Strategies for Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Early Childhood Environments

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Who are we? Who are you?

- Presenters: Kathy Meredith and Andrea Bartholomew

Who is in the room today?

- Teachers
  - Child Care
  - State-funded preschool
  - Head Start
- Administrators
- Others
Session Norms

• Take care of you

• Ask questions, tell stories

• Be open and honest, no judgement of self or others

• Relax and enjoy learning!
Individual Adaptations and Modifications to Support Inclusion

- Identifying Individual Child Needs
- Tips on Using Reinforcement Effectively
- Implementation of Individualized Supports
Key Points:

• How to evaluate key skills for new children

• How to assess current classroom implementation for simple changes that can improve individualized instruction

• Key strategies that can support individual children’s participation and success in the classroom
Guiding Principles

• Foundation for classroom is a High-Quality setting for typically developing children
• Inclusion from Day 1
• Typical children are more than models for appropriate behavior
• Learning and instruction continues until behaviors are generalized across contexts
• Utilization of a variety of Evidence-based interventions (PBS, Peers, functional communication systems, systematic instruction)
Inclusion in Kentucky

• The state-funded preschool program in Kentucky is intended to be inclusive of students with disabilities.

• Approximately 75% of all preschool students with disabilities are included in the regular preschool classroom in Kentucky.

• Kentucky ranks in the top 10 states for inclusive programs for preschool, based on national data collected by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center.
“If you know the what and the why, the how becomes easier”

Deidra Harris

- We know the underlying reason most children 0-5 years exhibit challenging behaviors is due to lack of emotional and social competence.
- We also know that a small percentage of children exhibit challenging behaviors as a result of their cognitive disability or trauma.
Pyramid Model Framework
Framework for Successful Inclusion

High Quality EC Setting
- Classroom Environment
- Classroom Schedule
- Adult Roles and Responsibilities
- Building Relationships and Promoting Participation

General Classroom Modification
- Routines
- Visual Support
- Social Skills Instruction

Individualized Supports
- Using Reinforcement
- Individual Schedules
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication
- Structured Teaching
- Data-base Decision Making
- PBIS

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The Initial Assessment Should Focus on:

1. **Reinforcer Assessment**: What does the child LOVE???

2. **Child’s Social Interest**: Do they show interest, are they aloof, do they actively avoid? Is it the same across adults and peers?

3. **Play Skills/Engagement**: When left on their own what do they play with? Is it fleeting or sustained? Do you need to actively teach play skills?

4. **Language/Communication Ability**: How does the child communicate their wants and needs? Do they have a consistent functional communication system?

5. **Behaviors**: Are their behaviors of concern? Can you identify the functions (SEAT: Sensory, Escape, Attention, Tangible)
Things You Want to Be Working on Day 1

Use the assessment data from the previous slide to make decisions when thinking about the following:

• Social Responsiveness
• Play skills
• Engagement
• Language and Communication: **Every Day, All Day**
“The way positive reinforcement is carried out is more important than the amount.”

B. F. Skinner
Using Reinforcement

• Reinforcer: Increases the probability that a behavior will occur again.
• Types of Reinforcement (There are many!)
  • Tangibles
  • Edibles
  • Attention
  • Social
  • Sensory
Identifying Potential Reinforcers

Use Multiple Methods
• Observations
• Interviews
• Reduced List
• Quick Paired-comparison
Handout 1 and 2: Reinforcement Inventory Forms

www.challengingbehavior.org
Keys to Using Reinforcement

• Reinforce Immediately
• Pair Tangibles and Positive Descriptive Feedback
• Be Behavior Specific
• Fade Tangible Reinforcement
Individual Supports

1. How can I change the environment to better support an individual?
2. How can I modify/change an activity to better support an individual?
3. How can I modify/change the materials to better support an individual?
4. How can I modify my instruction to better support an individual?
1. Modifying the Environment

- General Classroom Design
- Opening and closing centers
- Broad use of Visual Supports
- Adapt the Physical Environment
Example – Visually Distracting Environment
Example – Visually Inviting Environment
2. Modify Activities

Routines\(^3\) established throughout the day
- Beginning, Middle and End
- Answers to the Four Questions

Activity specific visuals to create clear expectations
- Center choice system
- Play scripts or visuals (mini schedules) for activities
- Large Group Easel – Visual Focal Point

Promotion of peer-peer interactions across the day
Arrival Sign In

Modifications
• Beginning, Middle, End
• Visual Supports
• Individualization

Embedded Instruction
• Peer Interactions
• Name Identification
• Writing Name
Play Scripts

- Helps teach the play skills, generate ideas, supports engagement
- Provides Beginning, Middle, End
- Promotes peer interactions
Art Activities

- Clear Beginning, Middle, End
- Visuals of process (steps)
- Peers as Table Captains
Setting Up Activities to Promote Social Engagement

- Embedding Peer-to-Peer interaction routines
- Putting children in positions that promote interactions
- Establishing expectations around peer interactions
3. Modify Materials

• Rotate Materials and Centers
• Balance of new/novel and existing/familiar
• Establish clear Beginning, Middle and End for Activities
• Personalize Materials
• Include High Preference materials
4. Modify Instruction

- Naturalistic Instruction (wait time!!!)
- Systematic
- Embedded Instruction
- Individualized Reinforcers
- Structured Teaching (i.e., Workbaskets)
- Additional Visuals
  - Individual Schedules
  - Picture Communication Systems (AAC)
- Large Group Monitoring
Handout #3-Direction Delivery: Prompting Hierarchy

Providing Helping Prompts

Natural Cue
Verbal Direction
Visual Cue, Model, Gesture
Partial Assistance
Full Assistance

Least to Most Help
Most to Least Help
When implementing a prompting hierarchy...

• Always provide the help needed for a child to be successful

• Always describe what you are doing so children know what to expect and can feel safe and secure

• Provide extra positive descriptive feedback and celebration as the child is learning a new skill
Individual Support Strategies

- Individual Schedules
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
- Structured Teaching
Individual Schedules

• Additional visual supports for a specific child (or children).

• Basic types of schedules
  1. First – Then
  2. Move to “All Done” Pocket
  3. Reveal Step by Step
  4. Use as a Transition Tool (match to sample)
First - Then

• An additional visual strategy used to clearly define a sequence of events.
• Based on the Premack Principle
  • “First do ________ Then you can _______________”
Visual Schedules

Move to All Done

- Child checks their schedule, moves the completed activity to the “All Done” pocket and then knows what is next.

Use as a Transition Tool

- Child checks their schedule, takes the picture for the next activity and travels with it to the next event/activity.
- Matches the traveling picture to a sample posted in that area.
Individualization

• How the schedule should be used needs to be individualized

• Progress towards independence
Pyramid Model Resources

Visual Supports for Routines, Schedules and Transitions (challengingbehavior.org)

This link will take you directly to a resource that provides the actual first/then templates, real pictures and specific directions for how to develop visual supports
Toddler Transition Strategy

Toddler Classroom Waiting Activities

In this one-year old toddler classroom the children are moving from hand washing to going outside. While one teacher helps the children with hand washing the other teacher does interactive activities with those children who are waiting including reviewing the visual outside rules. Once they are ready to go, the teacher reviews the expectations for moving from the classroom to going outside.
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Emphasis should be on a Total Communication Approach

• Using simple sign language and gestures
• Core Language Boards
• Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
• Audio Output Devices (Big Mac, Dinovox, tablets, etc.)
Utilization of AAC

• Promotes participation for non or emerging verbal children.
• Must be incorporated throughout the day.
• Must be utilized with peers as well as adults.
• MUST Emphasize the Social Aspect of communication!!!

This video shows a class singing a song led by the teacher. A switch is used by a student to respond with her peers to the pause in the song.

AAC Video.mov
Structured Teaching
Mobile Work Bins

Work Bins/Baskets
- Structured system to support children that have a hard time maintaining engagement or children that need additional support learning specific play skills
- Incorporate it into the broader classroom (not tucked in a corner)
Structured Teaching
Work Boxes

- Teaches a progression of left to right
- Teaches completion of a task
- Uses concrete tasks with clear beginning and end
- Incorporates reinforcement throughout
Visual Support Examples
This video is of two children playing a game of tossing balls in a bucket. One child is supporting another in completing the task of refilling their bucket so they can toss more balls into the larger bucket.
Major Messages to Take Home

• Some children will need additional support to learn social-emotional skills.
• Individualized teaching occurs within relationships as children engage in routines, interactions and activities.
• Teachers should partner with families to identify skills to target.
• To provide individualized teaching, you need to identify how and when the skill will be taught and monitor the child’s progress in learning the skill.
Individualizing Instruction Key Points

• Get to know the child’s strengths and needs including strong reinforcers.
• Incorporate the use of systematic Reinforcement in your instruction.
• Look for ways to adapt/modify the Environment, Activities, Materials and Instruction.
• Utilize Individual Support Strategies (e.g., visual supports and schedules, AAC and structured teaching)
• Have systems in place to monitor and track progress, use data to drive your instruction
References:

• Pyramid Model Consortium; www.pyramidmodel.org
• University of Denver; Morgridge College of Education
• The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations; www.challengingbehavior.org
• The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center; www.ECTAcenter.org