Facilitator's Guide

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Stream from http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators_pd/
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Introduction

This professional development training module is designed to help you lead educators in using best practices to individualize instruction. It is one of several modules developed for early childhood educators by the Department of Early Education and Care of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

This training meets the guidelines for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) as outlined by the Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children (MassAEYC).

For more information about this professional development training module, visit http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators_pd/.

About this Guide

This Facilitator's Guide provides instructions and narrative for delivering a video-based training for early childhood educators. You'll find an agenda, learning goals, preparation suggestions, talking points, activities, and handouts. You'll also find general tips and resources to help you facilitate the training. Use these materials with the accompanying videos to lead family child care and center- and school-based educators in an engaging, content-rich training.

Note: To access the videos referenced in this guide, go to http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators_pd/. Select "Individualizing Instruction." Be sure you have access to the videos prior to and while leading this training.

Learning Goals

After participating in this training, educators will be able to:

- Summarize the best practices for individualizing instruction.

- Recognize and consider each child's skills, interests, and abilities in order to plan instruction.

- Describe how demonstrating, modeling, and guiding learning helps to scaffold learning.

- Create and express clear program rules and expectations.

- Apply new knowledge to current practices.

Agenda

Introduction	15 minutes
Individualizing Instruction (Overview)	5 minutes
Assess and Plan	15–20 minutes
Demonstrate and Scaffold	15–20 minutes
BREAK (optional)	5–10 minutes
Communicate Expectations	15–20 minutes
Try It	15–20 minutes
Wrap Up	5–10 minutes
Total Time	**90–120 minutes**

Preparation

Before leading this training, you should:

- Watch the videos and get to know the best practices.

- Read through the training module. Become familiar with the talking points so that you can share them in a natural, conversational way.

- Obtain and test the technology you need to share the videos with participants and make sure you have a reliable Internet connection during the training.

- Gather any props or materials needed for the Try It activity.

- Rehearse and fine-tune your presentation to "make it your own." Time yourself to make sure you are within the allotted time.

- Create a handout packet with copies of the following for each participant:

  o Self-Assessment

  o Learning Log

  o Try It

  o Best Practices

  o Standards

  o Training Evaluation

- Consider working with a partner the first time you lead this training. You can learn from and support each other when preparing, practicing, and facilitating. After the training, you can reflect on participants' evaluations together.

Facilitation Tips

Whether you're a new or experienced facilitator, these tips can help your training run smoothly.

- Arrive early to prepare the training room for optimal learning.

  - Place handout packets where participants check in.

  - Have pens or pencils and paper on every table.

  - Check your technology setup to make sure videos play without problem.

- Create a space that is inviting and comfortable.

  - Play soft music as people arrive.

  - Greet participants with a smile and a handshake. A personal introduction helps set the stage for collaboration and learning.

- Invite partner or small group discussion.

  - Before the training begins, invite educators to identify a partner. People learn best when they have a chance to talk about what they are learning or thinking.

  - Allow a few minutes for partners to introduce themselves to each other.

  - During the training, provide opportunities for partner interaction.

- Keep participants engaged.

  - Follow the "ten-two rule" as you present the training: Speak for no longer than ten minutes at a time and then provide participants at least two minutes of interaction or activity.

  - Avoid simply reading the talking points that have been provided. Become familiar with each point so that you can keep the training engaging, fluid, and conversational.

Icebreaker Ideas

When working with a group of educators who may or may not know each other, it's a good idea to provide a few moments to "break the ice." This allows people to relax, laugh, move, and get to know each other (and you!). Below are just a few ideas you can use to begin a training session.

That's Me!

Read a statement aloud to the group. Ask participants to stand up, raise a hand in the air, and shout *That's me!* if the statement applies to them. It's fun to see which statements apply to all participants and which do not apply to any. Statements might include:

- *I teach at a family child care.*

- *I have worked with children for five years or more.*

- *I was born in Massachusetts.*

- *I write down the funny things that kids say.*

- *I laugh out loud at least once a day.*

- *I check Pinterest at least once a week.*

- *I have no idea what Pinterest is.*

- *I believe that there is no problem that good chocolate can't solve.*

You can come up with your own statements or invite a few participants to come up with statements. When they say their statement aloud, others (including you) can reply, *That's me!*

Weave a Web

Holding onto a ball of yarn, share your name and an interesting fact about yourself with participants. Keep the end piece as you toss the ball of yarn to a participant. Ask the participant to share his or her name and a personal fact, and hold onto the yarn as they toss the ball to another participant. Continue until everyone has had a turn and the "web" is complete.

Two Truths and a Lie

Ask participants to jot down two truths and one lie about themselves or their work with children. For example:

- *I speak Japanese.*

- *I am related to Davy Crockett.*

- *I have three sets of twins in my program this year.*

Form participants into small groups of three or four people. Have each person in the group read their statements aloud and ask the rest of the group to guess which statement is not true.

Four Corners

Post a word from a set of four related words in each corner of the room, such as:

- *lion, bear, eagle, deer*

- *desert, beach, mountain, city*

- *sushi, salad, enchilada, pizza*

- *hybrid, convertible, truck, Mustang*

Ask participants, *Are you a hybrid, convertible, truck or Mustang?* Direct participants to move to the corner of the room with which they most identify. Ask participants, now in small groups in their corners, to share with one another why they chose that corner and how it represents their interests, so that they can discover common attributes they may share. Have each small group pick one person to share the group's common attributes with the larger group. Repeat the process with another set of four words as many times as you like.

People Bingo

Photocopy and distribute the "bingo card" below. Invite participants to find people who match a fact listed on the card and have them sign off on that fact. Each person can sign off on only one fact. Explain that when a participant has obtained five signatures in a row (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally), he or she should shout *Bingo!* and introduce the people who signed his or her card to the rest of the group.

People Bingo

Has traveled outside the U.S.	Likes pineapple on pizza	Has lived in MA for more than 10 years	Knows how to juggle	Has never been on a plane
Can speak a foreign language	Has 3 or more brothers	Likes to camp	Has been scuba diving	Reads the Sunday paper
Likes to scrapbook	Has a summer birthday	F R E E S P A C E	Likes to garden	Can say the alphabet backwards
Likes math	Does crossword puzzles	Owns a cat	Has been to Alaska	Likes to run
Likes thunderstorms	Has watched a meteor shower	Is afraid of snakes	Knows how to sew	Can play basketball

Training

Introduction   (15 minutes)

Welcome Participants to the Training

- Introduce yourself and share your background and experience.

- Announce the length of the training (1½–2 hours) and note other logistics, such as break times, restroom location, and so on.

- Review the agenda and explain the structure of the training.

    o Participants will watch an overview video and then three short videos that explore best practices in creating a learning environment.

    o After each video, participants will briefly discuss the main points and reflect on what they have learned.

    o Participants will also have the opportunity to share and reflect on their own practices.

- Share the learning goals and objectives. Participants will:

    o Explore the best practices for individualizing instruction.

    o Assess and use each child's interests, talents, needs, and abilities in order to create individualized activities, adaptations, or extensions.

    o Understand how to demonstrate, guide, and model in order to scaffold and support learning.

    o Communicate rules and expectations clearly and consistently.

    o Apply new knowledge to current practices.

- Introduce the Learning Log.

    o The Learning Log includes questions to help participants identify best practices and distill the important points made in each video. The *viewing questions* reinforce ideas from the videos. The *reflection questions* help educators draw connections to their own experiences.

    o The Learning Log can also be used to jot down notes, questions, and ideas.

- Consider doing an icebreaker activity to get participants "warmed up" and ready to learn and interact. (See Icebreaker Ideas for suggestions.)

- Ask each participant to identify a partner to work with during the training and encourage them to share ideas. (You can offer small group discussions if you prefer.)

Complete the Self-Assessment

Educators grow and hone their skills by continually identifying their own strengths and training needs and reflecting on their own practices.

- Invite participants to complete the first half of the Self-Assessment to help them discover the skills they already possess and to identify those they would like to work on.

- Explain that toward the end of the training, participants will complete the second half of the Self-Assessment to measure their growth and learning.

Individualizing Instruction   (5 minutes)

Introduce the Topic

No two children are alike. Each child comes to us with different interests, talents, needs, and abilities. Although the learning goals remain the same for all children, educators need to tailor instruction accordingly. This individualizing of instruction can be done by assessing children's strengths and challenges in order to plan for individualized instruction, demonstrating and guiding the learning, and clearly communicating rules, routines, and expectations.

Introduce and View the Video

Introduce the overview video featuring Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Associate Professor of Education at Wheelock College. Use this brief video to set the stage for a discussion of best practices in individualizing instruction.

"Individualizing Instruction"   (approx. 2 min)

Assess and Plan   (15–20 minutes)

Introduce the Best Practice

To successfully create learning opportunities for children, educators need to know the particular interests each child has—what "makes a child tick" as Professor Villegas-Reimers says in the overview video. It's also important for educators to assess each child's skill level and understanding by carefully observing and interacting one-on-one, in small groups, and with the whole class. This enables educators to tailor activities, interventions, and teaching strategies.

- **Be proactive.** Get to know each child. As educators watch, listen to, and engage with children throughout the day, they should note children's abilities and challenges.

- **Create fun and engaging learning opportunities** by using what you know about each child's special interests, expertise, and favorite things.

- **Encourage children's learning** by helping them succeed. Educators can then provide opportunities for each child to move to a higher skill level.

Introduce and View the Video

Tell participants they will watch a brief video of center-based and family child care educators as they listen to and observe children to assess each child's unique characteristics. The educators use what they see and hear to plan activities and interactions to meet each child's learning needs.

"Assess and Plan"   (approx. 2 min)

Ask participants to look for effective strategies used by the educators in the video. Use these questions to guide their viewing:

- *How can educators assess children's unique interests, challenges, and abilities?*

- *How do the educators use what they know about each child to plan for and implement instruction?*

Partner/Small Group Share

After viewing the video, get participants thinking, talking, and learning together.

- Invite participants to share with each other, in pairs or small groups, what they noticed as they watched. Challenge them to use the language stem *I noticed…* rather than *I liked….*

- Suggest that participants jot down notes, ideas, or questions in their Learning Log.

Review

Share and expand on key points covered in the video. Use the following questions and talking points in your discussion. Ask participants to offer examples from the video as well as to draw upon their own experiences.

Why is it important to assess the individual traits of each child?

- Each child has different learning levels and needs. The information that educators gather when observing and listening to children can be used to support, encourage, and engage children in learning.

  - If you notice that a child likes dinosaurs, use books about dinosaurs to teach letter sounds and concepts of print, use toy dinosaurs at the math table for counting, and provide dinosaur props in the Pretend and Play Center.

   o   If a child or a group of children are having trouble with a concept or skill, such as sorting, use a small group setting to model the skill or explain the concept.

How can educators assess each child's unique interests, needs, and abilities?

- Observe each child's interactions and ask questions. As you do, note individual children's successes or challenges.

    o   At the Block Center, you might ask: *What shapes are you using to build your tower? How many blocks do you have left?*

    o   Review concepts or ideas children may not fully grasp*.* In the video, Min-Jen quickly reviews what the idea of a pattern is as she asks what color comes next.

Why is it important for educators to recognize and respond to children's strengths?

- Notice and praise children's successes. This helps children gain a sense of mastery and self-worth. As Min-Jen explains in the video, *I catch the moment when they are really good at something.*

- Specific and positive feedback that focuses on the child's effort and perseverance helps give children confidence to engage in more difficult tasks. For example, *Wow! You are learning to zip your coat all by yourself! You have been working hard on that* is more effective than a general comment like *Good job!*

View Again (optional)
Emphasize the key messages by showing the video a second time, if possible. Seeing the video again will give participants an opportunity to notice things they may have missed and to expand their learning.

Reflect
Help participants make the connection between what they have learned and what they do in their own programs. Ask them to answer the *reflection questions* in the Learning Log.

Demonstrate and Scaffold   (15–20 minutes)

Introduce the Best Practice
One of the best ways to guide young children's learning is to model a task from beginning to end. By hearing and watching the educator's process, children learn to think through a task and to understand what needs to happen first, next, and so on.

- **Demonstrate and explain.** As you model the activity, show how to do it by explaining and showing each step.

- **Provide time for children to practice.** Respond and coach children as they work. This "guided" practice will help reinforce what they are learning.

- **Scaffold the learning.** Provide supports, such as prompts, specific questions, or reminders that can help children follow instructions and learn.

Introduce and View the Video

Tell educators they'll watch another video, this time focusing on how educators demonstrate and scaffold tasks to meet each child's learning needs.

Ask participants to look for effective strategies used by the educators in the video. Use these questions to guide their viewing:

"Demonstrate and Scaffold"   (approx. 3 min)

- *How do the educators demonstrate and scaffold the learning?*

- *What types of cues do the educators give to children to help them learn?*

Partner/Small Group Share

After viewing the video, get participants thinking, talking, and learning together.

- Invite participants to share with each other, in pairs or small groups, what they noticed as they watched. Challenge them to use the language stem *I noticed…* rather than *I liked…*.

- Suggest that participants jot down notes, ideas, or questions in their Learning Log.

Review

Share and expand on key points covered in the video. Use the following questions and talking points in your discussion. Ask participants to offer examples from the video as well as to draw upon their own experiences.

How can educators demonstrate and guide learning?

- Demonstrating and guiding learning supports each child's specific skills and understanding. This also helps scaffold the learning.

  o As you demonstrate an activity, describe what you are doing. For example, in the video, Min-Jen shows a visual example of the pattern and then breaks down the task into steps. You might also make a chart that gives step-by-step directions or show an example of a completed activity for children to reference as they work.

  o Have children do each step with your guidance and encouragement. This type of guided practice encourages children as they learn.

o   Give children time to work independently, providing additional modeling or guided practice if needed. For example, in the video when the children plant grass seed, Karen is aware of their frustration levels and intervenes when they need help.

How does individualized instruction influence the scaffolding educators use?

• Like the instruction, the scaffolds are specific to each child. For example, in the video, Cary knows that a particular child needs extra help in understanding a concept in the Block Center. She refers to the child's family in order to help him understand the number of blocks he is using and how they relate to each other in size. Cary then models the appropriate vocabulary and prompts the child to use the word "medium" by pausing and letting him fill in the word.

View Again (optional)
Emphasize the key messages by showing the video a second time, if possible. Seeing the video again will give participants an opportunity to notice things they may have missed and to expand their learning.

Reflect
Help participants make the connection between what they have learned and what they do in their own programs. Ask them to answer the *reflection questions* in the Learning Log.

Break (optional)   (5–10 minutes)

Communicate Expectations   (15–20 minutes)

Introduce the Best Practice
Establishing, communicating, and enforcing clear rules, routines, and expectations is important so that children can feel safe, secure, and competent. By better understanding what is expected of them, children can achieve the intended outcome and feel good about their performance. As you add new tasks, be sure that each child understands how it fits into the day.

• **Communicate expectations** in a way that children can understand. Use simple language, role-playing, and repetition to explain concepts, rules, or tasks.

• **Use a variety of communication methods** geared to children's different learning needs. For instance, charts or posters, calendars, photographs with captions, and "to do" lists are all ways that children may be able to understand and refer to the rules.

- **Individualize instruction by using a variety of reinforcements.** Some children may need to be reminded often, respond to signals such as visual cues or songs, or will need the rule to be rephrased in order to help them understand.

- **Periodically discuss and review routines and expectations**. This may be especially important to do after a holiday break or when a new child joins the group.

- **Redirect inappropriate behavior** calmly and kindly, yet firmly.

Introduce and View the Video

In this video, participants will see educators model how to clearly communicate rules, routines, and expectations. Depending on their needs, children receive varying kinds and amounts of attention from the adults.

Ask participants to look for effective strategies used by the educators in the video. Use these questions to guide their viewing:

"Communicate Expectations"   (approx. 3 min)

- *What do you notice about the routines that have been established in each learning environment?*

- *What cues do the educators use to help children understand the routines and expectations?*

Partner/Small Group Share

After viewing the video, get participants thinking, talking, and learning together.

- Invite participants to share with each other, in pairs or small groups, what they noticed as they watched. Challenge them to use the language stem *I noticed…* rather than *I liked….*

- Suggest that participants jot down notes, ideas, or questions in their Learning Log.

Review

Share and expand on key points covered in the video. Use the following questions and talking points in your discussion. Ask participants to offer examples from the video as well as to draw upon their own experiences.

What routines did the educators use? How might these help the children navigate through the day?

- Routines help children know what to expect and help them to regulate their behavior accordingly. In the video, Min-Jen uses different-colored name cards and emphasizes the word "walk" by saying it loudly and slowly, in order to help children move on to their next activity.

How did educators communicate rules, routines, and how children are expected to behave?

- Cues help children transition from one activity or task to another. In the video, in addition to verbal cues, Liz uses auditory cues, such as music, along with visual reminders (turning the lights off).

- Non-verbal cues are also familiar methods. Educators can use a whispery voice, put their fingers to your lips, or raise a finger in the air to signal quiet. In the video, Liz has children mark the end of the activity by putting their hands on their heads.

- A fun "clean-up" song, used consistently, lets children know that an activity is coming to an end and that they are expected to help clean up the area.

- Children have different responses to the beginning and ending of the program day. "Hello" and "goodbye" routines help children make those important transitions more smoothly.

View Again (optional)

Emphasize the key messages by showing the video a second time, if possible. Seeing the video again will give participants an opportunity to notice things they may have missed and to expand their learning.

Reflect

Help participants make the connection between what they have learned and what they do in their own program. Ask them to answer the reflection questions in the Learning Log.

Try It   (15–20 minutes)

The Try It activity helps educators plan how to apply new ideas to their own early childhood program. Ask participants to work with a partner and direct their attention to the Try It handout in their packets.

Case Studies

Participants will individualize instruction for each "case study."

- Invite participants to break into groups of four by counting off numbers one through four.

- Assign a case study to each group using the corresponding number (e.g., assign Child #1 to Group #1; see the Try It handout for case studies).

- Ask each group to read the description of the child in their case study, and have them answer questions about individualizing instruction based on that child's needs.

- Have each small group share their case study and ideas with the larger group.

Wrap Up   (5–10 minutes)

- Invite participants to complete the second half of the **"Self-Assessment"** and then measure their growth and learning.

- Ask participants to look over their notes from the training and jot down three things that they want to remember from today in their Learning Log.

- Invite partners or small groups to meet and share their three "keepers." Then ask a few participants to share their "keepers" with the larger group.

- Thank participants for attending.

- Encourage them to fill out and return the Training Evaluation.

Glossary

guided practice: practice of a process, behavior, or tasks that happen alongside an educator or coach

individualized instruction: instruction that is planned and implemented based on the individual interests, strengths, and needs of each child

modeling: explicitly demonstrating a process, behavior, or task

scaffold: a specialized instructional support that helps children learn; examples include prompts, hints, reminders, or models

visual and auditory cues: signals and other indicators to let children know that something is about to begin or end

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Self-Assessment

Name: _____   **Date:** _____

Before the training: Place a ✓ in the box that best represents your current comfort level.
After the training: Place a ✓ in the box that best represents your new comfort level.

1 = Very uncomfortable 2 = Uncomfortable 3 = Neutral 4 = Comfortable 5 = Very comfortable

	Before					After				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
General **I am comfortable with my ability to . . .**										
Recognize and respond to the individual learning needs of children.										
Plan activities and use strategies that help each child learn.										
Assess and Plan **I am comfortable with my ability to . . .**										
Observe and note the unique interests, needs, and abilities of each child.										
Use what I know about each child to create fun and engaging learning opportunities for individuals and the group.										
Recognize and respond specifically to children's strengths.										
Demonstrate and Scaffold **I am comfortable with my ability to . . .**										
Scaffold learning using modeling and guided practice.										
Assess how children are responding to instruction and make changes accordingly.										
Communicate Expectations **I am comfortable with my ability to . . .**										
Clearly communicate rules and expectations.										
Use individualized learning to support children's understanding of rules and expectations.										
Use a variety of auditory, visual, and verbal cues to help children follow rules and meet expectations.										

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Learning Log

Assess and Plan

View
In the video:

- *How can educators assess children's unique interests, challenges, and abilities?*

- *How do the educators use what they know about each child to plan for and implement instruction?*

Reflect
In your program:

- *How are you already recognizing and responding to the unique interests, skills, and abilities of each child in your program?*

- *What supports could you add that would help you meet the unique learning needs of the children in your program?*

Notes

Demonstrate and Scaffold

View
In the video:

- *How do the educators demonstrate and scaffold the learning?*

- *What types of cues do the educators give to children to help them learn?*

Reflect
In your program:

- *How are you already demonstrating and guiding learning to respond to the different strengths and challenges of each child?*

- *How can you better use scaffolding and create more individualized instruction for each child in your program?*

Notes

Communicate Expectations

View

In the video:

- *What do you notice about the routines that have been established in each learning environment?*

- *What cues do the educators use to help children understand the routines and expectations?*

Reflect

In your program:

- *What are some of the routines that you have already established in your learning environment? What strategies do you use to help children understand and follow the routines?*

- *How can you more clearly communicate rules and expectations? Name some strategies you could add to the ones you already use.*

Notes

Try It

Case Studies

Individualize instruction for children "case studies."

Read the description of each child and answer the questions that follow.

Child #1
Boy, age 4, loves dinosaurs and drawing. He can recognize the letters in his own name, but he is still learning other letters of the alphabet. He has trouble keeping his hands to himself. He often pushes other children when he does not get his own way.

Child #2
Girl, age 5, loves horses, dress-up, and outdoor play. She is already reading, but is still working on being able to write her letters clearly. When she is with a group of children, she has trouble taking turns.
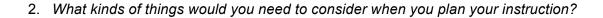
Child #3
Boy, age 3, loves cars and anything that makes a lot of noise! He is often not aware of the children around him. He zooms around the room and sometimes inadvertently runs into other children. He has trouble making friends and usually plays alone during outdoor play or free time.

Child #4
Girl, age 4, loves drawing and working puzzles. She is very shy and has difficulty making eye contact with children and adults. She follows the rules, but rarely offers to speak up or share her thinking. During center time, she gravitates toward spaces where she can be alone.

Try It (CONTINUED)

1. *How could you get to know this child better? What questions could you ask to find out more about his or her special interests, talents, skills, and abilities?*

2. *What kinds of things would you need to consider when you plan your instruction?*

3. *How might this child become more motivated?*

4. *What strategies would you use to communicate routines and expectations for this child?*

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Best Practices

No two children are alike. Each child comes to us with different interests, talents, needs, and abilities. Although the learning goals remain the same for all children, educators need to tailor instruction accordingly. This individualizing of instruction can be done by assessing children's strengths and challenges in order to plan for individualized instruction, demonstrating and guiding the learning, and clearly communicating rules, routines, and expectations.

Assess and Plan

To successfully create learning opportunities for children, educators need to know the particular interests each child has—what "makes a child tick" as Professor Villegas-Reimers says in the overview video. It's also important for educators to assess each child's skill level and understanding by carefully observing and interacting one-on-one, in small groups, and with the whole class. This enables educators to tailor activities, interventions, and teaching strategies.

- **Be proactive.** Get to know each child. As educators watch, listen to, and engage with children throughout the day, they should note children's abilities and challenges.

- **Create fun and engaging learning opportunities** by using what you know about each child's special interests, expertise, and favorite things.

- **Encourage children's learning** by helping them succeed. Educators can then provide opportunities for each child to move to a higher skill level.

Why is it important to assess the individual traits of each child?

- Each child has different learning levels and needs. The information that educators gather when observing and listening to children can be used to support, encourage, and engage children in learning.

    - If you notice that a child likes dinosaurs, use books about dinosaurs to teach letter sounds and concepts of print, use toy dinosaurs at the math table for counting, and provide dinosaur props in the Pretend and Play Center.

    - If a child or a group of children are having trouble with a concept or skill, such as sorting, use a small group setting to model the skill or explain the concept.

How can educators assess each child's unique interests, needs, and abilities?

- Observe each child's interactions and ask questions. As you do, note individual children's successes or challenges.

- o At the Block Center, you might ask: *What shapes are you using to build your tower? How many blocks do you have left?*

- o Review concepts or ideas children may not fully grasp*.* In the video, Min-Jen quickly reviews what the idea of a pattern is as she asks what color comes next.

Why is it important for educators to recognize and respond to children's strengths?

- Notice and praise children's successes. This helps children gain a sense of mastery and self-worth. As Min-Jen explains in the video, *I catch the moment when they are really good at something.*

- Specific and positive feedback that focuses on the child's effort and perseverance helps give children confidence to engage in more difficult tasks. For example, *Wow! You are learning to zip your coat all by yourself! You have been working hard on that* is more effective than a general comment like *Good job!*

Demonstrate and Scaffold

One of the best ways to guide young children's learning is to model a task from beginning to end. By hearing and watching the educator's process, children learn to think through a task and to understand what needs to happen first, next, and so on.

- **Demonstrate and explain.** As you model the activity, show how to do it by explaining and showing each step.

- **Provide time for children to practice.** Respond and coach children as they work. This "guided" practice will help reinforce what they are learning.

- **Scaffold the learning.** Provide supports, such as prompts, specific questions, or reminders that can help children follow instructions and learn.

How can educators demonstrate and guide learning?

- Demonstrating and guiding learning supports each child's specific skills and understanding. This also helps scaffold the learning.

  - o As you demonstrate an activity, describe what you are doing. For example, in the video, Min-Jen shows a visual example of the pattern and then breaks down the task into steps. You might also make a chart that gives step-by-step directions or show an example of a completed activity for children to reference as they work.

o   Have children do each step with your guidance and encouragement. This type of guided practice encourages children as they learn.

o   Give children time to work independently, providing additional modeling or guided practice if needed. For example, in the video when the children plant grass seed, Karen is aware of their frustration levels and intervenes when they need help.

How does individualized instruction influence the scaffolding educators use?

- Like the instruction, the scaffolds are specific to each child. For example, in the video, Cary knows that a particular child needs extra help in understanding a concept in the Block Center. She refers to the child's family in order to help him understand the number of blocks he is using and how they relate to each other in size. Cary then models the appropriate vocabulary and prompts the child to use the word "medium" by pausing and letting him fill in the word.

Communicate Expectations

Establishing, communicating, and enforcing clear rules, routines, and expectations is important so that children can feel safe, secure, and competent. By better understanding what is expected of them, children can achieve the intended outcome and feel good about their performance. As you add new tasks, be sure that each child understands how it fits into the day.

- **Communicate expectations** in a way that children can understand. Use simple language, role-playing, and repetition to explain concepts, rules, or tasks.

- **Use a variety of communication methods** geared to children's different learning needs. For instance, charts or posters, calendars, photographs with captions, and "to do" lists are all ways that children may be able to understand and refer to the rules.

- **Individualize instruction by using a variety of reinforcements.** Some children may need to be reminded often, respond to signals such as visual cues or songs, or will need the rule to be rephrased in order to help them understand.

- **Periodically discuss and review routines and expectations**. This may be especially important to do after a holiday break or when a new child joins the group.

- **Redirect inappropriate behavior** calmly and kindly, yet firmly.

Best Practices (CONTINUED)

What routines did the educators use? How might these help the children navigate through the day?

- Routines help children know what to expect and help them to regulate their behavior accordingly. In the video, Min-Jen uses different-colored name cards and emphasizes the word "walk" by saying it loudly and slowly, in order to help children move on to their next activity.

How did educators communicate rules, routines, and how children are expected to behave?

- Cues help children transition from one activity or task to another. In the video, in addition to verbal cues, Liz uses auditory cues, such as music, along with visual reminders (turning the lights off).

- Non-verbal cues are also familiar methods. Educators can use a whispery voice, put their fingers to your lips, or raise a finger in the air to signal quiet. In the video, Liz has children mark the end of the activity by putting their hands on their heads.

- A fun "clean-up" song, used consistently, lets children know that an activity is coming to an end and that they are expected to help clean up the area.

- Children have different responses to the beginning and ending of the program day. "Hello" and "goodbye" routines help children make those important transitions more smoothly.

Glossary

guided practice: practice of a process, behavior, or tasks that happen alongside an educator or coach

individualized instruction: instruction that is planned and implemented based on the individual interests, strengths, and needs of each child

modeling: explicitly demonstrating a process, behavior, or task

scaffold: a specialized instructional support that helps children learn; examples include prompts, hints, reminders, or models

visual and auditory cues: signals and other indicators to let children know that something is about to begin or end

View the self-paced video workshop at http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators.

BRAIN BUILDING IN PROGRESS
Resources for Early Learning

Standards

This professional development training module is aligned to Massachusetts standards and guidelines.

Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Center and School Based:

- **Curriculum and Learning 1A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity: Level 2**
  Educators demonstrate completion of formal professional development in curriculum, screening tools, and formative assessment; Program uses screening tools, progress reports, formative assessments, and information gathered through observation to set goals for individual children across all developmental domains.

- **Curriculum and Learning 1A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity: Level 4**
  Program uses progress reports, appropriate screening tools, formative assessments, and information gathered through observation to inform curriculum planning, and use results to monitor each child's progress across developmental domains, and inform program decision-making (e.g. curriculum content, strategies for improved staff implementation, and professional development.)

- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 4** Staff utilizes teaching strategies that ensure a positive classroom environment, engage children in learning and promote critical thinking skills.

Family Child Care:

- **Curriculum and Learning 1A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity: Level 2**
  Educators demonstrate completion of formal professional development in curriculum, screening tools, and formative assessment.

- **Curriculum and Learning 1A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity: Level 3**
  Educators have received formal professional development in the curriculum; documenting children's progress; and working with children from diverse languages and cultures and second language acquisition; Either directly or through a network or system, educator uses screening tools, progress reports, formative assessments, and information gathered through observation to set goals for individual children across developmental domains.

- **Curriculum and Learning 1A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity: Level 4**
Either directly or through a system or network, provider uses screening tools, progress reports formative assessments, and information gathered through observation to inform curriculum planning, and use results to monitor each child's progress across developmental domains.

- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 4** Educators utilize teaching strategies that ensure a positive learning environment, engage children in learning and promote critical thinking skills.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice:

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning B** Teachers make it a priority to know each child well, and also the people most significant in the child's life.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning B.1** Teachers establish positive, personal relationships with each child and with each child's family to better understand that child's individual needs, interests, and abilities and that family's goals, values, expectations, and childrearing practices. Teachers talk with each child and family (with a community translator, if necessary, for mutual understanding) and use what they learn to adapt their actions and planning.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning B.2** Teachers continually gather information about children in a variety of ways and monitor each child's learning and development to make plans to help children progress.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning C** Teachers take responsibility for knowing what the desired goals for the program are and how the program's curriculum is intended to achieve those goals. They carry out that curriculum through their teaching in ways that are geared to young children in general and these children in particular. Doing this includes following the predictable sequences in which children acquire specific concepts, skills, and abilities and by building on prior experiences and understandings.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning E** Teachers plan the environment, schedule, and daily activities to promote each child's learning and development.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning F** Teachers possess an extensive repertoire of skills and strategies they are able to draw on, and they know how and when to choose among them, to effectively promote each child's learning and development at that moment. Those skills include the ability to adapt curriculum,

activities, and materials to ensure full participation of all children. Those strategies include, but are not limited to, acknowledging, encouraging, giving specific feedback, modeling, demonstrating, adding challenge, giving cues or other assistance, providing information, and giving directions.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning F.2** To stimulate children's thinking and extend their learning, teachers pose problems, ask questions, and make comments and suggestions.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning F.4** To adjust the complexity and challenge of activities to suit children's level of skill and knowledge, teachers increase the challenge as children gain competence and understanding.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning F.5** To strengthen children's sense of competence and confidence as learners, motivation to persist, and willingness to take risks, teachers provide experiences for children to be genuinely successful and to be challenged.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning G** Teachers know how and when to scaffold children's learning—that is, providing just enough assistance to enable each child to perform at a skill level just beyond what the child can do on his or her own, then gradually reducing the support as the child begins to master the skill, and setting the stage for the next challenge.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning G.1** Teachers recognize and respond to the reality that in any group, children's skills will vary and they will need different levels of support. Teachers also know that any one child's level of skill and need for support will vary over time.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning G.2** Scaffolding can take a variety of forms; for example, giving the child a hint, adding a cue, modeling the skill, or adapting the materials and activities. It can be provided in a variety of contexts, not only in planned learning experiences but also in play, daily routines, and outdoor activities.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning G.3** Teachers can provide the scaffolding (e.g., the teacher models the skill) or peers can (e.g., the child's learning buddy models); in either case, it is the teacher who recognizes and plans for each child's need for support and assistance.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning H** Teachers know how and when to use the various learning formats/contexts most strategically.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning H.2** Teachers think carefully about which learning format is best for helping children achieve a desired goal, given the children's ages, development, abilities, temperaments, etc.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning I** When children have missed some of the learning opportunities necessary for school success (most often children from low- income households), programs and teachers provide them with even more extended, enriched, and intensive learning experiences than are provided to their peers.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning I.3** Recognizing the self-regulatory, linguistic, cognitive, and social benefits that high-quality play affords, teachers do not reduce play opportunities that these children critically need. Instead, teachers scaffold and model aspects of rich, mature play.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning J** Teachers make experiences in their class- rooms accessible and responsive to all children and their needs—including children who are English language learners, have special needs or disabilities, live in poverty or other challenging circumstances, or are from different cultures.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning J.1** Teachers incorporate a wide variety of experiences, materials and equipment, and teaching strategies to accommodate the range of children's individual differences in development, skills and abilities, prior experiences, needs, and interests.

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning J.4** Teachers are prepared to meet special needs of individual children, including children with disabilities and those who exhibit unusual interests and skills. Teachers use all the strategies identified here, consult with appropriate specialists and the child's family, and see that the child gets the adaptations and specialized services he or she needs to succeed in the early childhood setting.

- **(3) Planning curriculum to achieve important goals D** Teachers make meaningful connections a priority in the learning experiences they provide children, to reflect that all learners, and certainly young children, learn best when the concepts, language, and skills they encounter are related to something they know and care about, and when the new learnings are themselves interconnected in meaningful, coherent ways.

- **(3) Planning curriculum to achieve important goals D.2** Teachers plan curriculum experiences to draw on children's own interests and introduce children to things likely to interest them, in recognition that developing and extending children's interests is particularly important during the pre- school years, when children's ability to focus their attention is in its early stages.

- **(4) Assessing children's development and learning A** Assessment of young children's progress and achievements is ongoing, strategic, and purposeful. The results of assessment are used to inform the planning and implementing of experiences, to communicate with the child's family, and to evaluate and improve teachers' and the program's effectiveness.

Standards (continued)

- **(4) Assessing children's development and learning C** There is a system in place to collect, make sense of, and use the assessment information to guide what goes on in the classroom (formative assessment). Teachers use this information in planning curriculum and learning experiences and in moment-to- moment interactions with children—that is, teachers continually engage in assessment for the purpose of improving teaching and learning.

- **(4) Assessing children's development and learning D** The methods of assessment are appropriate to the developmental status and experiences of young children, and they recognize individual variation in learners and allow children to demonstrate their competence in different ways. Methods appropriate to the classroom assessment of young children, therefore, include results of teachers' observations of children, clinical interviews, collections of children's work samples, and their performance on authentic activities.

- **(4) Assessing children's development and learning E** Assessment looks not only at what children can do independently but also at what they can do with assistance from other children or adults. Therefore, teachers assess children as they participate in groups and other situations that are providing scaffolding.

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Training Evaluation

Thank you for your participation. Please indicate your impressions of the training below.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The training met my expectations.					
I will be able to apply what I have learned.					
The trainer was knowledgeable.					
The training was organized and easy to follow.					
Participation and interaction was encouraged.					
The handouts were pertinent and useful.					

1. How would you rate this training overall?

Excellent   *Good*   *Average*   *Poor*

2. What was most beneficial to you in this training?

3. What suggestions do you have to improve this training?

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