

Keynote
Speaker

Tools for the Journey

May 3, 2025

Dr. Jen Newton

Inclusion: How Committed Are We?



This keynote session will challenge us to consider the ways in which we may be upholding harmful systems while also motivating us to disrupt ableism to build something truly inclusive. We will put our beliefs about rightful presence into practice, armed with the knowledge and language we can use to influence the people and systems we interact with.

Jen Newton, PhD is an associate professor at Ohio University. Dr. Newton's research interests include anti-racist, anti-ableist education, early childhood inclusion, and inclusive teacher preparation. She regularly presents locally, regionally, and nationally on a range of inclusive educational topics.

Dr. Newton's 25 years in inclusive education began as an early interventionist and an inclusive prekindergarten teacher prior to pursuing doctoral studies. She is currently a teacher educator and an inclusive consultant and researcher. She previously served as an Executive Board member and as co-chair of the DEC Inclusion, Equity, and Social Justice Committee for over five years.

Dr. Jen Newton

2:00 - 3:15PM



Inclusion and Belonging: Moving From Where to Why

In early childhood, place often drives the conversation around conversation due to the inherent limitations of our models. However, we must continue to build our abilities to talk about the WHY of meaningful inclusive practices and opportunities for young children. NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practices guide best practices in early childhood settings but so overtly disregard the many ways of being children enter with. In this session, we will learn ways to embrace inclusion in all the ways we find it, how to build more inclusive opportunities for young children, and how to be agents of change in policy and advocacy for young children.



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