INCLUSION IN THE CLASSROOM

STEPHANIE COLLIER & ANA HERRON-VALENZUELA
OBJECTIVES

- Define early childhood inclusion
- Review curriculum modifications and adaptions
- Provide strategies and examples
- Discuss application based on individual children’s needs
INTRODUCE OURSELVES

- Who we are
- What we do
- How we can help
PUT YOURSELF ON A CONTINUUM ACTIVITY
INCLUSION

- Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, and communities, and society.

- The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without developmental delays/disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports.

(DEC, NAEYC, 2009)
INCLUSION BENEFITS ALL CHILDREN!

- Children develop friendships and learn how to play and interact with one another
- Children develop a more positive image of themselves and a healthy attitude about the uniqueness of others
- Children are provided with models of people who achieve, despite challenges
- All children have opportunities to learn new skills by observing and imitating other children
- Children are encouraged to be resourceful, creative, and cooperative
- Children are more sensitive to the interests and needs of others
- Positive attitudes are developed that impact future relationships
A PARENT’S PERSPECTIVE
WHAT IS CURRICULUM MODIFICATION?

SMALL CHANGE, 
BIG IMPACT

- Increases a child’s ability to participate
- Requires just a little extra thought and planning
- Is easy to implement
- Has a fairly immediate impact if it’s going to work
- Does not need additional resources, in most cases
WHY USE MODIFICATIONS & ADAPTIONS?

Access + Participation = Increased learning!
WHEN DO I MODIFY THE CURRICULUM?

When a child is not fully participating in a meaningful way.
CURRICULUM MODIFICATIONS:
AN INTRODUCTION
Safe, responsive, and nurturing environments are an important part of supporting the learning and development of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Such environments also help to prevent challenging behaviors and serve as a core component of interventions for infants and young children with identified disabilities.

“Environmental practices refer to aspects of the space, materials, equipment, routines, and activities that practitioners and families can intentionally alter to support each child’s learning across developmental domains.”

(DEC-RP)
A well-designed, safe, and responsive environment is an essential first step in including young children with developmental delays/disabilities in early childhood settings such as inclusive preschool, Head Start, and childcare programs. If, however, the learning environment does not provide the support necessary to help children with developmental delays/disabilities to succeed, teachers must make changes to maximize their participation in planned activities, interactions, and routines. These intentional changes can be small and are often easy to implement, yet they can yield immediate improvement in the level of child participation and learning.
TYPES OF MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS
ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATIONS & ADAPTIONS

- Altering the physical, social, and/or temporal environment to promote participation, engagement and learning
  - Physical environment is the overall design and layout of a room, including its learning centers, materials and furnishings.
  - Social environment refers to the way that a classroom environment influences or supports the interactions that occur among young children, teachers, and family members.
  - Term temporal environment refers to the timing, sequence, and length of routines and activities that take place throughout the school day.
VIDEO: Using Visual Supports
VIDEO: Blue Tray
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Physical environment is the overall design and layout of a room, including its learning centers, materials and furnishings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High-Quality</th>
<th>Less-Supportive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="High-Quality Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Less-Supportive Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In this high-quality environment:**

- The bookshelves, easels, and other furniture are used to break the room into small centers.
- A variety of materials are available and accessible to children.
- Visuals are placed at eye-level to support children in understanding the day's schedules and routines.
- Window shades are fully open to take advantage of natural light. A lamp and string of lights help to further offset the fluorescent light in the room.

**In this less-supportive environment:**

- The wide-open space* and uniform carpet color are not supportive in helping children to know what to do.
- The areas are not separated.
- The cubbies are poorly organized.
- The visuals are placed well above the children's eye-level.

* Note: This teacher may need more open space if one of her children uses a wheelchair. If this is the case, decisions regarding space must be carefully considered taking into account the children in the classroom.
MATERIALS ADAPTATION

- Modifying the position, stability, or size of materials and/or the response required so that the child can participate more fully.
STRATEGIES FOR MATERIALS ADAPTATION
VIDEO: Materials Adaptation
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- Using special or adaptive devices that allow a child to participate or increase the child’s level of participation.
This Rifton type chair provides more stability to support this child’s trunk so that she can fully participate in meal times alongside her peers.
Wooden cube placed under his feet allows his legs to be stable, while still sitting in a chair high enough to be at the table with his peers.
VIDEO: Using Special Equipment
SIMPLIFY THE ACTIVITY

- Simplifying a complicated task by breaking it down into smaller parts or by reducing the number of steps.
VIDEO: Ideas from the Field
Process chart provides child with visual reminder of the steps to washing hands.
A child wears a “chase me” hat, so that her peers have an easy visual cue as to who is the one to chase.
BREAK IT DOWN
ACTIVITY
Adult Support

- Having an adult step in to model, join the child’s play, and/or use encouragement to support the child’s participation and learning.
DISCUSSION

- How do you give praise or encouragement to children?
JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF SUPPORT

- Facilitate independence.
- Look for signs of progress.
- Decrease support as skill level improves.
- Be prepared for variable behavior.
VIDEO: What Would You Do?
CHILD PREFERENCES

- Identifying and integrating the child’s preferred toys, activities, or people to motivate the child to take advantage of available opportunities.
VIDEO: Integrating Child Preferences
PEER SUPPORT

- Utilizing peers to model, help, and/or offer encouragement to support the child’s participation and membership.
QUALITIES OF SUPPORTIVE PEERS

Caring • Patient • Flexible • Talkative
Playful • Positive • Affirming • Enthusiastic
VIDEO: Peers Modeling
INVISIBLE SUPPORT

- A purposeful arrangement of materials or naturally occurring events within one activity.
VIDEO: Definition and Examples
NAME THAT MODIFICATION ACTIVITY
VIDEO: Making An Impact
PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

- Observe and clarify the concern.
- Choose a modification strategy.
- Make a plan.
- Give it a try.
- Determine if it’s working.
DETERMINE IF IT’S WORKING

Is it working?

**YES**
- Improving—Keep it up!
- Fully participating—Phase out support.

**NO**
- No improvement—Try something else.
- Still no improvement—Consider increasing support.
DEAR TEACHERS