



NATIONAL CENTER ON

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Disabilities Services Newsletter

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Individualizing Instruction to Support Learning

Individualizing instruction can maximize children's learning opportunities. It can also improve their developmental and functional outcomes. In this issue, learn more about how to individualize early care and education for children with disabilities. Find resources with strategies to support instruction for children who have suspected or identified disabilities.

Read About It

Kendra is a 3-year-old girl with developmental delays who recently moved to another state with her family. She has joined Ms. Page's Head Start classroom. She is a quiet child who watches other children but does not join them, and usually plays by herself. Ms. Page and Ms. Grimes, the classroom assistant, have reached out to the disabilities coordinator because they are concerned that Kendra's lack of engagement in play activities reduces her opportunities for learning. They feel they need guidance to provide Kendra with the support she needs. What supports might a disabilities coordinator offer Ms. Page and Ms. Grimes?

Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices: Instruction

The DEC Recommended Practices on instruction provide practices that teachers, coordinators, and other caregivers can use to support the learning and development of children like Kendra. Whether the concern is a child's development or behavior, individualizing instruction can maximize learning opportunities and improve developmental and functional outcomes for young children who have, or are at risk for, developmental delays or disabilities.

The DEC Recommended Practices provide guidance across eight topic areas. Examples of the practices to support individualized instruction for children like Kendra include:

- Practitioners plan for and provide the level of support, accommodations, and adaptations needed for children to access, participate, and learn within and across activities and routines. (INS4)
- Practitioners embed instruction within and across routines, activities, and environments to provide contextually relevant learning opportunities. (INS5)
- Practitioners use systematic instructional strategies with fidelity to teach skills and to promote child engagement and learning. (INS6)

Take a Look

The three videos below depict these specific recommended practices in action. Keep Kendra and her teachers in mind while you watch.

1. **In the Classroom: Leah Asking a Friend to Play**

In this Head Start Inclusion video, a classroom teacher supports a child in asking a friend to play with her. She uses encouragement, choices, and positive verbal praise. (INS5)

2. **CONNECT Module 7, Video 7.16: Rolling a Ball Rhyming Activity**

Watch a teacher work with a small group of children to encourage turn-taking and reinforce the concept of words that rhyme using a rolling ball game. (INS6)

3. **CONNECT Module 1, Video 1.10: Routine in a Program—Water Play**

A classmate is paired with Luke, a child with disabilities, to introduce him to a new water play activity. With the prompting of the teacher, she takes Luke's hand and leads him through the sprinkler. She was chosen for this peer support strategy as she is a gentle, easy-going classmate and she and Luke get along well. (INS4)

Try It Out

Activity Matrix: Organizing Learning Throughout the Day

To offer a child like Kendra the additional support she needs to participate in the daily routine, teachers may use an activity matrix to embed instruction throughout the day. This in-service suite offers tools and tips for organizing learning opportunities for children who need additional support during daily routines and activities. Watch the instructional video and then develop a plan using the Activity Matrix provided under Tools for Teachers. Think about how you might incorporate some of the practices you saw in the videos in the Take a Look section. This Embedded Learning in-service suite also includes a resource list of articles, books, and web resources on instruction and training materials and PowerPoint slides for professional development providers.

Improve Your Practice

CONNECT Module 1: Embedded Interventions

Embedding interventions throughout the daily routine will provide support for Kendra's engagement throughout the day. Learn about an innovative decision-making process to help children fully participate in an inclusive setting through embedded interventions. CONNECT modules provide an evidence-based approach to professional development and are designed for staff and professional development providers. Videos, activities, and narratives guide staff to serve children with disabilities effectively.

Families, Too!

Embedded Instruction Practices for Parents – Learning Way: Planning and Using Embedded Learning Opportunities

Share this one-page guide with families to provide information about embedding learning opportunities in everyday activities at home or in the community. Practice Guides for Families are designed for practitioners to share with families. Each includes tips for implementing practices, an example of what the practice looks like, how to know it is working, and a video example. Find links to resources where families can learn more about the topic.

Note: The resources provided are only a sampling of the resources available on these practices.

Ongoing Features

Free Access to a Specially Selected Article from Young Exceptional Children (YEC)

Read the YEC article, **Using Implementation Checklists to Reinforce the Use of Child-Focused Intervention**

Strategies. It available through this newsletter until July 31, 2017.

Head Start Disability/Inclusion Network

Engage with the disabilities and Head Start community around the country in an online community hosted on the MyPeers platform. Our community currently has more than 1,000 members who are sharing resources, engaging in conversations, and asking questions. **Register now** as a member of MyPeers. If you are already a member of MyPeers, find the Head Start Disability/Inclusion Network community under "All Communities" and select the blue "Join" button.

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We Want to Hear from You

The Disabilities Services Newsletter is produced monthly by the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. Submit questions or suggestions for 2017 newsletter topics to ecdtl@ecetta.info.

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