


All Children
Can Learn and
Play Together

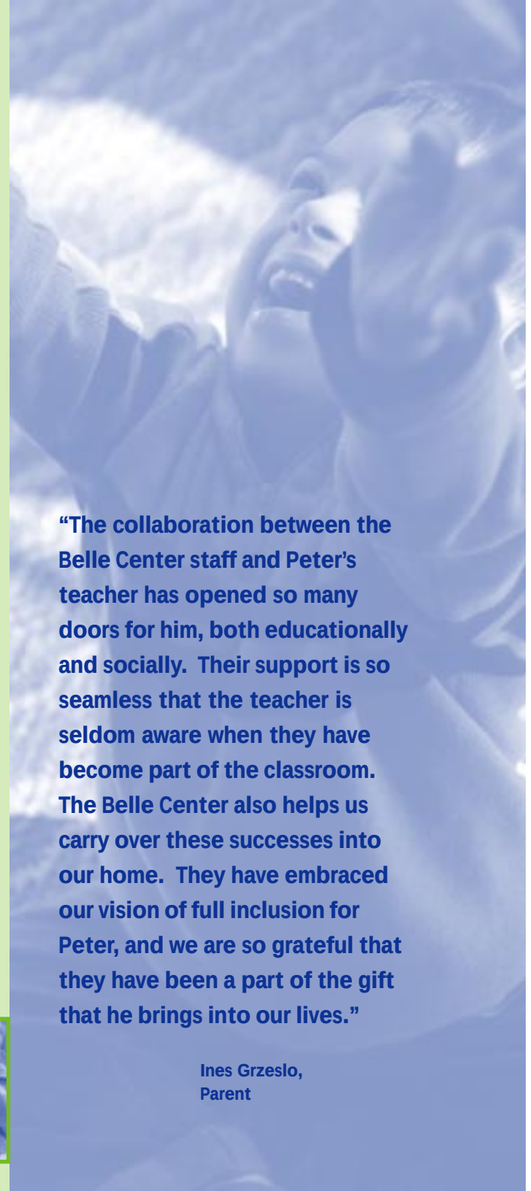
**Belle Center of Chicago**
1754 West Wilson
Chicago, IL 60640

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The Belle Center of Chicago makes over 2,000 direct service visits to schools, homes and community programs annually.

We also provide supportive services – nearly 1,000 contacts each year ranging from parent support to direct advocacy – to families, caregivers, teachers, community providers and administrators.





**"The collaboration between the Belle Center staff and Peter's teacher has opened so many doors for him, both educationally and socially. Their support is so seamless that the teacher is seldom aware when they have become part of the classroom. The Belle Center also helps us carry over these successes into our home. They have embraced our vision of full inclusion for Peter, and we are so grateful that they have been a part of the gift that he brings into our lives."**

**Ines Grzeslo,**
**Parent**



Photography by Selima Ani.

The Belle Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving all children in need of services regardless of ability to pay. Families typically pay for therapeutic services "out of pocket" or are reimbursed through insurance. Family support services, advocacy, phone consultations and referrals are provided free of charge. Scholarship assistance is available upon request. The Belle Center also offers workshops and information to schools, community groups and families on topics related to inclusion, child development and disability.

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INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES





# Belle Center of Chicago

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## The mission of the

Belle Center is to promote the rights and expectations of all children to be fully included in the community. The Center provides a progressive, family-centered inclusive approach to education and community life that supports children with disabilities and their families.

## OUR CORE VALUES









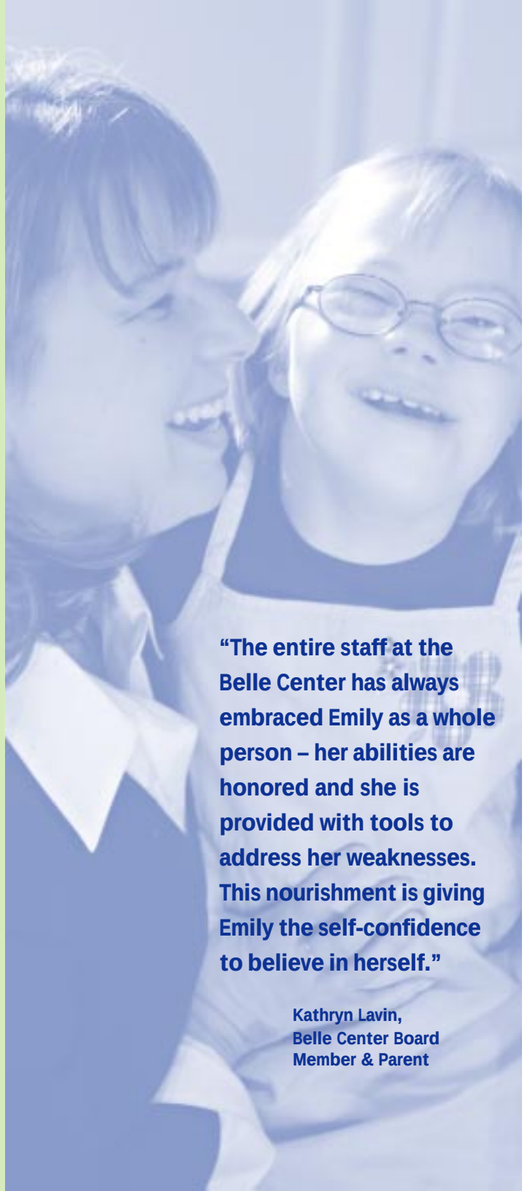
**Family-Centered Approach:** Families are the primary decision-makers regarding their child's learning experiences and development.

**Advocacy:** Advocacy is powerful. It can cause positive changes in the lives of the children whose families practice it, as well as within larger circles of children and families in the community.

**Inclusion:** Interactive learning experiences for children with and without disabilities are beneficial for ALL participants.

**Collaboration:** All members of a team – those persons designated by the family to provide support – are valuable when working together in the best interest of the child and family. A combination of unique strengths and roles forms the foundation.

**Natural Environment:** Families and children get support within, and relevant to, the places and activities that make up their lives.



**"The entire staff at the Belle Center has always embraced Emily as a whole person – her abilities are honored and she is provided with tools to address her weaknesses. This nourishment is giving Emily the self-confidence to believe in herself."**

**Kathryn Lavin,**
**Belle Center Board Member & Parent**

## OUR PROGRAMS

### 1 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Community Outreach Program is the heart of our current work. Our staff of professional therapists and educators travel to the places that make up a child's typical day – including schools, homes and community programs – to provide speech, occupational and physical therapies as well as educational services to children with disabilities in their natural environments. The goal is to promote the development of specific skills and facilitate the inclusion of children with disabilities in programs with their typically developing peers through collaboration with teachers, administrators, and community providers.

#### Socialization Groups

Socialization Groups support the work of the Community Outreach Program by providing a safe and comfortable space for children with disabilities to practice social skills in small groups of children of varying abilities and to enhance their self-esteem and confidence in the process.

### 2 FAMILY SUPPORT

The Family Support Program offers information, consultation, resources and referrals to the parents, siblings and extended families of children with disabilities. We help families navigate through their options, maximize their choices and support them in the decisions they make.

#### Sibshops

Sibshops are a popular component of our Family Support Program. These workshops offer a recreational context for the brothers and sisters of children with special needs to obtain peer support and learn that they are not alone in their experiences and feelings.






### 3 INCLUSION EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The goal of the Inclusion Education Initiative is to present community providers with information, tools and strategies to successfully include children with disabilities in their programs. Through workshops, in-services, consultation and training we seek to open doors to community activities for ALL children.

#### In-Services

We welcome the opportunity to present information about inclusion, child development and disability. Whether the audience is a parent group, summer day camp staff or meeting of classroom teachers, we strive to empower individuals to respond to the needs of ALL families within their communities.

### 4 POLICY AND ADVOCACY

The Belle Center seeks to raise awareness of the rights and responsibilities flowing from the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and to support policies and practices that facilitate the goal of inclusion as stated in this legislation.

#### Direct Advocacy

Belle Center professionals participate in Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and other "team" meetings on behalf of the children and families we serve, and collaborate with school staff and other community providers to advocate for the best interests of our clients.

*Please save this card for your records.*

**CONTACT INFORMATION**
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## I WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE BELLE CENTER

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

State: _____ Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

- ○ Please include me on your mailing list.
- ○ Please contact me about how I can get involved with the Belle Center.
- ○ Please send me more information:
  - ___ I'd like to make a donation.
  - ___ I am interested in your direct services.