

# Real Inclusion

*Creating a classroom where all children  
belong*

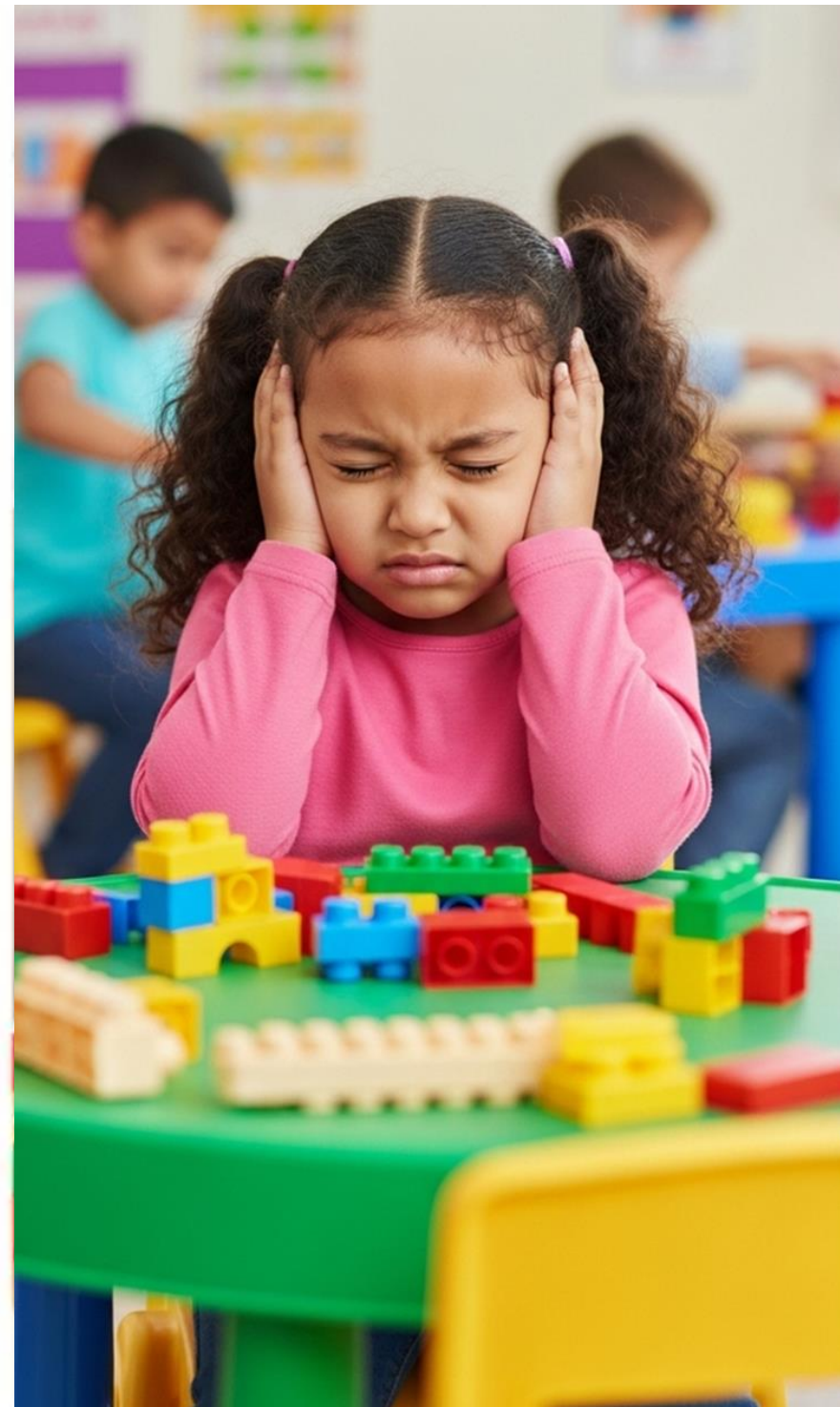


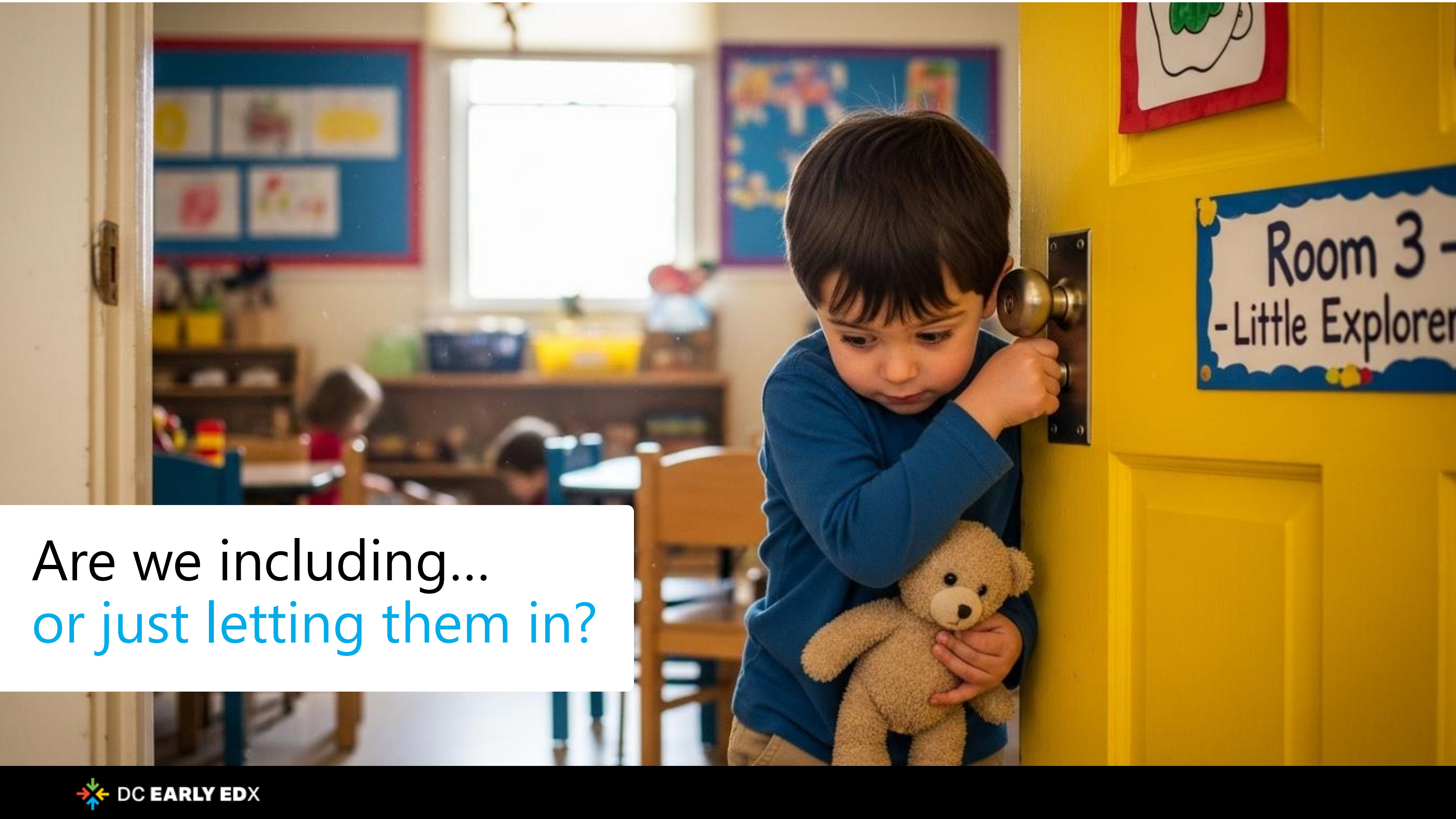
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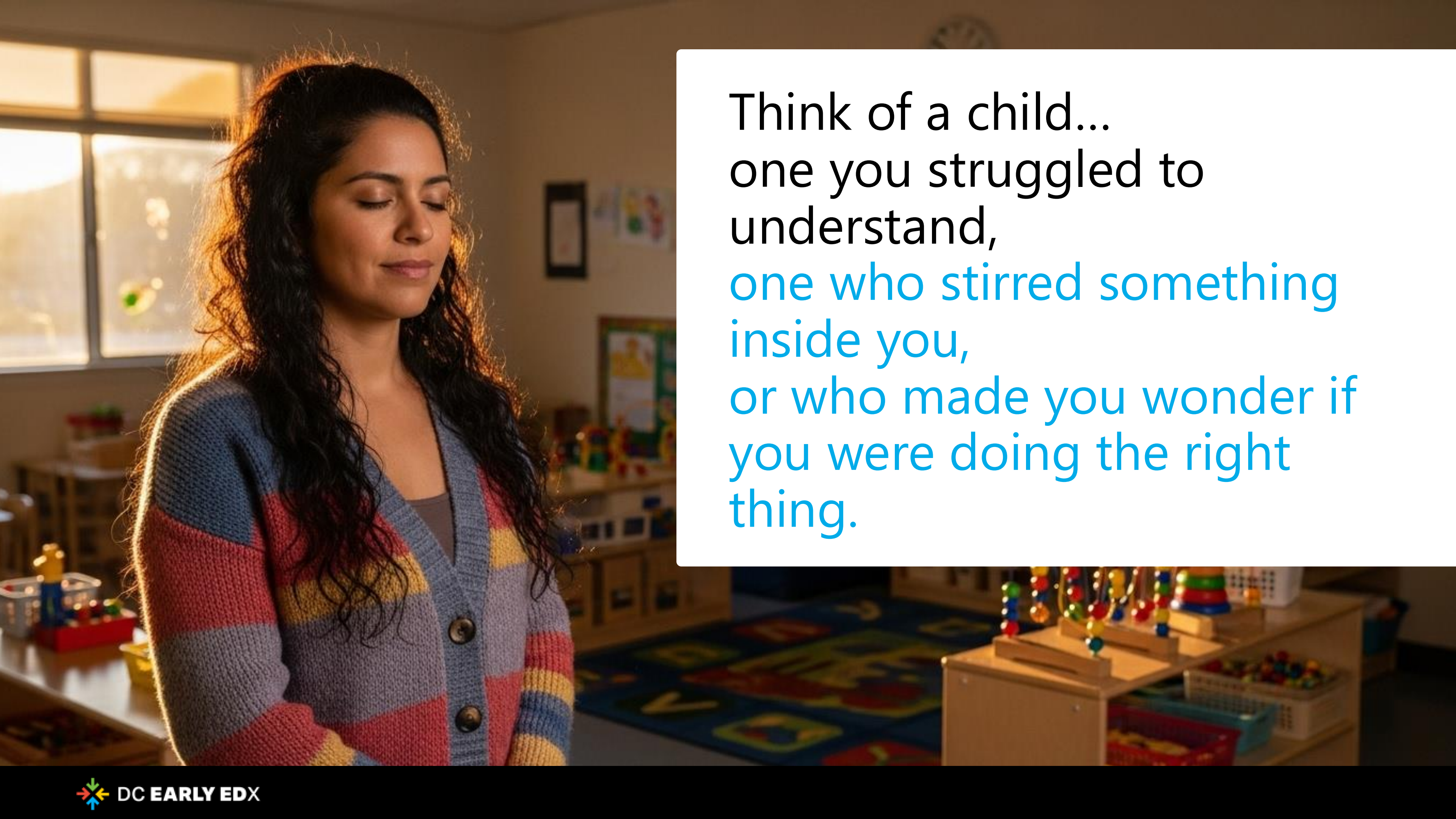


**Inclusion recognizes the whole child:**  
their culture, their story, and their unique way of learning.





Are we including...  
or just letting them in?



Think of a child...  
one you struggled to  
understand,  
one who stirred something  
inside you,  
or who made you wonder if  
you were doing the right  
thing.

Inclusion is not an action.  
It's a classroom culture.



# Integration vs. Inclusion

<b>Integration</b>	<b>Inclusion</b>
The child adapts to the classroom	The classroom adapts to the child
Individual supports are provided	Universal experiences are designed
The child participates if they can	Everyone participates at their own pace
The goal is for the child to “not interrupt”	The goal is for the child to have a real role
Exceptions are created	Opportunities are created
Focus on the child’s needs	Focus on the group design
The adult provides the support	The environment provides the support

# Real inclusion rests on three pillars

- **Access:** the child can enter learning.
- **Participation:** the child has a real role.
- **Belonging:** the child feels they are valuable to the group.



Inclusion is not  
opening the door.  
It's going out to  
meet the child who  
still doesn't feel like  
they belong.



True inclusion begins in  
our eyes...  
not in strategies.



Be a Mr. Jensen



**Inclusion begins with the way we see.**  
The very same behavior can be seen as a problem...  
or as a doorway.

# When we look beyond the action, we begin to discover patterns.

Behind a behavior, there may be different needs:

- Movement
- Regulation
- Structure
- Connection
- Safety
- Expression
- Sensory needs  
(o también "Sensory")
- Anticipation



**Every child gives us clues...**  
**but we need the right lens.**

# What is this child trying to tell me?



# What is this girl trying to tell me?



# What is this child trying to tell me?



# Three questions to shift our perspective:

1. What is this child communicating to me?
2. What do they need that I'm not seeing yet?
3. How can I offer them a safe way to participate?

**These three questions... are inclusion in action.**



The environment  
teaches first...  
even before the children  
arrive.



Inclusion begins  
in the physical  
space...  
because a  
child's brain  
responds to the  
environment  
first,  
and then to the  
adult.

# The physical space regulates before the teacher does.

Element	What the classroom should show	What it creates in the child
<b>Sensory load</b>	Fewer stimuli, neutral colors, open spaces, soft sounds	Physiological calm, less alertness, greater receptivity
<b>Predictability</b>	Clearly defined areas, visible routines, schedules displayed, stable furniture	Security, reduced anxiety, greater participation
<b>Visual organization</b>	Organized shelves, clear labels, materials grouped by function, open pathways	Focus, independence, understanding of the environment



Let's observe this space...

What message does it communicate?  
What feels clear without anyone explaining it?  
What feels confusing or creates visual noise?

# Plan for 'difference,' not for 'normality'

(Introduction to UDL – Universal Design for Learning)



# The 3 principles of UDL

UDL Principle	What it means in the classroom	What the teacher should offer
<b>Engagement</b> <i>(Participation)</i>	How each child enters the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More than one way to begin</li><li>• Options for self-regulation</li><li>• Alternatives for children who need movement</li></ul>
<b>Representation</b>	How each child understands the content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visual + verbal + tactile information</li><li>• Concrete supports and gestures</li><li>• Organization that reduces cognitive load</li></ul>
<b>Expression</b> <i>(Action &amp; Expression)</i>	How each child shows what they learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drawing, building, dramatization, pointing, oral responses</li><li>• Choice of formats</li><li>• Flexible assessment without requiring only one specific skill</li></ul>

# This could be a scene showing UDL in action





And how do I do this every day...  
by adjusting everything child by  
child?



Designing for diversity  
saves work —  
it doesn't multiply it.

# 4 key decisions that anticipate diversity

- 1 Integrated variability
- 2 Role flexibility
- 3 Natural regulation spaces
- 4 Strategic duplicate materials

# Built-in Variability

## Verbal

(narrate, imitate, sounds, describe)



## Visual

(pictures, cards, models)



## Hands-on / Manipulative

(objects, pieces, materials)



## Body-based

(movement, dramatization, pathways/activities)



# Flexibility of Roles

## Observer

(watch, anticipate, listen)



## Builder

(try, move, build)



## Body-based

(dramatize, represent, move)



## Narrator

(tell, explain, put into words)



# Natural Regulation Spaces

**Soft, accessible side corner**



**Cushions or poufs at the child's level**



**Calming sensory object box**



**Side mat / small side rug**



# Strategic Duplicate Materials

**Two identical sets of the “most desired” blocks**



**Duplicate puppets/characters**



**Duplicate art materials**



**Two identical books during a reading activity**





Children learn to include when they live in a classroom where everyone has a place.



# An inclusive classroom culture makes space for **ALL** children

**Who is being left out?**



**Does everyone have a way to participate?**



**Who are we making visible?**



**Who needs support to enter the play?**



# Empathy is taught through experience

**It's practiced through the body**



**It needs small, real encounters**



**Everyone participates We model it — and we name it**



# The language we use as teachers shapes how children see one another, speak to one another, and treat one another

Practice	How it includes	Example
<b>Speak with calm and clarity</b>	Regulates and provides safety	"I'm here with you."
<b>Offer another way to communicate</b>	Allows nonverbal children or children with autism to participate	Cards, gestures, objects
<b>Avoid labels</b>	Protects self-esteem	Instead of "You're hyper," say "Your body needs to move."
<b>Name the positive</b>	Reinforces inclusive behaviors	"Thank you for waiting for your friend."

# Play teaches children to include

**Parachute game**



**Chain building**



**Chain storytelling**



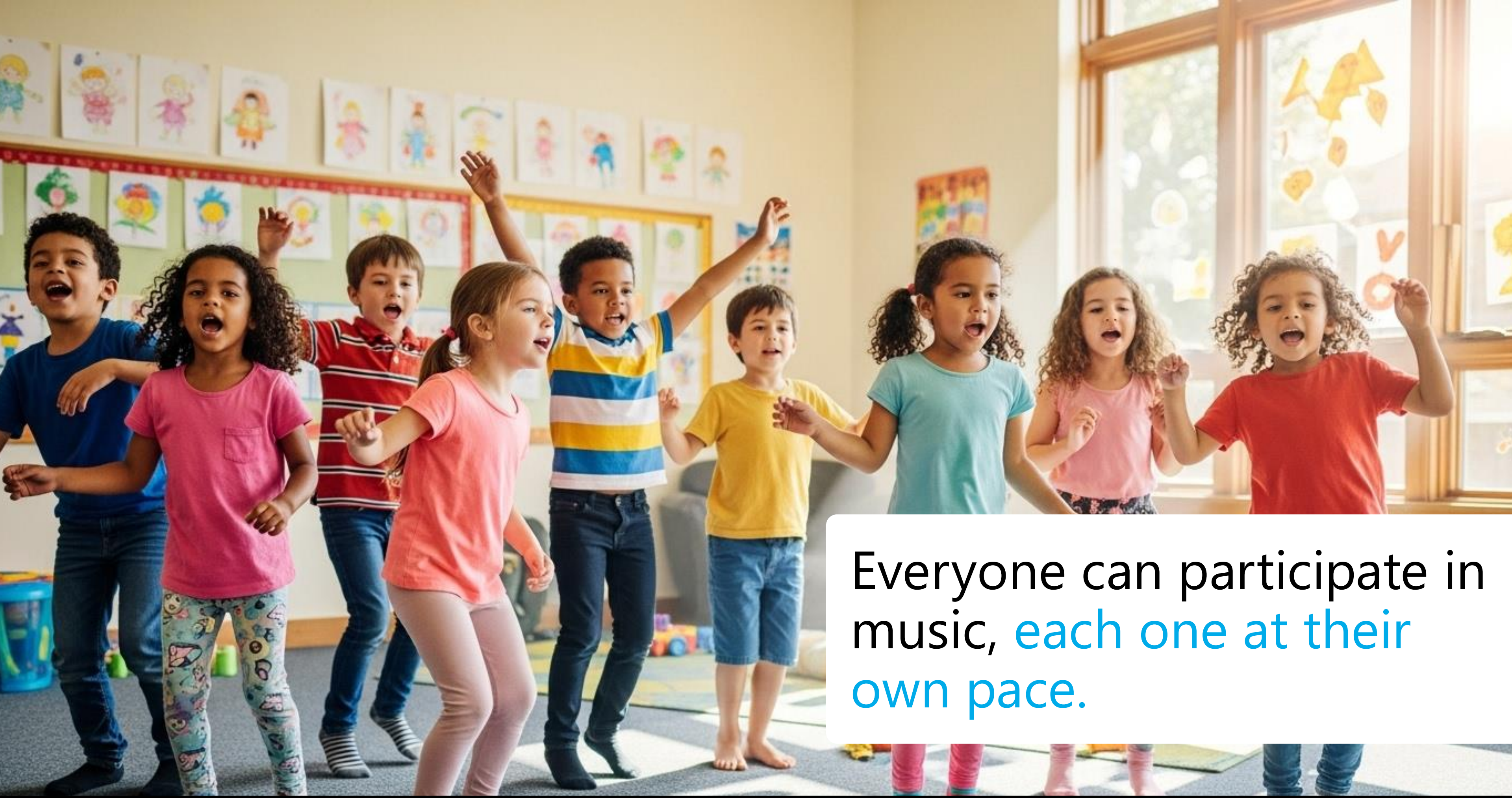
**Partner missions**



Stories don't just entertain... they shape who is seen, who is heard, and who belongs.

# ELMER





Everyone can participate in music, each one at their own pace.

Conflicts aren't avoided  
— they're guided with  
intention





Thank you for putting your heart into childhood.

Every one of your gestures changes a little world... and a real one.

# Let's stay in touch!

Email me at:  
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