

FOUNDATIONS
to the
Indiana Academic Standards
for
Young Children
from Birth to Age 5



**Indiana Department of Education
and
Family and Social Services Administration,
Division of Family Resources,
Bureau of Child Care**

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Why have these foundations been written?

In 2001, No Child Left Behind mandated that all states develop an early learning framework to guide early childhood educators in understanding and implementing classroom practices that facilitate learning of essential skills and knowledge young children require to be prepared for kindergarten.

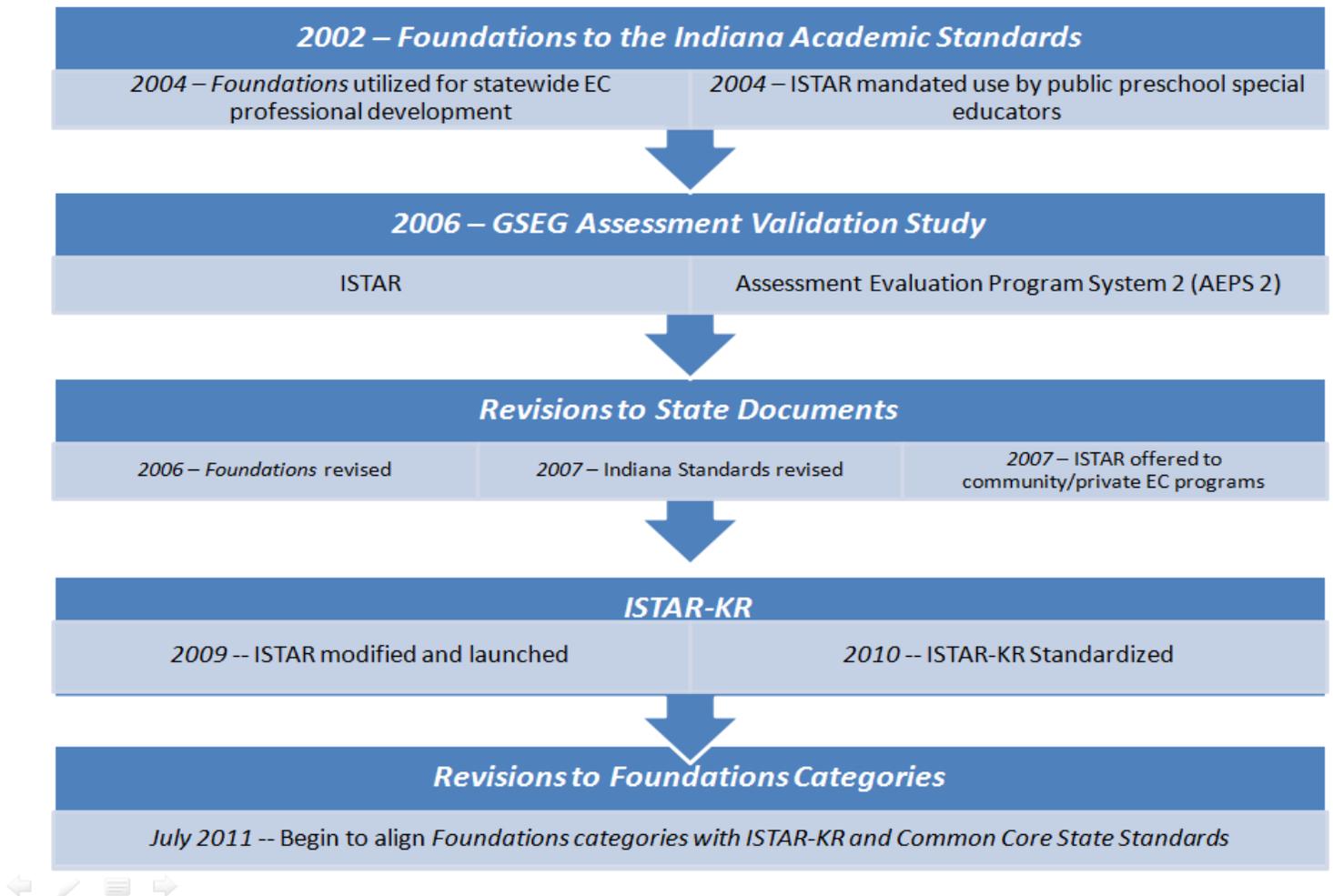
The Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards (Foundations) were originally developed in 2002 with content for children three- to five-years of age, and were later revised in 2004 and 2006 to include content for children from birth to age three. Individuals with expertise in each specialized area were engaged to develop these documents, which are based on the latest national research and findings.

From kindergarten through twelfth grade, academic standards have been established to promote excellence and equity in education. Excellence is important in education today for future success. Academic standards represent the *essential content* every student needs in order to have a basis for understanding a subject area. The Foundations include skills and experiences for children's development and address skills and competencies that children are to achieve from birth to age five. The Foundations are not a comprehensive list of skills that a particular child must exhibit; rather, they serve as a guide for educators to use in assisting young learners gain knowledge and skills in the early years that will prepare them for success in school.

The Common Core State Standards, Indiana Academic Standards and the Foundations are frameworks rather than complete curricula. A curriculum is generally much richer, with broader and deeper understandings than those in the Standards or Foundations. An early childhood curriculum is based on a philosophy of how children learn and contains both content that children should learn and methods to teach the content. A framework provides knowledge and skills that children are to achieve at various ages, identifies any gaps or points not being presented as essentials in the curriculum, and assists in planning experiences that will promote children's progress toward achieving the skills.

Why have the Foundations been revised?

The 2012 revision of the Foundations was necessary because of the modifications to the ISTAR assessment rating instrument, the standardization of ISTAR-KR, and the updates to the Indiana Academic Standards in 2007. As of the fall of 2011, Indiana is embarking on a transition to the national Common Core State Standards. It is our hope that with this current revision of the Foundations, Indiana's early childhood system will demonstrate strong alignment of the ISTAR-KR assessment instrument, the Foundations document, the Indiana Academic Standards and the Common Core State Standards. A diagram reflecting the history these documents follows.



The Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) focus on core conceptual understandings and procedures, starting in the early grades. Implementation of the CCSS enables teachers to take the time needed to teach core concepts and procedures well—and to give all students the opportunity to master them.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA) worked with representatives from participating states, including a wide range of educators, content experts, researchers, national organizations, and community groups, to develop the CCSS in Mathematics, English Language Arts, and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. These standards reflect the invaluable feedback from the general public, teachers,

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parents, business leaders, states, and content area experts and are informed by the standards of other high-performing nations.

The CCSSO and NGA Center developed the college- and career-readiness standards with the following criteria:

- Aligned with college and work expectations;
- Infused with rigorous content *and* application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Built upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Informed by top-performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and,
- Evidence and/or research-based.

Building on the excellent foundation of standards states have laid, the CCSS are the first step in providing our young people with a high-quality education. It should be clear to each student, parent, and teacher what the standards of success are in every school.

Teachers, parents and community leaders have all weighed-in to help create the CCSS. The standards clearly communicate what is expected of students at each grade level. This enables teachers to know exactly what they need to do to help students learn and to establish individualized benchmarks for them.

With students, parents and teachers all on the same page and working together for shared goals, we can ensure that students make progress each year and graduate from high school prepared to succeed in both college and a modern workforce.

The Common Core State Standards can be found at:

<http://doe.in.gov/standards>

How to Use the Foundations for Young Children

The foundations and experiences are NOT inclusive, but rather a guide that will assist the young learner in preparing for success. These skills are not written in any particular order, and because children grow and learn at different rates and in different ways, should NOT be used as a checklist.

The Foundations address the following content areas: English/language arts, mathematics, physical skills, personal care skills, social/emotional skills, science, social studies, and fine arts. Each content section includes an introduction and the key findings that support the Birth to Five foundations. The Foundations are aligned with the CCSS for kindergarten in a developmentally-appropriate way and reflect the types of experiences and interactions early learners need in order to be ready to transition to the CCSS in kindergarten.

By outlining specific skills and concepts and providing examples of instructional strategies, the Foundations will support teachers, parents, caregivers and other professional personnel as they develop appropriate experiences for young children. At the heart of the effort to promote quality early childhood experiences for all, the Foundations have been developed to support adults that work with children from birth to age five.

In developing the Foundations, the collaborators took as their primary position the concept that a program designed for young children will be most effective when based on what is known **about** young children. The Foundations are designed to assist all who work with young children in approaching the various domains from a developmentally-appropriate perspective.

Each individual standards area references the Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting-Kindergarten Readiness (ISTAR-KR) Assessment and the Kindergarten Common Core State Standards, and is divided into sections that are comprehensive from birth to age five.

• **YOUNG CHILDREN ARE LEARNING WHEN THEY:**

This section provides a description of skills that support development of the learning area. The skills or accomplishments are not written in particular order, either in importance or development. Skills are identified with a letter/number code, e.g. ELA 1.1: ELA is the standard area, English Language Arts, 1.1 is the first skill in the first KR section of ELA, (Demonstrates the awareness of Sounds). Development of skills in one area is often related to and influences development in other areas. As such, skills may be repeated across foundations.

• **A CHILD CAN BE SUPPORTED BY AN ADULT WHO:**

This next section provides examples of many activities adults can do with children to support growth and learning in each area. Statements of the adult's role as a facilitator/teacher of learning for young children are included. Many of these contain suggestions for materials to include in the environment.

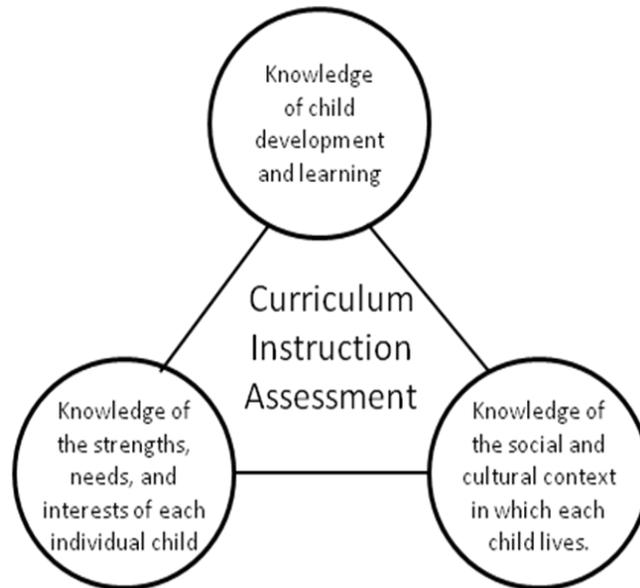
• **HOW IT LOOKS IN EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES:**

A variety of scenarios are provided as examples of experiences children and adults may be doing that would address each learning area. Scenarios are written to be used in the classroom environment, in the home environment, or outdoors. All activities planned by the children and adults should reflect the needs

and interests of the young learners involved. Alongside each scenario is a list of related developmental skills from other domains children are working on while addressing the identified skill in the foundation.

What is developmentally-appropriate learning for young children?

Developmentally-appropriate practice can be defined as a product of the adult making decisions based on at least three important kinds of knowledge and information:



Reference: Bredekamp, S. & Copple, C. (Eds.) (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

The concept of developmentally appropriate has two dimensions: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness. Age appropriateness refers to the universal, predictable sequences of growth and change that occur in children during the first nine years of life. Knowledge of typical development of children within the age span served by any program/home provides a framework from which the adult can prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences.

Both the curriculum and adults' interactions with children should be responsive to individual differences. Each child must be viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing for growth. Learning for young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas, and people. This child development knowledge should be used to identify the range of appropriate behaviors, activities, and materials for a specific age group and used in conjunction with understanding about individual children's growth patterns, strengths, interests, and experiences to design the most appropriate learning environment.

Different levels of ability, development, and learning styles are expected, accepted, and used to design appropriate experiences. For the content and the teaching strategies to be developmentally appropriate, they must be age appropriate and individually appropriate.

Ongoing Assessment for Young Children

Assessment for young children is the process of gathering information from several sources of evidence, organizing the evidence, and finally, interpreting the evidence, using it to inform instruction and monitor child progress. We assess young children to monitor development and learning, guide planning and decision-making, determine need for eligibility for special education services, and report and communicate results with others. The assessment process should provide information regarding what a child can do compared to age-appropriate expectations. It may reveal a child's interests and challenges to future learning. Assessment is not a single occurrence, but an ongoing process.

Assessment is derived from the Latin word *assidere*, meaning *to sit beside and get to know*. The mission of early childhood assessment is to support the achievement of four broad outcomes: demonstrates physical independence to take action to meet needs; demonstrates acquisition and use of skills in language, early literacy, and early math; demonstrates positive social/emotional skills; and demonstrates appropriate classroom behavior. Early childhood educators engage in assessment methods to gain knowledge of student skills.

Bagnato & Yeh Ho (2006) note that “authentic assessment” refers to the systematic recording of developmental observations over time of the naturally occurring functional behaviors of young children in their daily routines by familiar and knowledgeable caregivers in the child's life.

Whether the assessment is for the purpose of eligibility, ongoing assessment, or status at exit from a program or a service, the following is best practice for assessment of young children:
(NAEYC/DEC/DAP Assessment Standards & Practices)

- Natural observations of ongoing child behavior in everyday settings and routines versus contrived settings;
- Reliance on informed caregivers (teachers, parents team) to collect convergent multi-source data across settings;
- Curriculum-based measures linked to program goals, content, standards, and expected outcomes;
- Universal design; equitable assessment content and methods;
- Intra-individual child progress supplemented by inter-individual normative comparisons

Accurate assessments are the result of accurate observations. An excellent resource for observation guidelines is Gaye Gronlund's and Marlyn James' book, *Focused Observations: How to Observe Children for Assessment and Curriculum Planning, 2005, Redleaf Press*. This resource links assessment and curriculum as an interconnected ongoing practice. Teachers assess/observe to learn what skills the child knows and can do and what skills are emerging, then make decisions regarding what to do next to promote increased learning.

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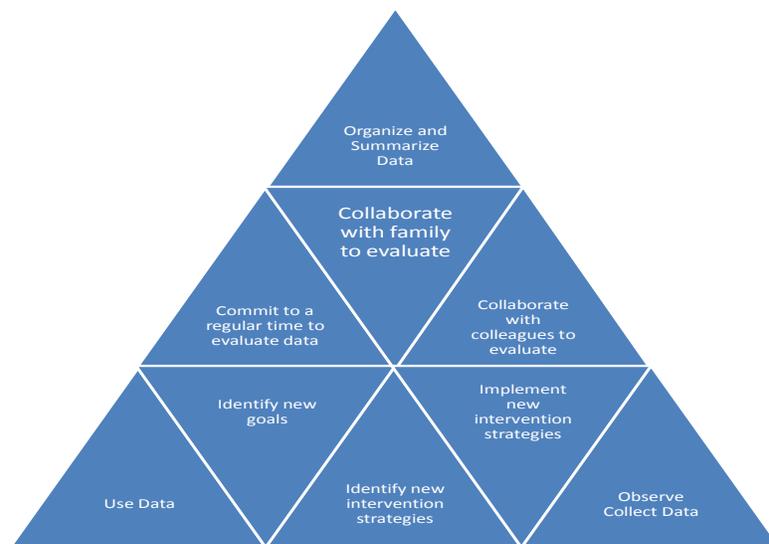
Effective observation skills give a teacher the information needed to strengthen decision-making skills in the determining the effectiveness of lesson plans, instruction, or intervention strategies. Early childhood teachers are observing everyday to determine progress and quality on: individual child outcomes, group outcomes, and outcomes related to all children (e.g., Are they developmentally appropriate, aligned to Indiana Academic Standards).

Observing to gain knowledge about children – when, what, where:

- Observe children at arrival and departure
- Observe them during daily routines
- Observe them as they play and work with peers – inside and outside
- Talk with them about what are doing or making
- Ask them questions that encourage them to describe their thinking, listen
- Listen to them as they talk with others informally or in group discussions
- Study their work, e.g., projects, constructions, drawing, writing, journals – photograph their work
- Observe in the home, when possible
- Invite parents to observe with you in the classroom
- Talk with family members to learn about their perspective on the child’s learning, interests

Building effective observation skills includes answering the following questions: (1) What do I want to know? (2) How do I record the evidence? (3) How do I organize the evidence? (4) What do I do with what I learned? (J. Jablon, A. Dombro, & M. Dichtelmiller, 1999, 2007).

Some educators have found the following observation and documentation system a useful application to their work with young children:



Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting- Kindergarten Readiness (ISTAR-KR)

In 2003, Indiana responded to a federal mandate requiring states to offer an alternative to the state achievement test for students with disabilities. The Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting (ISTAR) was designed for all children from infancy through grade 10. The early childhood section of ISTAR was derived from the Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards. The ISTAR assessment instrument is a web-based, standard-referenced rating instrument, completed by teachers. Although the instrument was developed for all children, Indiana public schools began using it to rate the proficiency of school-aged students with disabilities in Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Functional Skills, Science and Social Studies.

In 2004, Indiana mandated that all preschool special educators use ISTAR as the assessment to rate child developmental progress for students from age three to five who received special education services. Standard areas rated to demonstrate student proficiency include: Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Physical, Personal Care, and Social/Emotional Skills. The assessment data is used by Indiana Department of Education Special Education Administrators in reporting to the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to reflect Indiana's special education program effectiveness.

In 2006, the Indiana Department of Education, Family and Social Services Administration, Ball State University, and the Metropolitan School District of Pike Township were awarded a federal General Supervision Enhancement Grant in order to conduct a reliability and validation research study using the ISTAR Assessment tool. The purpose of the research grant was to strengthen the Indiana's comprehensive assessment and service provision for children with special needs, from birth to age five.

There are many dimensions to building a validity argument. For the GSEG study, a number of key investigations were pursued through the analysis of reliability, alignment, concurrent validity, discriminant-groups validity, and construct validity. In addition, a robust standardization study produced information to allow the instrument to be calibrated into three-month increments of growth.

To build a validity argument around using ISTAR-KR to measure the progress of children in early childhood programs, the investigation centered on how well the items address the key skills expected of children before they enter kindergarten. Because of the federal requirement that the instrument measure growth, the score patterns must be able to chart a continuum of progress. The results must be useful in planning instruction, as well as being meaningful for program evaluation.

The research study determined that ISTAR had high reliability, was adequately aligned to Indiana's kindergarten standards, and was effective at delineating children who demonstrated typical development from those challenged with reaching age-level skills. The research also identified improvement areas. First, significant gaps were found to exist in the social/emotional items. The structure of the assessment promoted some false assumptions in that all skills below a selected rating had been accomplished. Some

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of the language of the items was determined to be irrelevant to the activities of small children. Finally, some items appeared to add unnecessary bulk without serving a statistical or aligned purpose. The resulting improvements to the instrument were then vetted through a structured expert review and retested for alignment.

The result of this effort produced ISTAR-Kindergarten Readiness (ISTAR-KR), which is an assessment that can reasonably provide information as to how a student is performing compared to typically-developing peers on a continuum of skills leading to success in kindergarten. This score can be examined in terms of the three OSEP outcomes or in terms of the areas of pre-academics, and can be used in the planning of effective instruction.

ISTAR-KR is offered at no cost to public and private early childhood education programs. Together with the Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards, the ISTAR-KR assessment rating instrument demonstrates a strong early childhood system for Indiana early childhood education programs to prepare young children for kindergarten.

The format of the ISTAR-KR rating instrument is a rubric comprised of 30 performance threads of progressive skills, presented as rows of boxes containing performance indicators. A teacher selects one performance indicator per thread to reflect a student's highest level of mastery. An assessment summary report displays all mastered performance items as shaded boxes, and performance items to be learned are left un-shaded. The report is an excellent visual for family members to see what their child has achieved and what skills are next.

For information on how the Early Childhood ISTAR-KR assessment instrument may meet the needs of your early childhood education program, please contact the Indiana Department of Education Office of Student Assessment by calling 317-232-9050 or on the web at:

<http://www.doe.in.gov/achievement/assessment/istar-kr>

What does research say about appropriate learning environments for young children?

Adapted from the Early Childhood ISTAR-KR Assessment Handbook, 2010, *The Importance of High Quality Learning Environments in Achieving Child Outcomes*, by Anita Allison, pg.31

“A quality learning environment empowers children to become confident learners” (Greenman J., 1998).

A 2006 report from the National Association of State Boards of Educators’ (NASBE) Study Group on Creating High Quality Early Learning Environments echoes this statement from Greenman. In a review of the literature on quality, the study group found overwhelming evidence that high quality learning environments can produce important positive outcomes for children. Establishing a setting where all children can learn and develop optimally depends upon the quality of the environment provided. Preschool educators should use all that they know about how young children learn to nurture, protect, and provide for the well-being of all children (Executive Version, October 2006). The study group concluded that the most critical aspect of quality learning environments is highly trained and well-supported teachers that can provide responsive interpersonal relationships, nurture children’s dispositions to learn, and cultivate their emerging abilities. Teachers in high-quality environments ensure that children:

- are respected, nurtured, and challenged and enjoy frequent interaction and communication with peers and adults;
- have ongoing opportunities to learn important skills, knowledge, and dispositions in classrooms that provide materials and activities that are individualized and challenge children’s intellectual development; and
- acquire the skills necessary to learn basic school readiness proficiencies and knowledge in such areas as expanded vocabulary and alphabetic principles; phonological awareness; concepts of numbers; areas of language and literacy; shapes, measurement, and spatial relations; task persistence; and early scientific thinking, as well as information about the world and how it works (p.8).

Drawing from the work of numerous researchers and national experts, the NASBE study group developed a list of critical elements for environmental consideration:

- comprehensive state standards for preschool programs
- rich, coherent curriculum
- strong foundation in language and emergent literacy
- appropriate assessment that informs instruction
- responsiveness to cultural and linguistic diversity
- inclusion of children with disabilities
- partnerships with parents
- small class sizes and low adult-child ratios
- high-quality teachers who capitalize on young children’s “eagerness to learn” (pp. 9-10)

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A quality environment is one in which the teacher intentionally encourages communication and reasoning skills, provides *frequent* verbal feedback, and maximizes children’s engagement in learning opportunities (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998). It requires teachers to be highly responsive and to blend child-directed discovery and teacher-provided explicit information. “The possibilities in a high quality learning environment are endless...for making new discoveries, inventing, creating, and learning. This environment invites children to just be” (Bunnett & Davis, 1997). Staff members must arrange environments to be inviting, encouraging, participatory and respectful. The three major roles a teacher takes within this environment include acting as an environmental planner, an environmental participant and an environmental evaluator (Greenman J., 2005, pp. 66-67). Within each of these roles, the teacher is observing, recording, facilitating, adjusting and making necessary changes in order that children have optimal opportunities to gain the most from the learning environment.

By combining two important factors of a high-quality environment, learning can occur all the time: (1) young children are young children, they learn through play; and (2) by getting to know each child as an individual, teachers can create a community of learners by building on their strengths, interests, and competencies. Teachers need to look at learning goals for children and ask themselves, “Does my classroom environment support what we know is best for all children?” As Greenman states (2005), “Our job as educators is to set up a quality environment that works for all the children in our care.”

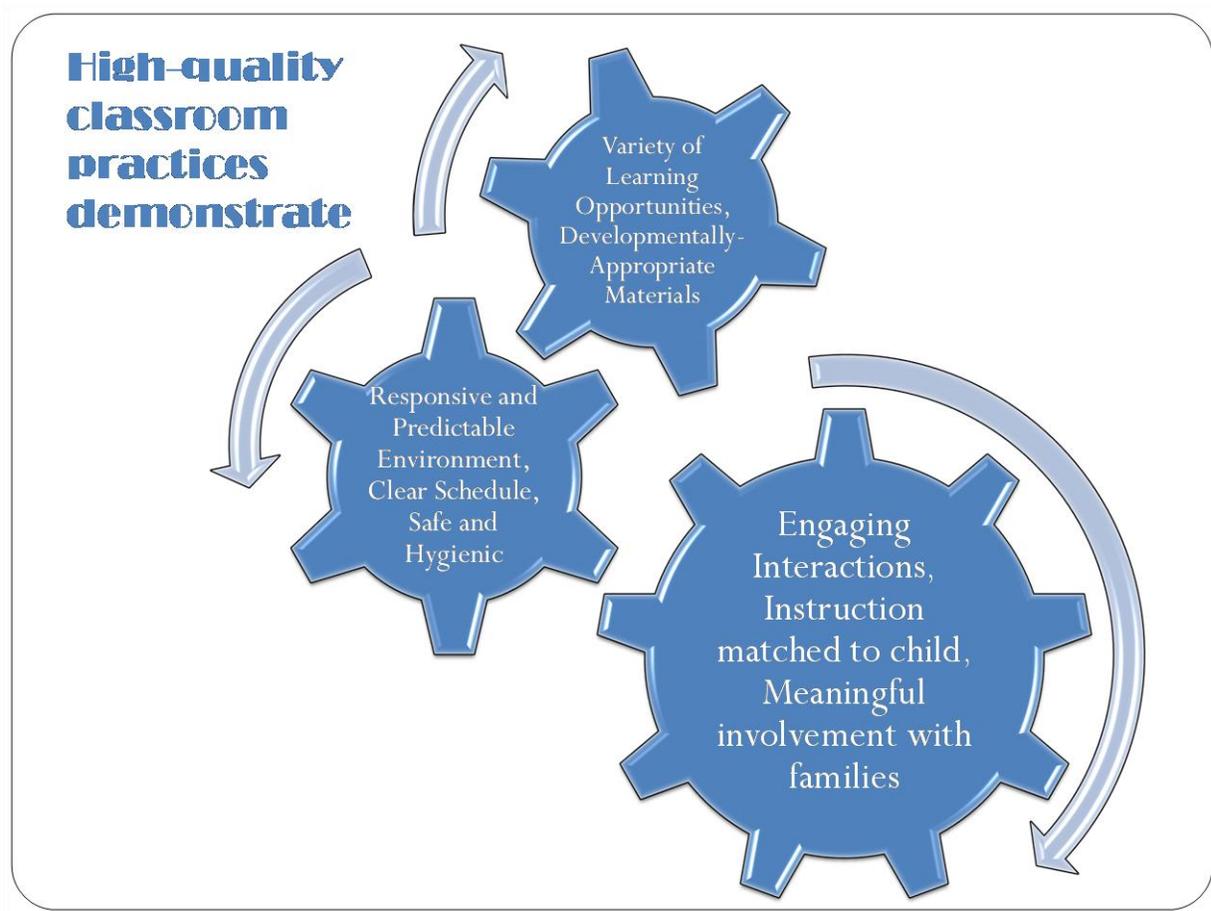
To ensure quality environments, we must provide for the three basic needs all children have: (1) protection for their health and safety; (2) access to supportive and nurturing relationships that include parents, extended family and community; and (3) opportunities for stimulation and learning (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998). There are critical dimensions of an early childhood setting that must be considered in setting up a high-quality environment (Adapted from Greenman J., 2005 pp. 97-124).

There are several measures available to assess the quality of environments for young children. Listed below are the most widely used across a variety of early childhood programs:

- Classroom Observation System (COS): NICHD Study of Early Child Care & Youth Development, n.d.
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R); Harms, Clifford, and Cryer, 2005.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (2007). *NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria. The Mark of Quality in Early Childhood Education (Revised Edition)*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

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- Observational Record of the Caregiving Environment (ORCE) Early Child Care Research Network (ECCRN), 2001.
- The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS); Pianta, LaParo, and Hamre, 2004.



Recommended Practices for Young Children Who Are English Learners (ELs)

Young children come to us with varying experiences, backgrounds, and languages. Children whose home language is not English face the challenge of adapting to an early childhood setting that may not be consistent with their home culture and language. It is important for caregivers to assist young children in this transition through a respect for and acknowledgment of the language skills, knowledge, and culture that they bring with them to the early childhood setting.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) states that caregivers can best meet the needs of children whose home language is not English by “preserving and respecting the diversity of the home language and culture that each child brings to the early learning setting” (NAEYC, 1995, p. 7). Most of the recommended practices for working with children who are English learners are very similar to strategies encouraged in both early childhood education and special education, and are simply techniques of good teaching.

It takes a long time to become fluent in any language, and children acquire English as a second language in different ways and at different rates. The difficulties in learning a second language should not be confused with a learning disability. Some children go through a “silent period,” for up to as long as six months, in which they do not speak but are learning to understand English. Other children quickly attempt to communicate in English and may mix or combine English with their home language (for example, “Quiero juice.”). Some children may already be using simple phrases and may appear fairly fluent. It is important to know that, even though a child is able to easily communicate with friends, research shows that it may take four or more years to become fluent in the cognitive language skills that are needed for academic learning (Cummins, 1981; Collier, 1989). The following levels of English proficiency may help in setting appropriate expectations for individual children who are acquiring English as a second language. These levels should be used as a guide in understanding the language acquisition process.

Level 1: Pre-production: This is often referred to as the “silent period.” Children are learning to understand the language and may not speak at all.

Level 2: Early Production: Children use single words or simple phrases to answer questions.

Level 3: Speech Emergence: Children start to use simple sentences and correct grammar to verbalize information.

Level 4: Intermediate Fluency: Children start to use more complex speech production and appear to be fluent. However, they may not have the vocabulary and grammar necessary to adequately express the concepts being learned.

Level 5: Fluent English Proficient: Children are on par with their native English-speaking peers.

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While young children are learning English, it is important for adults to encourage the development of the child's home (native) language. Families transmit values, beliefs, and a sense of belonging to their children through their home language. Children also learn basic concepts necessary for later learning through everyday conversation and interactions when families continue to use the home language. Native language development will accelerate the acquisition of English. Encouraging families to speak to children in English at home, when family members may not be fluent English speakers themselves, can result in limited verbal interactions and modeling of incorrect language use. Families should be encouraged to speak and read to their children in the home language; children will learn English quickly from others in early childhood settings.

There are strategies that caregivers can use to help young children who are learning English feel comfortable in early childhood settings. Many of the following strategies are good techniques for use with all young children, particularly as they enter early childhood programs:

- Adults should speak clearly; use simple words, short phrases, and repetition; and avoid the use of slang.
- Instead of correcting children's language, it is important to paraphrase and model correct use of English.
- Adults do not have to be bilingual to work with English learners. However, it is helpful to learn a few words important to the child and his/her needs (such as words for food, for using the bathroom, and for family members).
- Caregivers can seek assistance and support from those with expertise in the language and the culture of the child, including family members, EL providers, and others in the community.
- Adults who work with English learners should use gestures, pictures, and real objects to help communicate with children.
- The many types of hands-on activities familiar to quality early childhood programs lend themselves to working with children who are not yet fluent in English. Children can express themselves through drawing, painting, using clay, and movement activities before they are able to use English to communicate.
- Caregivers should incorporate children's culture and language into activities whenever possible. Children will be more comfortable in an early childhood program if they can bring in pictures of their family, have favorite foods for snacks, use materials that are familiar to them in dramatic play, and hear their home language in the early childhood setting. Adults can play music in the child's language, have bilingual volunteers come in to read to the children in their home language, and ask families to tell stories in their home language on cassette tapes.

Children should always be encouraged to speak with each other in their home language, as well as in English. These techniques will make learning more meaningful and comprehensible to second language

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learners. All children have different needs. As young children learn English, some will find it easier than others. Most teaching strategies that are encouraged in early childhood are already appropriate for young children learning a second language. It is not necessary to change the early childhood curriculum for children whose home language is not English, but it is important to support them in their efforts to communicate. Working closely with families, caregivers can create an environment for young children that respect their culture, encourages the development of their home language, and supports their English learning.

Please contact the Indiana Department of Education Office of English Learning and Migrant Programs by calling 317-232-0555 for more information on working with English learners.

Common Terms

EL: English learner: Any student between 3 and 21 years of age who is enrolled in a public school and was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English. The English Learner demonstrates challenges in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and does not have the ability to meet Indiana's proficiency level of achievement on state assessments or succeed in classrooms where the language of instruction is English. The English Learner is prohibited from participate fully in the society. This term is used to identify a student who is learning English as a new or second language.

LEP: Limited English Proficient: This term identifies a student who is learning English as a new or second language.

ESL: English as a Second Language: This term is used to identify a course or type of service provided to EL/LEP students.

ENL: English as a New Language: This term means the same thing as ESL.

FEP: Fluent English Proficient: This term identifies a student whose native language is other than English but is now fluent in English (Level 5).

Bilingual Education: A program in which two languages are used in content area instruction.

Home language: The dominant language spoken in the home.

Native language: The first language of the student.

Dominant language: The language(s) in which the individual is most fluent.

Primary Language: The first language a child learns to speak, also known as the *home language*. For some children, this may be a language other than English.

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GLOSSARY for English Learners

Adult-Initiated: The adult is a guide in each child’s learning process. Underlying this approach is an understanding of how children learn best and a set of expectations that guide the adult in planning activities and experiences that are meaningful to children.

Assessment: The process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting the work children do and how they do it, as the basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child. In early childhood, assessment serves several different purposes: to plan instruction for individuals and groups; to communicate with parents; to identify children who may be in need of specialized services or intervention; and to evaluate how well the instruction and curriculum are meeting their goals.

Authentic Assessment: The process of gathering evidence and documentation of a child’s learning and growth in ways that resemble “real life” as closely as possible (e.g., observing and documenting a child’s work in the environment and routines, e.g., as the child plays in the block area or is eating a meal). To measure growth and progress, a child’s work is compared to his/her previous work rather than to the work of others. Authentic assessment is based on what the child actually does in a variety of contexts at points throughout the school year. Authentic work represents the child’s application, not mere acquisition, of knowledge and skills. Authentic assessment also engages the child in the activity and reflects best instructional activities.

Child-Initiated: The child takes an active role in learning through active explorations of the environment, by sharing knowledge, and by interacting with adults and other children (e.g., the child brings in a butterfly found at home and wants to share it with the others).

Common Core State Standards/Academic Standards: The standards clearly communicate what is expected of students at each grade level, allowing teachers to better serve their students. The Common Core State Standards focus on core conceptual understandings and procedures starting in the early grades, enabling teachers to take the time needed to teach core concepts and procedures well—and to give students the opportunity to master them. With students, parents, and teachers all on the same page and working together for shared goals, we can ensure that students make progress each year and graduate from high school prepared to succeed in both college and modern workforce.

Curriculum: Virtually everything that happens in a child’s life involves learning, whether explicitly identified as such or not. All activities and processes through which children learn and what adults do to help children achieve this learning include center work, field trips, organized play, and sports. Even routine meals are integral parts of any early childhood curriculum. A developmentally-appropriate curriculum is based upon three areas: (1) what is known about child development and learning; (2) what is known about the strengths, interests, and needs of each individual child in the group; and (3) a knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which each child lives. Curriculum should always be planned based on the best knowledge of theory, research, and practice regarding how children learn and develop, with attention given to individual needs and interests in a group in relation to program goals.

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Hands-On: Children are doers striving to make sense of their experiences, to relate new information to what they already know, and to acquire understanding. Children’s natural tendency to explore and figure things out is active, not passive. Children learn by doing, not simply by listening or looking.

Informal Assessment: A non-standardized measurement by which the adult gauges what a child is able to do in various content areas. Informal assessment helps the adult tailor instruction and curriculum to meet each child’s needs and interests.

Inquiry: Active investigation, experimentation, and discovery. Because children are naturally curious, inquiry is a natural part of their lives.

Instruction: The process for delivering the curricular goals of the program. This process involves strategies, activities, arrangement of the environment, and relationships with families. Instructional strategies will vary based on each child’s needs and interests and each child’s cultural and social context.

Play: In a child’s world, play is a child’s prime educator. Play enhances the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of the young child. A child needs opportunities for play that are active and quiet, spontaneous and planned, indoors and outdoors, and done alone and with peers. When reviewed as a learning process, play becomes a vehicle for intellectual growth. Play involves not only materials and equipment, but also words and ideas that promote literacy and develop thinking skills. Play promotes problem solving, critical thinking, concept formation, creativity, and social/emotional development.

Scaffold Instruction: Instruction in which adults build upon what children already know and provide support that allows children to perform more complex tasks.

Sensory Integration: The neurological process that organizes sensation from one’s own body and the environment, thus making it possible to use the body effectively within the environment. Specifically, it deals with how the brain processes multiple sensory modality inputs into usable functional outputs. It has been believed for some time that inputs from different sensory organs are processed in different areas in the brain.

Spatial Reasoning: Spatial intelligence is the ability to recreate one’s visual experience and reasoning about shape, measurement, depiction and navigation.

Standardized Assessment: An assessment (test) with validity and reliability from which scores are interpreted against a set of norms, such as state, national, or international norms. Group-administered, standardized, multiple-choice achievement tests are not appropriate before third grade (NAEYC, 1999).

Teachable Moments: Moments when specific topics spontaneously arise. The topic may emerge through discussion and call for a “lesson in a lesson”.

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<http://doe.in.gov>

<http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/>

<http://www.doe.in.gov/achievement/assessment/istar-kr>

<http://www.doe.in.gov/achievement/curriculum>

<http://www.doe.in.gov/commoncore/>

<http://cast.org/>

CURRICULUM PLANNING FOR CHILDREN RECEIVING EARLY INTERVENTION OR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

When teachers are observant and assess children’s abilities, interests, and achievement using the *Foundations* as a guide, interventions become part of teachers’ everyday practice. Revising activities, adjusting lesson plans and accommodating children’s individual differences becomes matter-of-fact and the norm. Successful strategies that allow children to master skills at their own pace provide benefits for all children as they interact with others of varying abilities and cultures.

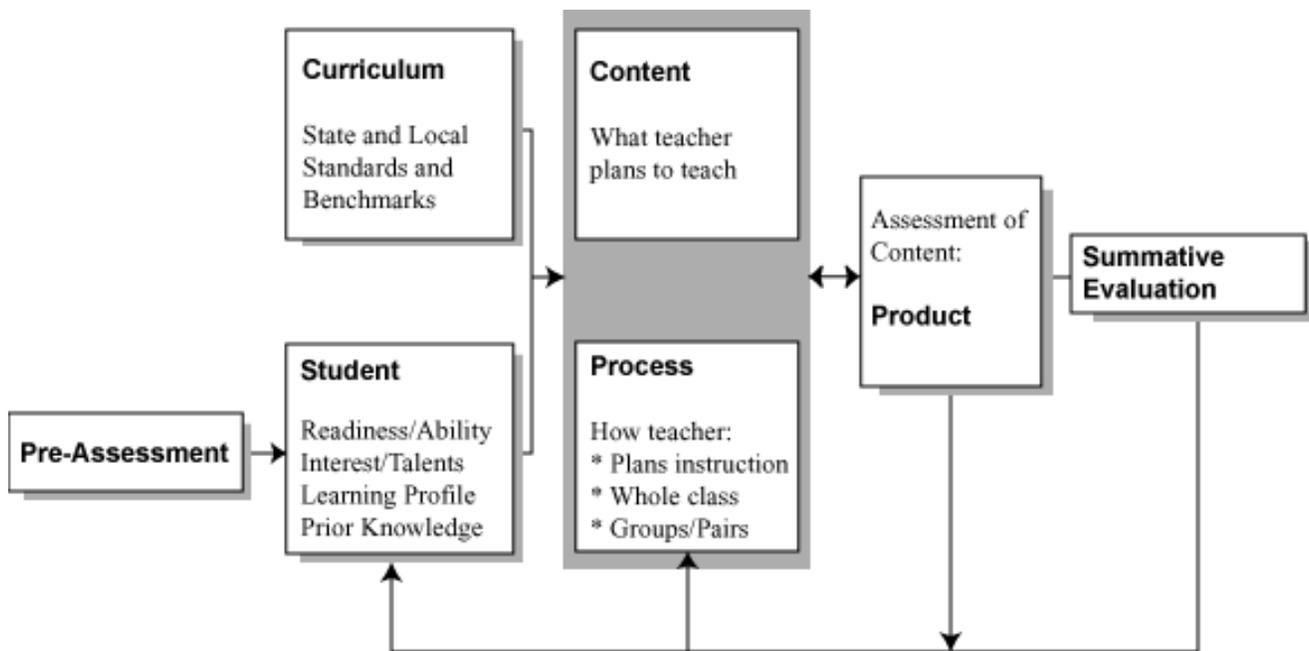
Early Childhood Special Education

Early childhood classrooms should be inclusive ones where children with disabilities and developmental delays are enjoying learning experiences alongside their typically-developing peers. Teachers may need to adapt or modify the classroom environment; teacher interactions and/or materials and equipment to help children with disabilities fully participate. The *Foundations to Indiana Academic Standards* are designed to be used for all children. The content within these standards does not need to be specific to an age, but instead it should provide the breadth of information from which to create goals and experiences for children that will help them reach their highest potential while capturing their interests and building on what they already know. Teachers must emphasize and celebrate all children’s accomplishments and focus on what all children can do.

Differentiated instruction is a teaching theory based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse children in classrooms (Tomlinson, 2001). The model of differentiated instruction requires caregivers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and adjust the activities, curriculum, and presentation of information to learners, rather than expecting children to modify themselves for the curriculum. Many teachers and teacher educators have recently identified differentiated instruction as a method of helping more students in diverse classroom settings experience success. This introduction to differentiated instruction defines the construct, and then identifies components and features.

Definition

To differentiate instruction is to recognize children’s varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning and interests, and to react responsively. Differentiated instruction is a process of teaching and learning for students of differing abilities in the same group. The intent of differentiating instruction is to maximize each child’s growth and individual success by meeting each child where he or she is and assisting in the learning process.



(adapted from Oaksford, L. & Jones, L., 2001)

Figure 1. Learning Cycle and Decision Factors Used in Planning and Implementing Differentiated Instruction

Identifying Components/Features

Several key elements guide differentiation in the education environment. Tomlinson (2001) identifies three elements of the curriculum that can be differentiated: Content, Process, and Products (Figure 1).

Content:

- **Several elements and materials are used to support instructional content.** These include acts, concepts, generalizations or principles, attitudes, and skills. The variation seen in a differentiated classroom most frequently occurs in the manner in which children gain access to important learning. Access to the content is seen as key.
- **Align tasks and objectives to learning goals.** Designers of differentiated instruction view the alignment of tasks with instructional goals and objectives as essential. Objectives are frequently written in incremental steps, resulting in a continuum of skills-building tasks. An objectives-driven menu makes it easier to find the next instructional step for learners entering at varying levels.
- **Instruction is concept-focused and principle-driven.** The instructional concepts should be broad-based, not focused on minute details or unlimited facts. Teachers must focus on the concepts, principles and skills that children should learn. The content of instruction should address the same concepts with all children, but the degree of complexity should be adjusted to suit diverse learners.

Process:

- ***Flexible grouping is consistently used.*** Strategies for flexible grouping are essential. Learners are expected to interact and work together as they develop knowledge of new content. Teachers may conduct whole-class introductory discussions of content big ideas, followed by small group or paired work. Child groups may be coached from within or by the teacher to complete assigned tasks. Grouping of children is not fixed. As one of the foundations of differentiated instruction, grouping and regrouping must be a dynamic process, changing with the content, project, and on-going evaluations.
- ***Classroom management benefits students and teachers.*** To effectively operate a classroom using differentiated instruction, teachers must carefully select organization and instructional delivery strategies.

Products

- ***Initial and on-going assessment of student readiness and growth are essential.*** Meaningful pre-assessment naturally leads to functional and successful differentiation. Incorporating pre- and on-going assessment informs teachers so that they can better provide a menu of approaches, choices, and scaffolds for the varying needs, interests, and abilities that exist in classrooms of diverse students. Assessments may be formal or informal, including interviews, surveys, and developmental assessments.
- ***Children are active and responsible explorers.*** Teachers must ensure that each task put before the learner will be interesting, engaging, and accessible to essential understanding and skills. Each child should feel challenged most of the time.
- ***Vary expectations and requirements for student responses.*** Items to which children respond may be differentiated so that different children can demonstrate or express their knowledge and understanding in different ways. A well-designed product allows varied means of expression and alternative procedures, and offers varying degrees of difficulty and types of evaluation.

Additional Guidelines That Make Differentiation Possible for Teachers to Attain

- ***Clarify key concepts and generalizations.*** Teachers must ensure that all learners gain powerful understandings that can serve as the foundation for future learning. Teachers are encouraged to identify essential concepts and instructional foci to ensure that all learners comprehend.
- ***Use assessment as a teaching tool to extend rather than merely measure instruction.*** Assessment should occur before, during, and following the instructional episode, and it should be used to help pose questions regarding children's needs and optimal learning.
- ***Emphasize critical and creative thinking as a goal in lesson design.*** Tasks, activities, and procedures should require that children understand and apply meaning. Based on the learning needs of each of the children in the classroom, instruction may require supports, additional motivation, or variation in tasks, materials, and equipment.

- ***Engaging all learners is essential.*** Teachers are encouraged to strive for the development of lessons that are engaging and motivating for a diverse group of children, varying tasks within instruction, as well as across children. In other words, an entire session for children should not consist of any single activity or simply drill and practice.
- ***Provide a balance between teacher-assigned and student-selected tasks.*** A balanced working structure is optimal in a differentiated classroom. Based on pre-assessment information, the balance will vary from class-to-class as well as lesson-to-lesson. Teachers should ensure that children have choices in their learning.

Adapted from:

Differentiated Instruction and Implications for UDL Implementation
Tracey Hall, Nicole Strangman and Anne Meyer (2011).

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a theoretical framework developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) to guide the development of curricula that are flexible and supportive of all students (Dolan & Hall, 2001; Meyer & Rose, 1998; Pisha & Coyne, 2001; Rose, 2001; Rose & Dolan, 2000; Rose & Meyer, 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Rose, Sethuraman, & Meo, 2000). The concept of UDL was inspired by the universal design movement in building architecture. This movement calls for the design of structures that anticipate the needs of individuals with disabilities and accommodate these needs from the outset. Although universally-designed structures are more usable by individuals with disabilities, they offer unforeseen benefits for *all* users. Curb cuts, for example, serve their intended use of facilitating the travel of those in wheelchairs, but they are also beneficial to people pushing strollers, young children, and even the average walker. And so, the process of designing for individuals with disabilities has led to improved usability for everyone.

UDL calls for the design of curricula with the needs of all children in mind, so that methods, materials, and assessment are usable by all. Traditional curricula present a host of barriers that limit children's access to information and learning. A UDL curriculum is designed to be innately flexible, enriched with multiple media so that alternatives can be accessed whenever appropriate. A UDL curriculum takes on the burden of adaptation so that the child doesn't have to, minimizing barriers and maximizing access to both information and learning.

The UDL framework guides the development of adaptable curricula by means of three principles (Figure 2). The three UDL principles call for flexibility in relation to three essential facets of learning, each one orchestrated by a distinct set of networks in the brain.

Principles of the Universal Design for Learning Framework

Principle 1:

To support recognition learning, provide multiple, flexible methods of presentation

Principle 2:

To support strategic learning, provide multiple, flexible methods of expression and apprenticeship.

Principle 3:

To support affective learning, provide multiple, flexible options for engagement.

Figure 2.

Recognition Learning

The first UDL principle focuses on pattern recognition and the importance of providing multiple, flexible methods of presentation when teaching patterns – no single teaching methodology for pattern recognition will be satisfactory for every learner. The theory of differentiated instruction incorporates some guidelines that can help teachers to support critical elements of recognition learning in a flexible way and promote every student’s success. Each of the three key elements of differentiated instruction – content, process, and product – supports an important UDL Teaching Method for individualized instruction of pattern recognition. Highlights of the UDL Teaching Method are outlined in the following section.

The content guidelines for differentiated instruction support the first UDL Teaching Method for recognition networks *provide multiple examples*, in that they encourage the use of several elements and materials to support instructional content. For example, when learners working on letter recognition, teachers can post letters around the classroom and make them available on cards with sand texture for a tactile view near the writing center. For students with physical or cognitive disabilities, such a diversity of examples may be vital in order for them to access the pattern being taught. Other students may benefit from the same multiple examples by obtaining a perspective that they otherwise might not. In this way, a range of examples can help to ensure that each student’s recognition networks are able to identify the fundamental elements identifying a pattern.

This same use of varied content examples supports a second recommended practice in UDL methodology, *provide multiple media and formats*. A wide range of tools for presenting instructional content are available digitally, thus teachers may manipulate size, color contrasts, and other features to develop examples in multiple media and formats. These can be saved for future use and flexibly accessed by different students, depending on their needs and preferences.

The content guidelines of differentiated instruction also recommend that content elements of instruction be kept concept-focused and principle-driven. This practice is consistent with a third UDL Teaching Method for recognition, *highlight critical features*. By avoiding any focus on extensive facts or seductive details and reiterating the broad concepts, teachers highlight essential components and better supporting recognition.

The fourth UDL Teaching Method for recognition is to *support background knowledge*, making the assessment step of the differentiated instruction learning cycle instrumental. By evaluating student

knowledge about a construct before designing instruction, teachers can better support students' knowledge base, scaffolding instruction in a very important way.

Strategic Learning

As individuals seek the most desirable method of learning strategies, one method does not work for everyone; therefore, teaching methodologies need to be varied. This kind of flexibility is critical for teachers to meet the needs of their diverse students, and the notion of varied teaching strategies is reflected in the 4 UDL Teaching Methods. Differentiated instruction can support these teaching methods in valuable ways.

Differentiated instruction recognizes the need for students to receive ***flexible models of skilled performance***, which is one of the four UDL Teaching Methods for strategic learning. As noted above, teachers implementing differentiated instruction are encouraged to demonstrate information and skills multiple times and at varying levels. As a result, learners enter the instructional episode with different approaches, knowledge and strategies for learning.

When students are engaged in initial learning on novel tasks or skills, ***supported practice*** should be used to ensure success and eventual independence. Supported practice enables students to divide a complex skill into manageable components and fully master these components. Differentiated instruction promotes this teaching method by encouraging students to be active and responsible learners and by asking teachers to respect individual differences and scaffold students as they move from initial learning to practiced, less supported skills mastery.

In order to successfully demonstrate the skills that they have learned, students need ***flexible opportunities for demonstrating skill***. Differentiated instruction directly supports this UDL Teaching Method by reminding teachers to vary requirements and expectations for learning and expressing knowledge, including the degree of difficulty and the means of evaluation or scoring.

Affective Learning

Differentiated instruction and UDL Teaching Methods bear another important point of convergence: recognition of the importance of engaging learners in instructional tasks. Supporting affective learning through flexible instruction is the third principle of UDL and an objective that differentiated instruction supports very effectively.

Differentiated instruction theory reinforces the importance of effective classroom management and reminds teachers of meeting the challenges of effective organizational and instructional practices. Engagement is a vital component of effective classroom management, organization, and instruction. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to offer choices of tools, adjust the level of difficulty of the material, and provide varying levels of scaffolding to gain and maintain learner attention during the instructional episode. These practices bear much in common with UDL Teaching Methods for affective learning: ***offer choices of content and tools, provide adjustable levels of challenge, and offer a choice of learning context***. Teachers provide varying levels of scaffolding when differentiating instruction, which enables students to access varied learning contexts and to make choices about their learning environment.

<i>Network-Appropriate Teaching Methods</i>
<p>To support diverse recognition networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide multiple examples• Highlight critical features• Provide multiple media and formats• Support background context
<p>To support diverse strategic networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide flexible models of skilled performance• Provide opportunities to practice with supports• Provide ongoing, relevant feedback<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer flexible opportunities for demonstrating skill
<p>To support diverse affective networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer choices of content and tools• Offer adjustable levels of challenge• Offer choices of rewards• Offer choices of learning context

Adapted from:
Differentiated Instruction and Implications for UDL Implementation
Tracey Hall, Nicole Strangman and Anne Meyer (2011).

GLOSSARY for Early Intervention and Special Education Services

Article 7

Indiana’s interpretation of the Individual’s with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).

Assistive Technology

Is an item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted or the replacement of such device.

Case Conference Committee

Case conference committee or “CCC” means the group of persons including parents and public school personnel who are responsible for determining a student’s eligibility, writing the educational program, monitoring the program and updating the program as needed, identifying appropriate services and place of implementing the educational program, and other matters relevant to the education of the student.

(1) Reviewing the educational evaluation report and determining a student's eligibility for special education.

Introduction

Eligibility

For special education and related services, means that a:

- (1) student's CCC has determined, in accordance with this article, that a student's disability or impairment adversely affects the student's educational performance and, by reason thereof, the student needs special education or related services; or
- (2) child's CCC has determined, in accordance with this article, that a child has a developmental delay as described in 511 IAC 7-41-6 and, by reason thereof, the student needs special education or related services.

First Steps Early Intervention

The Indiana service system for infants or toddlers less than three (3) years of age who demonstrate a delay in develop and would benefit from additional supports to address their developmental needs and the family in order to enhance the child's development and the family's capacity to care and advocate for their child.

IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities that requires a free, appropriate public education provided in the least restrictive environment. IDEA provides the structure of state's laws which govern special education in the public schools. IDEA specifically describes how states and public agencies, like schools, provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

Individual Education Program (IEP)

The Individualized Education Program, or IEP, is the key document developed by the parent and his or her child's teachers and related services personnel that lays out how the child receives a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Among other components, the IEP lays out the child's academic achievement and functional performance, describes how the child will be included in the general education curriculum, establishes annual goals for the child and describes how those goals will be measured, states what special education and related services are needed by the child, describes how the child will be appropriately assessed including through the use of alternate assessments, and determines what accommodations may be appropriate for the child's instruction and assessments.

Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)

An IFSP is the developmental program plan for eligible infants and toddlers receiving First Steps Early Intervention services. The IFSP is developed by a group including family members and First Steps providers through an assessment and evaluation process, identifies the child's present levels of development and performance, establishes goals for future development and performance, and outlines how the child will receive early intervention and other services. Unlike an IEP which is an educational program, the IFSP explicitly integrates the needs of the family with those of the child and presents a comprehensive plan that enables the family to meet its goals.

Preschool Special Education

Public special education provided to eligible children 3 years through 5 years, who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment.

Special Education

Introduction

Individualized educational services for eligible students (ages 3 years to 21 years) which are provided by a local public school corporation, at no cost to the parent. Special education includes, but is not limited to instruction in a classroom, home, hospital or other settings; instruction in physical education, travel training, vocational education or speech-language pathology services. Special education is provided by licensed teachers, licensed therapists, and other related services needed to for a student to benefit from public education. Special education services are written into an Individual Educational Program (IEP)

Universal Design for Learning

A set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning

David H. Rose & Anne Meyer, ASCD, 2002

<http://www.cast.org/teachingeverystudent/ideas/tes/>

The Universal Design of Early Education Moving Forward for All Children, 2006, in Beyond the Journal NAEYC, September, 2006.

<http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/SRUD-MovingForwardArticle.pdf>

Universal Design: Process, Principles, and Applications

A goal and a process that can be applied to the design of any product or environment

Sheryl Burgstahler, Ph.D.

<http://www.washington.edu/doi/Brochures/Programs/ud.html>

Building Blocks 2nd Edition, for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs, Susan Sandall and Ilene Schwartz, (2008) Paul H. Brookes Publishing

Cara's Kit: Creating Adaptations for Routines and Activities, Milbourne, S.A. and Campbell, P.H. (2007), Philadelphia, PA: Child and Family Studies Research Programs, Thomas Jefferson University; Distributed by Division for Early Childhood (DEC), www.dec-sped.org

Helpful links/websites:

Article 7/Navigating the Course: <http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/laws.html>

IDOE Special Education: <http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/>

IDEA: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html>

First Steps: <http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2633.htm>

Transition: <http://www.indianatransition.org/>

IDOE: <http://doe.in.gov/>

Resource for parents of children with disabilities: <http://www.insource.org/>