

18th Annual Birth to Three Institute

Adapting and Embracing the Environment: Fostering Participation for Children with Disabilities

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Co-Facilitated by:

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West Ed



Senta Greene
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Objectives



By the end of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- Understand how the principal of universal design applies to environmental design
- Examine multiple areas of the environment for adaptation and accommodation
- Describe ways that teachers can monitor the physical environment for inclusive practices



Agenda



- Welcome!
- Universal Design for Learning
- The Importance of Individualization
- The Science of Adapting Learning Environments
- Specific Strategies for Supporting Young Children's Participation
- Closing Thoughts and Reflections



Reflect and Connect

Share with a partner:

What inspires you about your work?





Access for children with disabilities to the world of child care involves opening our hearts as well as our doors.

Project EXCEPTIONAL




Access, Participation, and Supports

April 2000

Early Childhood Inclusion


Jigsaw The DEC/NAEYC Statement

A Small Group Experience




Universal Design

- The term “Universal Design” is borrowed from the movement in architecture to design buildings and products that accommodate a variety of users, including those with disabilities:
 - Ramps (wheelchairs, walkers, strollers)
 - Automatic doors
 - Closed captioning
- **EVERYONE** benefits!




Universal Design for Learning

- Developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)
- Based on the fact that children learn in different ways
 - learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic
 - communication: verbal, sign language, pictures
- Provides multiple approaches to teaching to meet the needs of diverse learners
- Removes the barriers from the learning process
- It can begin with infants!




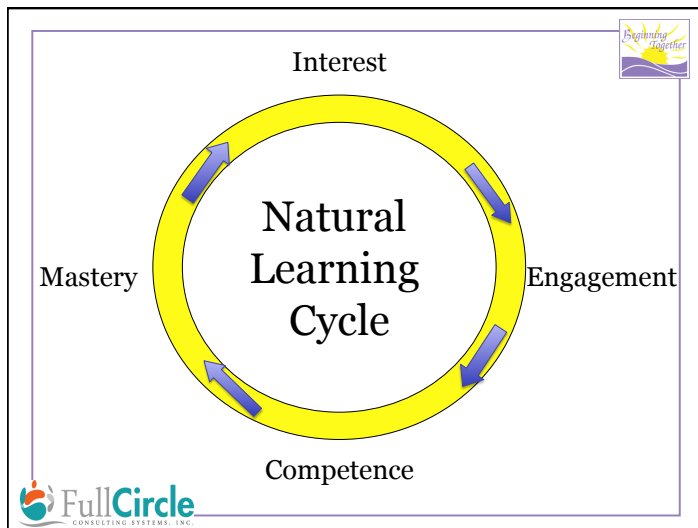
When to Individualize?

- Universal design is great, but individual needs still surface
- Many adaptations are logical extensions of what you already know
- When you start with high quality practices, you can easily build on those to provide access, participation, and support
- Now you get to practice some individualizing




Learning Opportunities

- Children learn whether or not we are teaching, but not all children learn what we intend for them to learn unless we plan for it
- There are informal and formal learning opportunities present as part of family and community life as well as in ECE settings
- Understanding how learning occurs can assist us to identify ways to support a child who needs extra help or focus

Universal Design for Play

- There have been some tools developed to examine existing toys for their “universal design”
- Included are an article and a tool for measuring each toy
- Try the tool on a toy that is a current favorite with the children in your care
- There are also some handouts to help you think of adaptations to existing toys as needed to help ALL children interact with the different toys
- Of course, many toys need no adaptation



Hands are the First Toy



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Feet Become Toys Too



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**Adaptations:
Creating Access for ALL Infants
and Toddlers**



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Different Types of Adaptations

- Augmentative or Alternative Communication System
- Visual Support
- Assistive Equipment or Device
- Functional Positioning
- Sensory Support
 - low, medium, and high-from simple to complex

DR Access: California Department of Education



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Adaptations provide just enough assistance so that infants and toddlers with disabilities participate in learning in order to learn and master new skills and behaviors as do infants and toddlers without disabilities.

Dunst & Trivette, 2008

Other Considerations



- As you consider adapting routines or activities, ask yourself or your team these questions:
 - What is the activity? What is the child’s goal?
 - What does child need to be able to do to perform this activity?
 - What strengths is this child bringing to this activity?
 - What might you need to do to accommodate this child?

Questions to Ask about How You Facilitate



- Does the child have an opportunity to be in control of the learning experience?
- Is there a balance between adult-initiated learning and child-initiated learning?
- Can the child make choices while learning the skill?
- Is the child able to initiate practice with the support given by the caregiver?
- Is the child gaining self confidence and showing the joy of accomplishment while learning?
- Is there room in the activity for the child to make discoveries?

Peter Mangione, WestEd

From Ideas to Practice: Specific Strategies to Support Very Young Children

- As a team, explore the toys and/or materials given to you and identify a way to create access for your assigned infant or toddler.

Adapting Environments




What Can We Do in the Environment?


- Beginning Together has developed some questions you can use as you walk through your environment
- Read the questions and think about what might need to be adapted






Those who are open and willing to share themselves fully... have the ability to ignite the souls of others to achieve greatness far beyond what anyone imagined possible."

Bill George



Contact Information

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