59% of total special education funding from the General Fund. The proposed 25/26 SELPA budget proposes general education fund support for special education services at 61.47%.³⁵

TK and Kindergarten Round Up activities take place at all four elementary schools.

Attendance is optional and gives families the opportunity to access vision, hearing, and medical screenings, as well as immunizations. However, developmental screenings are not part of the Round Up events.

Instead, each elementary school conducts a TK/K screening for every child enrolling in Transitional Kindergarten or Kindergarten. These screenings are limited to early literacy and math skills to provide a basic assessment of each child's readiness.

	SMART Goals
Goal 1B: Improved Child Find Part B (Ages 3–5)	a. The Plumas Inclusive Early Education Team (PIEET) will conduct assessments of the local Child Find system using the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) and Child Find Self-Assessment tools for Part B on an annual basis. Based on the assessment results, the team will implement identified best practices to improve the identification of children ages 3-5 who may need additional developmental support. Plumas Inclusive Early Education Team (PIEET) to meet with the SELPA Director by December 2025 to complete a Child Find assessment and incorporate the recommended actions into this Goal 1B of this plan.
	b. Monitor annually (October) PUSD unaudited actuals to determine the percentage of special education costs actually paid from the general fund.
	c. Monitor the annual SELPA plan for budgeted special education costs from the general education fund at CAC meeting in May/June and then each year in June at the school board meeting.
	d. Recommend that PUSD ask parents of incoming TK and K students (age 5 and under) to complete ASQ screenings to ensure comprehensive developmental coverage for the 2026/27 school year and forward.

i. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part B referrals

There is confusion around when and how to initiate a referral for special education

- Misconceptions exist that special education evaluations start only at 2nd grade; this can discourage earlier referrals.
- Parents report being told to "wait and see" without understanding that a written request triggers legal timelines.
- Refer to [Goals 1Ai a,b,c,e](#) for more detailed information and goals related to community-wide developmental screening efforts for children 0-5 years
- PUSD uses MTSS and SST for Child Find but this program only serves enrolled students; homeschooled and children enrolled in private schools are often overlooked.
- The Plumas Inclusive Early Education Team (PIEET) should be aware of common misconceptions regarding the use of MTSS in Early Childhood. The Pyramid Model is the best multi-tiered framework for young children birth-five years old.
- PUSD uses MTSS and Student Study Teams (SST) as part of its Child Find process. However, the specific procedures related to Child Find within the SST are unclear. The only publicly available information is found in the PUSD "Behavior Expectations" document, which set procedures for misbehavior that may lead to a referral for special education, typically after three similar incidents have occurred.
- PUSD has an interagency agreement with one of the CSPP contractors, SCFO, to ensure timely referrals, supported by a referral form and referral form guidelines. There is no interagency agreement with FRC-CDC for Child Find activities.
- PUSD's new TK toileting policy does not consider developmental needs and could result in challenges for children with delays instead of offering additional support.³⁶ According to a 2001 study by Schum, using normally developing children, the median age of boys

in the study were able to enter bathrooms and have bowel movements by themselves was about 39.5 months and the median age of girls was 34.4 months, with confidence intervals of 37.8-40.4 months and 33.5-35.8 months respectively.³⁷ If children are not toilet trained beyond these ages this should be a trigger for Child Find.

- The referral form currently used by PUSD serves all students ages 3 to 22 years.

	SMART Goals
Goal 1B: Improved Child Find Part B (Ages 3–5) i. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part B referrals	a. Recommend PUSD helps reduce confusion by posting clear information on the PUSD website about how to complete a referral, how eligibility is determined (including disability categories), what a comprehensive evaluation entails, and the criteria for eligibility. Ideally this referral and eligibility information would be published by December 2025.
	b. Beginning in the 2025/26 academic year, recommend PUSD to provide annual Child Find training and support for all PUSD staff to improve referral recognition and ensure parents with concerns are provided accurate information on how to request an assessment for special education. This would include offering to put the parent’s verbal request for a referral in writing, according to CA law. ³⁸ PUSD contracts with Keenan for Human Resources training. Keenan has an Exceptional Child Course Library that includes training on components of Child Find. Recommend PUSD require completion of these modules annually by staff. EIPG funds could support these efforts.

Goal 1B: Improved Child Find Part B (Ages 3–5)

i. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part B referrals

c. By June 2026 ensure that the Pyramid Model, the developmentally appropriate version of MTSS for learners 3-5 years, is implemented in place of the version for K-12.³⁹ SCFO sites are trained to utilize this model. FRC-CDC and TK sites would need to be trained for use of this model. [EIPG](#) funds could support these efforts.

d. By June 2026, develop targeted strategies to effectively deliver Child Find messages to families who homeschool or have enrolled their children in private schools, enhancing outreach and engagement within these communities, utilizing the expertise of the PUSD Marketing Specialist position.

e. FRC-CDC should initiate discussions with PUSD to request an interagency agreement for serving children ages 3–5, aiming to finalize the agreement by March 2026.

f. Recommend PUSD publish MTSS/SST procedures for intervention strategies related to academic strategies and supports including, where requests for special education for referrals fit into this system by June 2026.

g. Recommend PUSD develop a more developmentally appropriate intake form specifically for children aged 3 to 5, as recommended by CalECSE by December 2025.⁴⁰

Goal 1B: Improved Child Find Part B (Ages 3–5) i. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part B referrals	h. Request PUSD revise the TK toileting policy to include Child Find referrals for students delayed in toileting independence by December 2025.
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ii. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part B eligibility

Eligibility practices can be improved

- Clear eligibility definitions are key to effective Child Find practices. Special Education materials were created for First 5 Plumas in partnership with PUSD which will be available on the First 5 Plumas website.
- PUSD reports using developmentally appropriate, play-based evaluations for children under 3 transitioning to Part B, and validated assessments for children aged 3 to 5. However, staff at SCFO observe that these assessments take only 15 to 30 minutes, and the resulting reports often do not fully capture the child’s needs.
- Children initially found ineligible for special education have a higher chance of becoming eligible later; follow-up processes need improvement.
- Reevaluations for children with speech or language impairment IEPs occur every three years but rely on reported concerns for additional areas of evaluation, potentially missing emerging needs.

	SMART Goals
Goal 1B: Improved Child Find Part B (Ages 3–5) ii. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part B eligibility	a. Continue First 5 Plumas’ collaboration with PUSD Special Education program and update First 5 Plumas website information at least annually.
	b. Recommend PUSD implement best practices for comprehensive evaluations by June 2026 which can be found in the presentation <i>The ABCs of Comprehensive Preschool Special Education Assessments</i> (California Early Childhood Special Education Network [CalECSE], 2024).^{41,42} EIPG funds could support these efforts.
	c. Recommend PUSD create and maintain follow-up policies for children initially deemed ineligible to ensure they are tracked for potential future eligibility by June 2026, including ensuring these families are connected to resources, local community agencies, or early childhood programs to meet family/child needs that Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) does not currently address.

iii. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part B services

Services provided can be improved

- Families feel declining an IEP placement at Special Day Preschool is equivalent to declining FAPE and supports offered. Refer to Goal 2B.
- PUSD has assigned aides to preschool children in SCFO classrooms, but SCFO reports these aides mostly shadow students rather than facilitating purposeful, learning-focused

interactions. Criteria for qualifying a child for aide support, as well as academic support of an ECSE teacher are also unclear.

- PUSD’s Human Resources classifies all aide positions under the general category of “paraprofessionals.” There are no specific qualifications required to work with preschool children or young children with disabilities in the job description, resulting in most aides being inadequately prepared to support preschool children with disabilities.
- All children birth to five years of age with individualized education programs (IEP) or individualized family service plans (IFSP), serviced by local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to have the DRDP completed on them.⁴³

	SMART Goals
Goal 1B: Improved Child Find Part B (Ages 3–5) iii. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part B services	a. By June 2026 IEP teams to use ECTA’s <i>Making Sound Preschool LRE Decisions</i> when deciding on Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for children 3-5 years old. ⁴⁴ Refer to Goal 2B.
	b. Recommend PUSD creates a separate “paraprofessional” position to a paraeducator position to support young children with disabilities that requires the person in the position has the skills to support the child by June 2026. This would include a background in child development, knowledge of the IEP/IFSP process, familiarity with resources in the community and Teachstone CLASS training. PUSD contracts with Keenan for Human Resources training. Keenan has an Exceptional Child Course Library that includes training specifically for Paraeducators as well as Early Education

Goal 1B: Improved Child Find Part B (Ages 3–5)	that PUSD could utilize. EIPG funds could support continued professional development of these positions.
iii. Improved experiences and outcomes for Part B services	c. By December 2025, PUSD publish clear criteria for: when a preschool student requires aide support to access FAPE and when a preschool student requires academic support from an ECSE Teacher.

Goal 2: INCREASED ACCESS, PARTICIPATION, AND SUPPORT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

A. Children will have adequate support for successful inclusion experiences

Children are not adequately supported in inclusive settings

- Children do not need to be “ready” before inclusion, they need adequate supports.

	SMART Goals
Goal 2A: Children will have adequate supports for successful inclusion experiences	a. In 2025/26 provide SCFO staff, FRC staff, Plumas STARS participants, Home Visitors, Plumas County Department of Social Services, and any other interested childcare providers with training on IEP meetings and plan components, with a focus on best practices in evaluation so providers can effectively advocate for necessary supports and services to help students succeed in the LRE. Deliver at least 1 training session annually for each: FRC-CDC and SCFO staff as they educate the largest numbers of preschool children with IEPs. Provide 1 training session for the childcare community at large. Refer to Goal 3 for additional advocacy goals.

B. Children will have access to a continuum of LRE options for preschool

Percentage of preschool in General Education settings are below state and federal targets

- Data related to the IDEA Indicators are collected from each LEA through the State Performance Plan (SPP). This data is housed by the California Special Education Technical Assistance Network. According to their February 2025 report, Plumas Unified did not meet the LRE targets for preschool students.⁴⁵

The state targets are:

- More than 45% of preschool children with disabilities (ages 3 to 5, excluding five-year-olds in Kindergarten or TK) should attend a regular early childhood program and receive the majority of special education and related services there.
- Less than 27% should attend a separate special education class, separate school, or residential facility.
- Less than 3.5% should receive the majority of special education services at home and not be enrolled in a preschool program.

Plumas Unified SELPA's reported levels were:

- 38.36% in regular classrooms (below target)
 - 34.62% in segregated classrooms (above target)
 - 15.38% receiving services at home (above target).
- The California Special Education Technical Assistance Network report (2/2025) also reported that Plumas Unified SELPA did not meet statutory timelines for annual plan reviews, triennial re-evaluations, Part C to B transitions, and Part B Initial Evaluations, as well as ensuring students with disabilities 16 years or older had secondary transition elements in their IEPs.
 - Some parents report being told the only FAPE offer is a segregated Special Day Preschool, with limited additional support outside this setting.
 - In the 2024/25 academic year, 2 students were enrolled in the Special Day Preschool. The ECSE Teacher supports the children enrolled in this program to meet the academic goals listed in the students IEPs. This site is licensed-exempt to serve preschool students with IEPs.

- Speech or language impairment is defined as a communication disorder—such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language, or voice impairment—that negatively impacts a student’s educational performance. The evaluation team must show that the disorder adversely affects learning. If a preschool evaluation confirms the criteria are met, the child is entitled to special education services and access to the general education curriculum like other disabilities.⁴⁶
- There are five California State Preschool Program (CSPP) classrooms in Plumas County, with at least one in each of the four largest communities. State regulations require CSPPs, which are California Department of Education (CDE) certified preschools, to reserve or "set aside" at least 5% of their enrollment for children with exceptional needs. Head Start programs are required to reserve 10%. Two of the CSPP classrooms blend funds with Head Start, bringing the "set aside" to 10% in those classrooms. These classrooms function as general education preschools that include children with IEPs. The "set asides" apply only to children with IEPs.
- PUSD SELPA Director notes CSPP sites are not managed by PUSD, which limits offering these as educational settings. PUSD has had an interagency agreement with SCFO for the past 10 years. The language in the [interagency agreement](#) with SCFO seems inconsistent with this statement and the language in the SELPA Plan. In the interagency agreement PUSD agrees to “utilize SCFO as a placement option, when appropriate, for preschool children identified through Child Find as needing special services.” and SCFO agrees to be available as a placement option in need of special services, when SCFO is an appropriate setting.”
- PUSD does not have an interagency agreement with FRC-CDC which also has a CSPP contract. Refer to Goal 1Bi.e.
- According to the 2024/25 Plumas County SELPA Local Plan Section B: Governance and Administration Special Education Local Plan Area “Preschool aged children are served by

the AU (PUSD) in a continuum of settings, including separate class, push-in/consult services for Private, State and Head Start Preschools.”⁴⁷

- Non-certified preschools, such as private preschools and licensed family childcare homes, generally cannot receive state special education funding but districts may fund them if there is no certified program that is available or suitable. [EIPG](#) funds could be used to fund enrollment in these settings. These settings are listed as options in the 2024/25 Plumas County SELPA Local Plan Section B: Governance and Administration Special Education Local Plan Area “Preschool aged children are served by the AU (PUSD) in a continuum of settings, including separate class, push-in/consult services for *Private*, State and Head Start Preschools.” (emphasis added)

	SMART Goals
Goal 2B: Children will have access to a continuum of LRE options for preschool	a. Recommend PUSD develop a consumer-friendly list of the continuum of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) options, as outlined in the SELPA plan, by June 2026. This list should be shared with families of all preschool children undergoing evaluation and posted on the district’s website to promote transparency.
	b. Recommend PUSD transition the Special Day Preschool to an inclusive early learning model, pursuing CSPP and other early-learning funding and obtaining Title 22 licensing as needed.
	c. It is important for parents and advocates to understand that a speech-language impairment does not automatically restrict services to only Speech and Language Therapy, nor does it disqualify children from

	receiving additional supports. See Goal 3 for further information on educating parents about eligibility, including speech-language impairments.
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C. Resources will be used more efficiently to provide increased access to inclusive early childhood education

Inclusion does not cost more than segregated settings

- Inclusion is not more expensive than having separate programs for children with disabilities. [48,49](#)

	SMART Goals
Goal 2C: Resources will be used more efficiently to provide increased access to inclusive early childhood education	a. Offers of FAPE should be provided in general education Transitional Kindergarten (TK), California State Preschool Program (CSPP), or Head Start classrooms, with Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) delivered through itinerant collaborative consultation by an Early Childhood Special Education Credentialed teacher. This inclusive model reduces costs by combining funding from CSPP, Head Start, Quality Counts California, and special education. EIPG funds could be used to implement this inclusive delivery model.

D. Continued support for Plumas STARS Quality Improvement Program

We have a local program in place to support quality improvement in early learning settings

- Plumas STARS program is a valuable local resource for implementing high-quality inclusive care. High-quality childcare is crucial for successful inclusion because it provides the foundational elements for all children to thrive, including those with disabilities.⁵⁰
- IMPACT Legacy funding (~\$64,000) ends June 30, 2026, limiting support for Plumas STARS QCC.
- Financial instability at PUSD threatens early childhood contracts managed by PCOE, as both agencies share fiscal staff.
- Early childhood initiatives at PCOE have historically received limited recognition or support, possibly due to lack of general early childhood education programs at PUSD.

	SMART Goals
Goal 2D: Continue support for Plumas STARS Quality Improvement Program	a. Continue supporting Plumas STARS QCC through CSPP QRIS, WFP, LPC, and other available funding sources.
	b. Pursue additional funding opportunities for Plumas STARS by securing ongoing support and submitting at least two grant applications annually, beginning in fiscal year 2025/26. EIPG funds could support Plumas STARS efforts related to providing support to childcare providers on quality, inclusive care for children 3-5 years old.

Goal 2D: Continue support for Plumas STARS Quality Improvement Program	c. If PCOE is unable to effectively manage and prioritize ECE contracts, it is recommended that these responsibilities be offered to other local agencies. Consider transferring management if PCOE is unable to prioritize ECE contracts. Evaluate management options by December 2025.
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E. TK, Preschool Providers, and childcare providers (licensed and exempt) will have access to training and support to provide quality, inclusive care

Providers working with children with disabilities in inclusive settings require access to professional development opportunities to enhance the quality of their support.

- Early Childhood Educators/Providers should not be expected to serve as specialists but should instead receive support from specialists via FNRC and PUSD. Refer to Goal 2C.a
- Early Childhood Educators/Providers should have access to professional development opportunities that improve their ability to provide quality inclusive care.

	SMART Goals
Goal 2E: TK, Preschool Providers, and childcare providers (licensed and exempt) will have access to training and support to provide quality, inclusive care	a. Collaborate with local early childhood education agencies to ensure ongoing professional development on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and positive interaction models such as the Pyramid Model are available to Early Childhood Educators/Providers. EIPG funds could support these efforts.
	b. Utilize the Beginning Together workshop series hosted by The California Department of Social Services, in

Goal 2E: TK, Preschool Providers, and childcare providers (licensed and exempt) will have access to training and support to provide quality, inclusive care	collaboration with WestEd. The Plumas STARS Early Learning Specialist is a certified facilitator, enabling our county the ability to host local workshops and to provide inclusion consultation by participating in Plumas STARS.
	c. Utilize the Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge (CONNECT) Modules and Courses in collaboration with Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children.
	d. Utilize the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children Learning Deck Webinars.

F. Liability concerns are addressed

Concerns exist around liability of serving children with disabilities in inclusive settings

- Under the ADA, childcare providers are legally required to serve children with disabilities.^{[51](#)}

	SMART Goals
Goal 2F: Liability concerns are addressed	a. Ensure providers are familiar with ADA requirements regarding children with disabilities. Provide ADA compliance training to all early childhood providers by June 2026.

G. Early Childhood Educators/ Providers are provided with sufficient planning time

Concerns exist around not having enough time to ensure successful collaboration

- Adequate time is needed for collaboration, planning, and implementation of inclusive programs.

	SMART Goals
Goal 2G: Early Childhood Educators/ Providers are provided with sufficient planning time	a. The proposed collaborative itinerant consultation/teaching model requires building in time for the collaboration. Ensure this model is implemented with integrity by using the “Resource Guide for the Early Childhood Collaborative Itinerant Teaching Model” by Early Choices and the Illinois State Board of Education.⁵² Implement scheduled planning time for the itinerant model by August 2026. Build collaboration and planning time into itinerant consultation/teaching model using resource guides. Monitor collaboration effectiveness quarterly.

H. Improved collaboration among agencies serving children with disabilities

Background:

- Coordination between local Early Childhood professionals and Early Intervention and Special Education agencies has historically been inadequate.
- SCFO educates most preschool children with IEPs, and they are only able to schedule one meeting with the SELPA Director each year.

	SMART Goals
Goal 2H: Improved collaboration among agencies serving children with disabilities	a. Enhance active collaboration among PUSD, PCOE, LPC, SELPA, and the Plumas STARS Consortium to improve coordination and service delivery. Maintain monthly Plumas Inclusive Early Education Team (PIEET) meetings to monitor progress and advance the objectives outlined in this plan.
	b. Enhance collaboration among SCFO, FRC-CDC, SELPA, and General Education leadership by holding quarterly interagency meetings beginning by December 2025. Ensure that special education, Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) and transition to kindergarten topics are consistently included in the agenda.

Goal 3: PARENTS AND ADVOCATES ARE ENGAGED, EMPOWERED AND FULLY UNDERSTAND CHILDREN’S EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

- There are active contracts for the Early Start Family Resource Center (ES-FRC, IDEA Part C) and the Family Resource Center Seeds of Partnership (FRC, IDEA Part B) to support advocacy efforts in Plumas County.
- The Early Start Family Resource Center (ES-FRC) actively works in partnership with FNRC and education agencies and helps many parents, families and children get information about early intervention services and how to navigate the Early Start system (0-3 years). Plumas Rural Services manages this contract.

- Family Empowerment Centers (FECs) provide training and support to families of children and young adults with disabilities, ages 3 to 22. These parent-led nonprofit organizations offer specialized training, peer support, information, and referrals to help parents better understand their child’s educational and developmental needs. FECs also assist families in communicating with service providers, participating in the IEP process, engaging in school improvement efforts, promoting alternative dispute resolution, and fostering positive relationships between parents and professionals. Our local FEC, based at Plumas Rural Services, is funded by Seeds of Partnership, which operates under the California Department of Education Special Education Division (CDE SED).
- Regionally the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) serves as the Office of Education Programs (OSEP) Parent Training and Information Center (PTIC) for Plumas County. This agency is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization funded and managed by the U.S. Department of Education, under the IDEA.
- Disability Rights California serves as our local contact for the Office of Clients’ Rights Advocacy (OCRA) protecting regional center clients' rights.
- Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC) provides essential civil legal services, including education and civil rights support. They have presented information to parents through the FEC in the past.
- The Family Empowerment Center recently conducted a parent survey. Results of this will be helpful for the Plumas Inclusive Early Education Team (PIEET) going forward.
- Before the formation of the PIEEW, the Early Start Family Resource Center (ES-FRC) received zero referrals in fiscal year 23/24. FNRC developed internal procedures to ensure that newly enrolled Early Start families are referred to this program. Since then, referrals have improved significantly; in February 2025, ES-FRC reported an increase from 0 to 26 referrals, but these are all from FNRC.

- It is beneficial for parents of young children with disabilities to have opportunities to connect with parents of older children with disabilities so they can benefit from sharing experiences.
- Many community members, including parents, lack sufficient understanding of children’s educational rights.
- Rightful presence is an approach to educational equity that emphasizes true belonging, inherent value, and shared power for marginalized students, families, and communities. Unlike traditional inclusion—which often treats students with disabilities as guests who must prove they belong—rightful presence assumes all students inherently belong and shifts power to ensure they fully participate and influence education policies.⁵³
- Advocacy materials were created for First 5 Plumas for Part C & B services. This information will be available on their website.

	SMART Goals
Goal 3: Parents and advocates are engaged, empowered, and fully understand children’s educational rights	a. Create opportunities for increased parent connection, by creating fun, in-person activities on a regular basis (i.e. monthly) that benefit the children with disabilities and allow time for parents to connect while their children are engaged.
	b. Advocate through the lens of Rightful Presence. Seek true belonging, inherent value, and shared power.
	c. Boost referrals to ES-FRC and FEC programs by communicating these resources through Child Find activities. Refer to Goal 1Ai for Child Find activities.

Goal 3: Parents and advocates are engaged, empowered, and fully understand children's educational rights	d. Recommend FEC focuses on Rightful Presence, ensuring best practices in evaluation are used, and that students with a primary speech or language impairment receive all the supports needed to promote their development as these have been identified as barriers.
	e. By September 2025 ensure early childhood agencies clearly communicate that the IEP process is collaborative and that offers for educational settings can be discussed and negotiated.
	f. Expand available resources by providing additional resources such as: Undivided membership opportunities for families of children 0-5 navigating early intervention, special education, and Lanterman services for their child.
	g. Promote inclusion slots by marketing that spaces at FEC-CDC and SCFO are available specifically for children with IEPs, regardless of income.
	h. Improve communication by coordinating listservs and message sharing among DDS, PUSD, FEC, ES-FRC, and FNRC. This will facilitate cross-sharing of information and ensure parents receive frequent, comprehensive updates and are aware advocacy services
	i. Engage parents and families in the Plumas Inclusive Early Education Team (PIEET) so they may be actively

Goal 3: Parents and advocates are engaged, empowered, and fully understand children’s educational rights	involved in planning and implementing inclusion efforts to ensure their needs and preferences are incorporated.
	j. Recommend PUSD strengthen inclusion outcomes by having the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) utilize <i>The California Special Education Community Advisory Committee Guide</i> (2022, 5th Edition) as a framework for guiding inclusion efforts, including monitoring IDEA performance goals (“State Performance Plan Indicator Guide a Resource for Understanding the California State Performance Plan Indicators,” 2023).
	k. By December 2025, follow-up with the FEC to access and share their survey results with the Plumas Inclusive Early Education Team (PIEET).

Goal 4: A COMMUNITY CULTURE EMBRACING INCLUSION TAKES ROOT

There is limited community awareness and understanding around inclusion, leading to discomfort and uncertainty about including people with disabilities.

- We have an engaged and active group committed to inclusion, with regular meeting participation.
- There is a widespread tendency in the community to avoid discussing early childhood inclusion and disabilities.
- There are misunderstandings about what inclusion means.
- There is community reluctance to address challenges faced by families seeking inclusive classrooms.

- There are persistent cultural attitudes favoring segregation over inclusion.

	SMART Goals
Goal 4: A community culture embracing inclusion takes root	Promote a mindset shift around inclusion by communicating the following key messages: • Children with disabilities do not need to be ‘ready’ before joining inclusive classrooms. • Inclusion benefits all children by enhancing social skills, empathy, and respect, supporting both social and academic growth. • Inclusion is most effective when it begins early, ideally from birth. Early childhood is a crucial period for fostering inclusion, as young children are more open to learning about differences and developing empathy. Encouraging inclusive practices early helps build a more accepting and diverse future. • Inclusion is cost-effective and often less expensive than segregated care. • Inclusion is a human rights issue that acknowledges disability as a natural aspect of human diversity. • Successful inclusion depends on active family involvement and advocacy. Refer to Goal 3g ‘Rightful Presence’. • Clearly communicate the benefits of inclusion to help shift community culture away from segregation. • Children with disabilities can achieve academic success in

Goal 4: A community culture embracing inclusion takes root	inclusive settings when provided with appropriate supports. Life skills are best developed at home and in the community, while academic skills are fostered within inclusive classrooms.
	b. Collaborate with local community agencies, including the ALIVE program at PRS and Plumas County Veterans, to leverage community events such as Disability Pride Month (July), National Inclusion Week (late September to early October), National Developmental Disabilities Month (March), community film screenings (e.g., <i>Crip Camp</i>, <i>Being Heumann</i>), art shows featuring artists with disabilities, and ongoing communication platforms (PUSD Parent Square, emails, texts, Plumas Sun) to effectively disseminate inclusion messages.
	c. Recommend PUSD implement Rightful Presence district wide, as recommended in the recently issued a “<i>Dear Colleague</i>” letter affirming Rightful Presence and Inclusive Early Education Programs as the First Consideration for Children with Disabilities (2024). Rightful presence in schools means that previously excluded students, families, and communities feel they belong and have the power to influence educational decisions.
	d. Increase the percentage of Far Northern Regional Center clients by marketing the benefits of being enrolled in the Self-Determination Program. Self-determination plans allow families to choose from a wider range of services and supports, including those not traditionally offered by the Regional Center and allocate funds

Goal 4: A community culture embracing inclusion takes root	to areas that are most impactful for their child's development. SDPs can promote greater inclusion of young children with developmental disabilities in their communities, fostering a sense of belonging and participation. Utilize Goals 3A and 3F to promote this messaging.
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Resources

Goal 1

1. Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) Child Find Self-Assessment
<https://ectacenter.org/topics/earlyid/tools.asp>
2. California Early Childhood Special Education Network (CalECSE) Assessment Practices
<https://calecse.org/support/assessment-practices>
3. CDC Milestone tracker app <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html>
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Goal 2

1. Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) Making Sound Preschool LRE Decisions <https://ectacenter.org/topics/iep/iep-placement.asp#guidingquestions>
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https://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resource-files/ECRII_Administrators_Guide_2000.pdf
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<https://www.childcarelaw.org/content/know-the-law-about-the-americans-with-disabilities-act/>
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https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SyQ_-tWg7dbNu-MbFhebNGYRr8yA4e-u/view?usp=sharing
13. “ Resource Guide for the Early Childhood Collaborative Itinerant Teaching Model” developed by Early Choices and the Illinois State Board of Education

<https://cainclusion.org/camap/resource-guide-for-early-childhood-itinerant-collaborative-teaching-model/>

Goal 3

1. The Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA) Regional Staff Contact Information
<https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/what-we-do/programs/office-of-clients-rights-advocacy-ocra/ocra-staff-links>
2. Disability Rights California <https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/>
3. Undivided: Support for families raising kids with disabilities. <https://www.undivided.io/>
4. Legal Service of Northern California <https://lsnc.net/>
5. Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF) <https://dredf.org/>
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