

## US Navy Makes Commitment to Inclusion - Kids, Families Benefit

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San Diego, California - Children with disabilities and their families will benefit as San Diego based non-profit, Kids Included Together is awarded a contract to train personnel at US Navy Child Development Centers, Youth and Teen Programs and Child Development Homes worldwide on the best practices of inclusion.

San Diego based Kids Included Together (KIT) announced that they've been awarded the first of what promises to be a multi-year six-figure contract to provide its much sought after, best practice training on inclusion: the process of including children with and without disabilities together in community settings such as recreational, child development, and youth development programs. KIT will accomplish this by utilizing its curriculum, online tools and resources, relationship-based coaching, resource library and state-of-the-art eLearning modules.

The scope of work for the project is all-encompassing, creating a solid foundation for the Navy to build on year after year. As our sailors continue to answer our nation's call to service, Navy Child and Youth Programs provide a place for their children to learn and grow, regardless of their abilities and where they go within the Navy system. KIT will provide much needed support in the area of inclusion by providing training and consultation services to all of programs", Larrie Rodriguez, Child and Youth Training and Communications Manager for Commander, Navy Installations Command. Year one responsibilities include a review of existing Navy materials, the creation of informational brochures for Navy families, conference presentations, the establishment of a toll-free helpline for world-wide access, creation and hosting of webinars, working group facilitation, guidebook and training module creation, creation of communication journals and multiple program site visits.

Navy Adopts KIT Worldwide: When asked about the importance of this contract to KIT, CEO Jan Giacinti was almost speechless. "It's huge", she said, "We've had large grants and contracts before with national organizations like the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation and CVS Pharmacy and we are thrilled to partner with the Navy and support their enthusiasm and forward-thinking to including all children, regardless of ability globally. This contract also allows KIT to expand the scope of its training and tools to build significantly on what it has already accomplished in the San Diego community and on the national stage." Given KIT's diminutive staff size, 5 full-time and 2 part-time Giacinti was asked how KIT intended to meet the increased demand for its services, "eLearning will be our biggest asset; &hellip;that and an amazing staff. Torrie Dunlap, KIT's Director of the National Training Center on Inclusion will be heading up the project and she's fabulous. Torrie led the way in crafting KIT's state-of-the-art eLearning modules which will allow KIT to train Navy child and youth professionals anywhere in the world."

KIT staff members have the unique experience of being professionals in inclusion, as well as the direct experience of working in early childhood, school age and teen programs. KIT staff members know the challenges that child care and youth development professionals face, because they have worked in these settings. The recommendations, coaching, and training that KIT provides are rooted in experience, providing tools to providers that can be immediately implemented in a program setting. KIT trainers will also be involved in presentations and webinars to support Navy Child and Youth Program personnel. KIT's website and eLearning capabilities were created through a partnership with San Diego State University's Interwork Institute Center for Distance Learning with funding provided by San Diego based Qualcomm Inc.

About Kids Included Together (KIT): KIT's mission is to support recreational, child development and youth development programs that include children with and without disabilities. KIT's goals are to enrich the lives of all who participate and to increase understanding and acceptance of disabilities as a natural part of life. In San Diego County KIT provides its services free of charge with its work being funded by grants and private donations. KIT is affiliated with 49 organizations representing 249 site locations in the County. Since inception in 1997 KIT has trained over 15,000 professionals on the process of inclusion resulting in the inclusion of over 8,000 children in community programs. KIT has also trained in 24 states and is currently conducting a pilot project funded by the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation to establish 10 National Affiliates across the country.