



Early Childhood Curriculum:

Planning for early learning...



Why is curriculum important?

The early years are times of rapid growth and set the stage for children's later ability to take advantage of the curriculum provided by primary grade teachers. Early childhood teachers therefore, build children's skills, knowledge, and interests in a broad range of developmental areas. To help children with this very complex venture, teachers need to implement curriculum that provides intellectually rich, varied, and interesting content that advances children's learning.



Curriculum

- Description of guiding beliefs and theories
- Goals and objectives
- Teaching strategies and methods
- Documentation of progress



Sources of curriculum content

- Child development knowledge
- Knowledge base of various disciplines
- Values of the culture and community



Developmentally Appropriate

- Individually appropriate
- Chronologically age appropriate



Individually Appropriate Activities

- Allow children of a variety of abilities to participate at a level that is challenging, but not overwhelming
- Allow for easy adaptations in order to support children's various ability levels



Chronologically Age Appropriate Activities

- Are based on meaningful experiences (i.e., experiences with theme and materials present in the child's environment)
- Require skills that would typically be present for children of that age range
- Focus on functional or useful skills



From Benchmarks to Curriculum

- Take some time to look at selected goals from the Washington Early Learning and Development Benchmarks
- With a partner or your team come up with some ideas for activities or materials in different learning centers that will promote learning in this area




Special Ed. Vs. General Ed.

- Individual
- Adult facilitated
- Scaffolding/ Support
- Prompting Strategies promote acquisition
- Conditioning or shaping responses
- Errorless Learning
- Group
- Child directed
- Trial & Error/Experiential
- Environment & activities promote learning
- Discovery & exploration
- Errors are important for learning



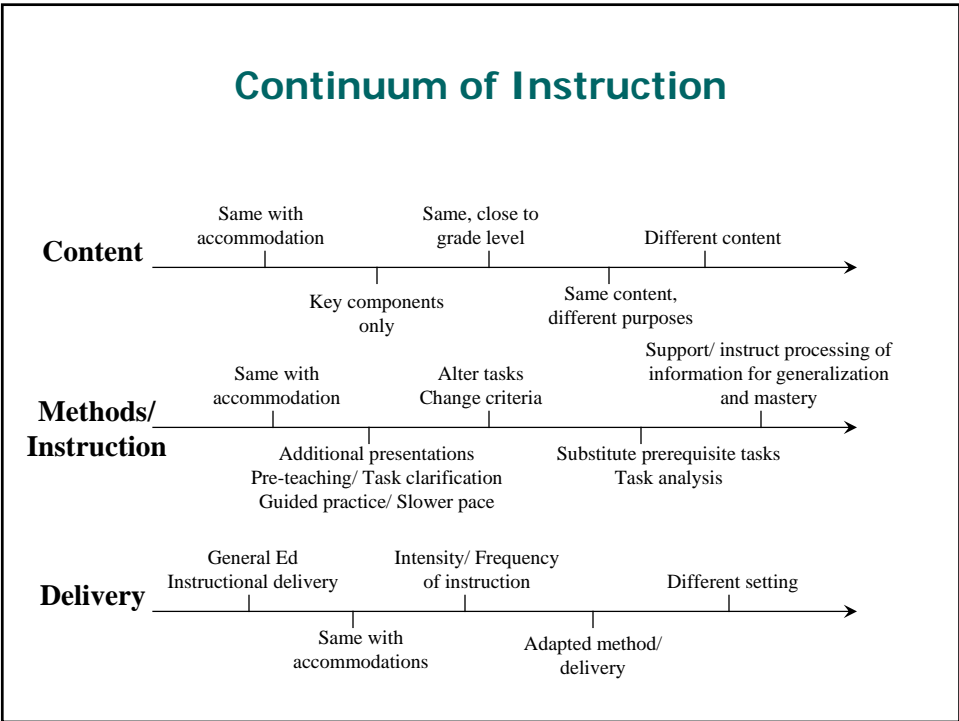
Special Education

- Providing access to the general education curriculum to the greatest extent possible
 - Content
 - Instruction
 - Environment



Specially designed instruction

- **Adapting**
 - Curriculum content
 - Method or
 - Delivery of instruction
- **To meet:**
 - The child's unique disability-related needs, and;
 - To ensure access to the general education curriculum





Benefits of Curriculum

- Short and Long Term Planning
- Planning occurs at group and individual level
- Classroom goals considered in selection of activities and materials
- Focus on children who are typically developing and strengths of children with special needs
- Content Areas



Myths: Think Outside the Box

- Every child must do the same thing at small group
- Small group instruction must be a separate activity
- Circle should include calendar and individual choice making
- Students should go to every area during free choice
- Students should not spend extended periods of time in one learning center
- Art projects should teach sequencing and discrete skills



Throw out the myths...

- With a partner or your team think about common areas and activities
- Identify what we want students (ALL STUDENTS) to gain from these activities or areas
- **THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX...**
- How can we make changes to promote early learning and break the chains of the old myths



Panning an Activity

- The Activity Plan details a (small or large) group oriented activity focused on the concepts, skills and knowledge we want all students to learn in the general education curriculum.
- **To begin, ask yourself three basic questions:**
 1. Where are your students going?
 2. How are they going to get there?
 3. How will you know when they've arrived?



I. Goals/Purpose

- Goals determine purpose, aim, and rationale for what you and your students will engage in during class time.
- What are the broader objectives or long term goals of the curriculum?
- What are your goals for this activity?
- What do you expect students to be able to do by the end of activity?
- Related to the standards for general education (i.e., Washington Early Learning and Development Benchmarks).



II. Prerequisites

- What must students already be able to do before this activity?
- What concepts have to be mastered in advance to accomplish the activity objectives?



III. Materials

- What materials will be needed?
- What needs to be prepared in advance?



IV. Activity Description

- **Introduction**
 - How will you introduce the ideas and objectives of this activity?
 - How will you get students' attention and motivate them in order to hold their attention?
 - How can you tie activity objectives with student interests and past classroom activities?
- **Main Activity**
 - How would you describe the flow of the activity to another teacher who will replicate it?
 - What does the teacher do to facilitate learning and manage the various activities?
- **Closure/Conclusion**
 - What will you use to draw the ideas together for students at the end?
 - How will you provide feedback to students to correct their misunderstandings and reinforce their learning?



V. Ideas for Social Engagement

- This section focuses on ensuring that the activity remains group focused.
- Many times teachers will focus on individual students and IFSP/IEP objectives first. In some cases, this leads to teacher working only with children with special needs, rather than the entire group.



VI. Assessment/Evaluation

- How will you evaluate the goals that were identified?
- Have students practiced what you are asking them to do for evaluation?
- Think outside the box (i.e., samples, pictures, video, performance, etc.)



VII. Modifications and Adaptations

- This section focuses on modifications and adaptations needed in order for all students to participate.
- Curriculum Modifications are:
 - A change to the ongoing classroom activity or materials in order to facilitate or maximize the child's participation
 - Easy to implement
 - Require thought and planning, but should not require additional resources



VIII. Embedded Instruction

- Embedded Instruction is a planned procedure that:
 - Gives opportunities to practice skills
 - Happens during a typical activity
 - Expands activity while remaining interesting
 - Instruction that is deliberately inserted into the regular activities or routines of a child's day.



Make your plan

- With a partner or a team, create a plan for one of the activities relating to the Benchmarks
- Identify one curriculum modification for a student with (a) motor, (b) social, or (d) communication delays