



**Applying New Knowledge:
Learning & Transfer**

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC

Accredited by International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET)

Enhancing your Learning Community

**Learn the values of supporting families, creating curriculum, healthy
environments, communication and inclusion.**

Dr. Theresa Vadala

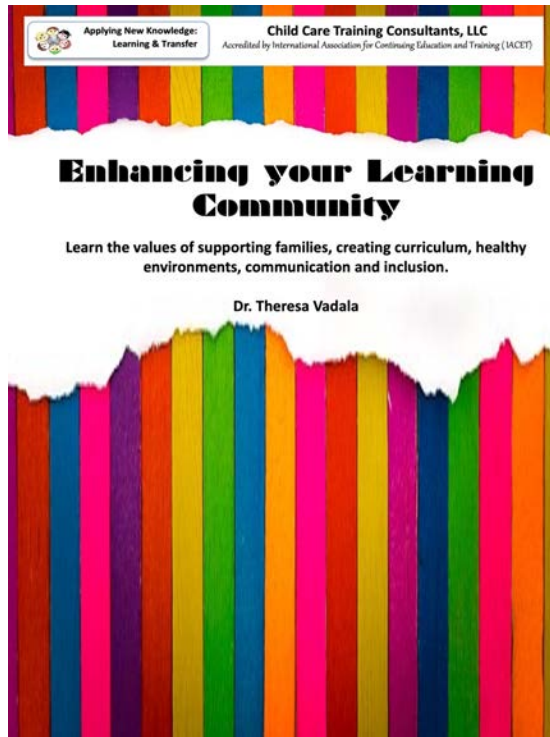


Enhancing your Learning Community

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Learning & Transfer**

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC

Accredited by International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET)

Title: NV CKA4.C Enhancing your Learning Community

3 Hours

0.3 CEUs

CKA 4: ENVIRONMENT AND CURRICULUM



Dr. Theresa Vadala
(Instructor & Curriculum Designer)





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**Thank you for choosing
Child Care Training Consultants, LLC.,
for your CDA Training Needs!**

Learning Assessment

Read the material provided, take the 5-10 quiz questions and
complete the training evaluation at the end of the course.

Participants must receive 100% on individual courses to obtain a certificate of completion.

Questions?

We are happy to help.

Support Services:

Please contact us 24/7 at

childcaretrainingconsultants1@gmail.com

Business # 702.837.2434



Child Care Training Consultants LLC, Goal

The goal is to empower educators as they take Child Development Associate (CDA) courses to make a powerful difference in the lives of young children!

Mission Statement

“Child Care Training Consultants, LLC’s is committed to provide research-based professional growth and development training courses primarily focused on the Child Development Associate. The CDA is the nation’s premier credential that is transferable, valid, competency-based and nationally recognized in all 50 states, territories, the District of Columbia, community colleges and the United State Military.

Vision

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC’s vision is to provide the early childhood community with courses based on CDA competency standards to obtain their CDA Credential and assist in reaching their goal as an exceptional early childhood educator to ultimately achieve higher child outcomes.



About the Instructor

Theresa has over 30 years experience in the field of Early Childhood Education. During that time, she served as a Preschool Teacher, Disabilities Coordinator, Program Facilitator, and Director of an Early Childcare Program. She has a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership with Specialization in Curriculum and Instructional Design. Theresa is a Professional Growth & Development Trainer and Curriculum Designer and offers web-based courses internationally. She is the Executive Director/Owner of the training organization Child Care Training Consultants, LLC., (CCTC).

Business Description

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC. (CCTC) is an accredited provider (AP) with the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) that provides Continuing Education Units (CEU) for adult education nationally. The business is also a recognized training organization with the Council for Professional Recognition, Child Development Associate Council (CDA), National Credentialing Program.



Learning Objectives & Outcomes

Learning Objectives

By the end of the training participants will be able to:

1. Recognize appropriate learning community ideas.
2. Identify their own values as they work with young children given the resources with strategies to use from the Building a Learning Community Course.
3. Implement clear communication skills between adult care providers and the children in their care.
4. Organize an early childcare facility environment to optimize productive spaces.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the training participants will:

1. Recognize 3-5 appropriate learning community ideas.
2. Identify their own values as they work with young children given the resources with strategies to use from the Building a Learning Community Course.
3. Identify 3 communication skills to use between adult care providers and the children in their care.
4. Identify 3-5 strategies to organize an early childcare facility environment to optimize productive spaces.



Agenda

Part 1: Professional Learning Community

- Opportunities for Collaboration
- Removing Barriers
- A Focus on Results
- Commitment
- Security
- Continuity of Care

Part 2: Questions to Consider for Planning and Programming

- Curriculum Design, Plan & Format
- How to Write Curriculum
- Environment
- Health and Safety
- Communication

Part 3: Supporting Parents

- Parent – Provider Relationship
- Inclusion

Review





Part 1:

What is a Professional Learning Community?

Educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.

The professional learning community model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn. This simple shift—from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning—has profound implications for schools.

School mission statements that promise “learning for all” have become a cliché. But when a school staff takes that statement literally—when teachers view it as a pledge to ensure the success of each student profound changes begin to take place.



What is a Professional Learning Community?

The school staff finds itself asking:

- What school characteristics and practices have been most successful in helping all students achieve at high levels?
- How could we adopt those characteristics and practices in our own school?
- What commitments would we have to make to one another to create such a school?
- What indicators could we monitor to assess our progress?

When the staff has built shared knowledge and found common ground on these questions, the school has a solid foundation for moving forward with its improvement initiative.

As the school moves forward, every professional in the building must engage with colleagues in the ongoing exploration of three crucial questions that drive the work of those within a professional learning community:

- What do we want each student to learn?
- How will we know when each student has learned it?
- How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?





Opportunities for Collaboration

- Build relationships
- Relationships lay the foundation
- Find time to collaborate
- Leads to higher levels of student achievement





Opportunities for Collaboration



Educators who are building a professional learning community recognize that they must work together to achieve their collective purpose of learning for all. Therefore, they create structures to promote a collaborative culture.

Collaboration begins with finding time to connect with colleagues, to share thoughts, and provide support. Here are three tips for successful collaboration:





Opportunities for Collaboration



1. Build Relationships: Teaching is emotionally draining, and the best colleagues can be there for you in all types of situations. Pop your head into a colleague's classroom just to say hi!

Remember to ask your colleagues to share their trials and triumphs with you, too. Sometimes just asking fellow teachers how their day is going opens up the doors for productive and bonding conversations.

The relationships you build with colleagues aren't just good for your mental well being; they're also the foundation of collaboration that can result in increased student achievement. Just like building relationships with students lays the groundwork for academic success, building relationships with colleagues lays the groundwork for effective collaboration.

2. Find Time to Collaborate: Shared planning time allows teachers to collaborate during the school day. With shared planning time, teachers are able to make strides in planning rigorous and appropriate lessons for their students.

Ideally, your school provides you time within the school day to collaborate with colleagues..

The powerful collaboration that characterizes professional learning communities is a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. Teachers work in teams, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning. This process, in turn, leads to higher levels of student achievement.





Removing Barriers

- State standards do not guarantee that all students will learn
- Teachers need time to discuss state and district curriculum
- Teachers must know what they are expected to learn
- No excuses for failing to collaborate

For meaningful collaboration to occur, a number of things must also *stop* happening. Schools must stop pretending that merely presenting teachers with state standards or a set curriculum will guarantee that all students have access to a common curriculum. Even childcare facilities that devote tremendous time and energy to designing the *intended* curriculum often pay little attention to the *implemented* curriculum (what teachers actually teach) and even less to the *attained* curriculum (what students learn).

Teacher conversations must quickly move beyond “What are we expected to teach?” to “How will we know when each student has learned?” Few educators publicly assert that working in isolation is the best strategy for improving schools. Instead, they give reasons why it is impossible for them to work together:

In the final analysis, building the collaborative culture of a professional learning community is a question of will. A group of staff members who are determined to work together will find a way.

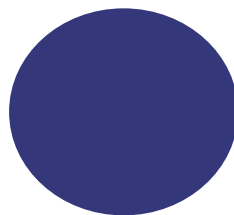
Marzano, 2003





A Focus on Results

- Teacher participation
- Identifying current level of student achievement
- Collaboration
- Periodic evidence
- Shift attention to goal that focus on student learning





A Focus on Results

Professional learning communities judge their effectiveness on the basis of results. Working together to improve student achievement becomes the routine work of everyone in the school. Every teacher team participates in an ongoing process of identifying the current level of student achievement, establishing a goal to improve the current level, working together to achieve that goal, and providing periodic evidence of progress. Educators who focus on results must also stop limiting improvement goals to factors outside the classroom, such as student discipline and staff morale, and shift their attention to goals that focus on student learning.





Commitment

- Focus on learning rather than teaching
- Working collaboratively on items related to learning
- Focus on continual improvement

Building a professional learning community is a powerful way of working together in a way that affects the learning practices of schooling. It requires the school staff to focus on learning rather than teaching, working collaboratively on items related to learning, and keeping focus on continual improvement.





Security

- Supporting emotionally meaningful separations and reunions
- Provide parents with access to staff after saying goodbye to their children.
- Spending time in the morning observing the classroom can give the parent a concrete image of other children in the arms of caregivers singing and talking and reminding them that "mama or dada will be back later."

Parents, staff, and children all experience intense emotions when young children leave or return to a caregiver's program. The facility you work in can provide emotional support for their staff, parents, and children. The pattern of "give and take" that occurs among young children and their parents and caregivers' shapes how children feel about themselves.

From birth, positive give and take in relationships fosters social and emotional well-being and resilience. Secure relationships are particularly important for a very young child's language development, problem solving, social interaction, and emotional regulation.

The patterns of interpersonal exchanges during the early years have significance for the developing brain, including the development of a young child's sense of self, as well as what the child thinks, remembers, and feels. Researchers have found that although brains are impressive in their continuing ability to change and adapt throughout the life cycle, early relationships are significant in influencing future development.



Security continued...

Relationships described as "secure attachments" involve identifying and enhancing positive emotional states such as joy and elation and identifying and supporting painful emotional states such as fear, sadness, and anger. Hellos and goodbyes—times when young children's emotions are often heightened—provide golden opportunities to build and enhance relationships. It is important to take into account the reality that parents and professionals often experience intense emotions themselves and are influenced by their past experience with comings and goings from loved ones.

Supporting emotionally meaningful separations and reunions:

Provide parents with access to staff after saying goodbye to their children. If a baby was crying when the parent left, the parent might be comforted by talking to the teacher or the director and hearing how the baby is doing. Spending time in the morning observing the classroom can give the parent a concrete image of other babies in the arms of caregivers singing and talking and reminding the babies that "mama or dada will be back later." Create a welcoming environment for parents so that they can enter the room, help children get settled, connect with a teacher, and hang out at the end of day. These moments allow the staff and parents to interact and share their feelings and knowledge of the child.

Arrange for and invite parents to regular (monthly) parent/staff meetings to talk about their children and hear how other parents and children are doing.

Provide regular, reflective supervision so staff can discuss their emotions and responses to children and parents.



Continuity of Care

- 1) The day to day interactions between the primary caregiver and a child that give the child a sense of predictability in their daily experiences
- 2) The deepening relationship and shared memories created through the enduring, year-after-year relationship between the primary caregiver and the child.

The extended time together supports a child's development of a sense of history of themselves with the caregiver. It helps children believe that people remain in their lives, in caring, meaningful ways -- that they can rely on, and safely love other people. For families experiencing multiple challenges (e.g., unstable housing leading to multiple moves, unstable employment, or numerous adults or other individuals rotating in and out of the home), continuity in the caregiving environment is especially beneficial for the young child, who might not otherwise experience regularity in relationships.

When continuity of care is provided by a primary caregiver, there are also many opportunities for the caregiver and parents to develop a caring relationship. Caregivers may learn from parents how the child expects to be cared for, and any cultural or personal care practices the family utilizes. The caregiver, in turn, may inform the family on the thinking behind some of the care practices in the program. Open, genuine communication between parents and caregivers increases the continuity of the child's experiences between home and center.





Part 2: Questions to Consider for Planning and Programming

- * What does the program staff understand about the process of early learning and early relationships?
- * What kinds of trainings does the program offer about continuity of care and primary caregiving?
- * How do the organizational structure and personnel policies of the agency support continuity of care?
- * How does the staff feel about working with restricted or expanded age groups?
- * Does the staff have the range of skills needed to work with mixed age groups or the range of
- * the first three years of life?
- * How does the program support children and families when caregivers or home visitors leave?
- How do licensing or accreditation requirements impact the plan for continuity?

A system of continuity of care helps to nurture the important relationships between primary caregiver and the child. It is within the context of these relationships that children grow and develop. When young children and their caregivers are tuned into one another, and when caregivers can read the child's emotional cues and respond appropriately to his or her needs in a timely fashion, their interactions tend to be successful and the relationship is likely to support the child's healthy development in multiple domains, including communication, cognition, social-emotional competence, and moral understanding.



Curriculum Design

Your curriculum is your guide on how you nurture children's development. It allows you to offer experiences that help children learn about themselves and the world around them. Your curriculum includes:

- Planned activities
- Materials and equipment

Interactions between children and providers and among children

Your curriculum should focus on all areas of child development:

- Cognitive/intellectual - numbers and shapes, counting, patterns and measurement, sense of space, knowledge and experience with the world, art, movement and dramatic play
- Language/literacy - communication (listening, understanding and speaking), knowing about letters and word sounds and patterns, knowing about print and books
- Social - cooperation, positive social relationships, respect for others, knowledge about families and communities
- Emotional - self control and knowledge about feelings
- Physical - gross motor skills, fine motor skills, active play and health and safety
- Cultural - awareness and appreciation of their own and others' cultures

Approaches to learning - initiative and curiosity, engagement and persistence and reasoning and problem solving. Your curriculum is based on providers' observations of the needs, strengths and interests of the individual children in care. It builds new experiences and expectations based on children's previously learned knowledge and skills. Providers need to be intentional in the methods used to support children's learning. Your curriculum should support children with disabilities and children whose home language is not English.





Curriculum Plan

The curriculum plan is a document that lists all the experiences, events and activities that are available for the children throughout the course of the day. The experiences and activities planned on the curriculum plan are follow up, extension ideas, based on children's interest, family input, intentional teaching etc. and are sourced from a variety of documents such as observations, learning stories and more.

As part of implementing a curriculum plan, documentation (learning stories and observations) becomes a resource tool that is used to reflect on and extend upon the children's learning and development. This is done by linking further learning opportunities from these documents to the curriculum plan.

Each experience on the curriculum plan is intentional and must have a learning outcome (objective), a reason why that particular experience is being provided and clearly states where the experience originated from. This provides a clear link to the learning objective and to the original source or specific documentation of where this experience originated from.





Curriculum Plan

When thinking about what experiences / activities to implement on the curriculum plan (previously known as “program”), information or evidence needs to be gathered which supports children’s learning and development. The collection of evidence you gather to form your curriculum should come from a variety of sources. Once the sources have been collected, these can be used to make up the curriculum plan. The collection of evidence and the information gathered should come from the following sources:

- Children’s Interests
- Child Input / Family Input / Community Events
- Intentional Teaching
- Children’s Portfolios
- Daily Diary
- Spontaneous Experiences
- Observations
- Continuation Of Children’s Learning
- Group Experiences
- Supporting Skills and Development



Through planning, once this information and evidence of learning is collected, the curriculum plan will begin to take shape. This is the process of “designing a curriculum” with children rather than “programming” for children’s learning.



Curriculum Format

Once the information and evidence has been gathered, the curriculum plan format can begin to take shape. There is no right or wrong way on how the curriculum format is developed. Each individual educator and early childhood setting will have their own thoughts and ideas on how to implement the elements of the curriculum plan and how the curriculum format will be created. In saying this, there are a few options on what headings (where each experience falls under) can be used when formatting the curriculum plan. Headings on the curriculum plan can include the following:

Learning Outcomes – Using each learning outcomes as a heading on the curriculum plan is a simple way to identify the objective or goal for each experience planned. It enables educators to quickly determine which outcome the children should achieve through each experience.

Play Based Learning - To emphasis a play-based learning approach within the curriculum plan the following headings can be used: Sensory Play (learning through senses), Exploratory Play (learning by finding out), Manipulative Play (learning by touch/feel/manipulating), Dramatic Play (learning by role-taking/pretending) and Creative Play (learning by creating). The headings also support the types of play the children will be engaged in throughout the day within their learning environment.





Curriculum Format

Interest Areas - When setting up the physical environment into interest areas, this can be reflected onto the curriculum plan format. The experiences/activities the children will be engaged in can be added under each of the interest areas onto the curriculum plan.

Child Development - Developmental domains can be used as categories within the curriculum plan. Since the EYLF has been introduced there seems to be less focus on a child's developmental stages and more focus on the learning outcomes. These two can be incorporated and be used together to determine a child's overall achievements. The learning outcomes are similar and reflect upon the developmental domains:

- Children Have A Strong Sense of Identity relates to Emotional Development
- Children Are Connected With & Contribute To Their World relates to Social Development
- Children Have A Strong Sense of Wellbeing relates to Physical Development
- Children Are Confident and Involved learners relates to Cognitive Development
- Children Are Effective Communicators relating to Language Development





How to Write the Curriculum

Once the curriculum plan format has been decided and the “evidence of learning” has been collected, the curriculum plan can now be written. Practice makes perfect and so does writing the curriculum plan. Although it may look like an overwhelming task, it’s really quite simple once all the information has been collected. Here is a simple guide on how to write the curriculum plan.

Experiences and Activities are added under each of the relevant headings. These are the experiences that the children will be engaged in throughout the week. In order to decide what experiences are to be added onto the curriculum plan, use the collection of documentation from the evidence of learning. Using these, think about an experience to extend upon interests, develop further learning, master a skill, parent suggestions, child input etc. Any of these ideas can form activities for the curriculum plan.





How to Write a Curriculum

When adding experiences onto the curriculum plan, details need to be provided on what the experience is. It doesn't have to be too detailed, however when someone is reading the curriculum plan, they will need to understand what you are referring to. So, it's a good idea to add a little detail if necessary.

For each experience written on the curriculum plan a learning outcome needs to be recorded and identified. Think about and identify which learning outcome the children will achieve while engaging in that particular experience. More often than not, an experience can fall under more than one learning outcome. When this occurs, choose the outcome that best describes what the children should achieve through that particular experience.

For example:

Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.

The experiences listed on the curriculum plan all have come from somewhere. There is a reason behind having each experience on the curriculum plan in the first place. To reflect this, an input key is required to link the experience to the original source.





Curriculum

On the curriculum plan parent input needs to be added on a weekly basis. The simplest way to add parent input into the curriculum plan is to listen to what parents say during pickups and drop offs. They will more than likely discuss what they did on the weekend, what their child is doing at home, new skills developed etc. Use this information to form parent input. When a parent mentions something about their child who can be used as parent input, add it onto the curriculum plan along with the date.

For example:

Taylor's mother Tiffany mentioned they will be moving soon. This can be added onto the curriculum under parent input. An extension experience could be a group discussion on what types of houses the children live in. Parents don't need to physically write down the information you can do it for them.

Incorporated within the curriculum plan, reflection questions can be added for educators to critically reflect on how the overall atmosphere in the environment is working. The questions are to be used as a tool to guide educators in their professional development. Questions can include:

- Does the curriculum assist in the development of Belonging, Being and Becoming?
- Has parent input been added into the curriculum plan?
- Is the current setup of the environment working?





Environment

A child's environment affects their development and behavior. Well-planned, indoor and outdoor environments make it easier for children to learn, to get along with one another and become independent. Effective environments can also make things easier for the child care provider. A quality learning environment should send these messages to children:

- * This is a good place to be
- * You can trust all the big people in this place
- * You can be independent and do many exciting things that will help you learn
- * You can get away and be by yourself or be with friends whenever you want to
- * This is a safe place to explore and try out your ideas
- * Everything here is for you and you can use it whenever you like
- * You know where things are and they're always in the same place
- * This is a happy place that helps you learn new things
- * Somebody knows you and know what you like to do





A Welcoming Environment

The design and layout of the classroom affects how children interact and how safe and connected they feel in the classroom space. Do children have room to move in the classroom? Is the circle time area large enough for children to cross their legs, or are they clustered together with little room to move?

Take a good look at the furniture in the classroom, as well as how the space is divided up. Are the activity centers situated in one part of the room? Is there a quiet space where children are able to work without disruptions from others? Is there really a need for a large teacher's desk, or would a small cubby or locker suffice?

- * **Defined Play Spaces** *that offer challenging play opportunities and promote acceptable behavior*
- * **Defined Quiet Spaces** *that allow children to take a break and refocus their energies, while at the same time can be supervised by childcare provider*
- * **Curriculum & Activities** *that are age-appropriate and support Early Learning Guidelines*
- * **A Variety of Equipment and Play Materials** *that are age-appropriate and accessible by children*
- * **Children's Artwork** *and other colorful, realistic pictures and photographs displayed at children's eye level*





Creating a Healthy and Safe Environment



Support the care of children by creating environments that allow staff to focus their efforts on nurturing and caring for children. The design should provide features that encourage strong, positive relationships between staff and children.

Create an environment that comfortably accommodates the needs of staff in order to attract and retain highly qualified people.

Design centers that are pleasing and will enhance the involvement of families and the children's caregivers in the center.

Respond to local cultures, climate, and regional preferences in designing the center. Seek and consider the goals of parents, the sponsoring agency, and the governing board of directors.

Create a center environment that attests to Head Start's high level of commitment to providing appropriate, well-planned and beautiful environments for children of the community. The appearance and functional arrangement of the center should enhance the center's assets.

Design "through the eyes of a child" with sensitivity to children's scale. Consider how the children will use the space, what they will see from their perspective, and what kind of experience they will have in the environment.

Provide an intriguing environment with features and literal "themes" that reflect the community and its culture. For example, tribal Head Start programs may provide language activities, legends, and dance activities, use traditional symbols for their wall decorations, or use traditional colors, songs, and music during their "circle" activities.



Creating a Healthy and Safe Environment continued...



Size the classroom to accommodate recommended group sizes and adult-to-child ratios. The design should use space efficiently and incorporate features such as strategically situated storage.

Provide durable and cost effective materials and design details. Designers should consider the intense use a center receives and should be particularly sensitive to the life cycle cost of materials.

Establish a distinctly child-oriented environment within a controlled facility. The impression created by the design should be the antithesis of a typical institutional setting. The center should “feel like home” for the child.

Create an accessible center for the disabled, staff, parents and children and emphasize cost effectiveness.

Provide a healthful indoor and outdoor environment.





A healthy classroom needs to address the needs of the whole child, rather than simply focusing on one or two aspects of a child's health. With this in mind it is also important to remember that all health and safety issues should address the children's emotional, cognitive, language, and social skills. Teachers can play an important role in strengthening children's healthy attitudes and knowledge; just remember a healthy and well-organized classroom also speaks volumes!





Communication

Communication between parents and providers is not always easy or smooth, though. Parents may say some things that stop providers in their tracks.

- Why are the kids always playing? Why don't you teach reading and math?
- My sister's childcare provider takes the kids on field trips. When are you going to the museum?
- I noticed a bruise on Juan's leg last night. What did you do to him yesterday?

As a provider, you also may say things that make parents confused or angry.

- I need to raise my rates starting next week.
- I need to take my child to the doctor tomorrow, so you will need to make other arrangements for the morning.
- Your child isn't having a good relationship with the other children. I'm afraid I can't take care of him anymore.





Part 3: Supporting Parents

Parents' jobs and schedules make a difference in your job and schedule. If they need to go to work very early, you need to go to work very early. If they have a difficult day at work, you will notice. If they are having problems at home, you will notice that, too. You might notice that they are not paying for the childcare on time. They might complain to you that they can never get everything done. Or they might look stressed or depressed.

Your job is to take care of children, but you might be able to help the parents, too. You cannot give therapy, but you can give support. You cannot teach them everything they need to know about time management or finances, but you might be able to help them get information about those things. Parents who can handle time, money, and emotions well will do a better job taking care of children. That will make your job easier, too.

When most people think about children in childcare, the people they think about are probably the children and the provider. Another central person in this setting, however, is the parent—sometimes several parents, grandparents, or other guardians. Consistency and connection between those people and the childcare setting are very important. The parents or guardians and the childcare provider should understand each other. They should do similar things with the child and have similar goals.

The first step is to understand issues that parents and families face.





Parent – Provider Relationship

Studies have shown that children do better when parents and childcare providers do similar things—that is, when they are consistent. And children's well-being is the most important part of childcare. It is important for parents to choose settings that fit their childrearing practices. It is important for providers, on the other hand, to describe their practices clearly and to adjust to the parents' goals at times. It is also important that parents have one special provider as a contact person to keep the lines of communication open.

Good relationships are also valuable for you and for the parents. If you get along with them well, you will have an easier time talking about the problems you are having with their child. Parents may be more willing to pay you on time. A parent who likes you will be more comfortable with leaving his or her child in your care. Then there may be fewer problems with crying and clinging children.

- **Systemic**— *anchored in leadership priorities, program management, continuous improvement systems, and staff development*
- **Integrated**— *effective PFCE activities are carried out throughout the entire organization*
- **Comprehensive**— *the full range of strengths, interests and needs of the adults and children in a family are considered, and staff support families by connecting them with services and resources to achieve their goals*
- **Outcomes-based and data-driven**— *enabling, parents, teachers, program directors, family service providers, and community partners to find new solutions to new challenges*





Inclusion



Inclusive childcare seeks the full integration of children with disabilities into the childcare and pre-school setting.

The activities and materials used in most early childhood classrooms are designed to meet the needs of many children with or without disabilities. When they do not meet the specific needs of a child, they can be adapted or expanded to accommodate that child's individual needs. The purpose of an adaptation is to assist children in compensating for intellectual, physical, or behavioral challenges. They allow children to use their current skills while promoting the acquisition of new skills. Adaptations can make the difference between a child merely being present in the class and a child being actively involved.

Developing adaptations and accommodations for a child with special needs is a continuous process that involves each child's collaborative team. The first step is to assess the child's abilities and the environment where the child will be spending time. Once the goals and objectives are identified and expectations for the child's participation in that environment are established, the team selects or creates adaptations and accommodations that address those needs. Once implemented, their effectiveness should be assessed on an ongoing basis and revised, as needed. To meet the specific needs of a child, changes may need to be made in one or more of the following instructional conditions. Remember, when the child can participate in an activity, as it is, no changes need to be made.

Instructional groupings or arrangements – For any given activity there are a number of instructional arrangements from which to choose: large groups, small groups, cooperative learning groups, peer partners, one-to-one instruction, and/or independent tasks.



Inclusion

Lesson format - The format of a lesson may be altered to meet the needs of a child by including more opportunities for whole class discussions, games, role playing, activity-based lessons, experiential lessons, demonstrations, and/or thematic lesson organization.

Teaching strategies - A change in teaching strategies can influence a child's ability to participate. Examples include: simplifying directions, addition of visual information, use of concrete materials/examples, sequencing learning tasks from easy to hard, repeated opportunities to practice skills, changes in the schedule of reinforcement, elaboration or shaping of responses, verbal prompts and/or direct physical assistance.

Curricular goals and learning outcomes - To match the needs of a child within the context of an activity, it may be appropriate to individualize the learning objectives. This can often be accomplished using the same activities and materials. If children are working on a classification concept by sorting blocks, a child with a disability could participate in the same activity but focus of reaching, grasping, and releasing skills.

Adaptations to the method for responding - Sometimes children may understand a concept yet need an adaptation in the way they demonstrate that knowledge. Use of augmentative communication systems, eye gaze, and demonstrations may better allow a child to demonstrate his/her skills.

Environmental conditions - The environmental arrangement is an important aspect of any early childhood setting. Changes in lighting, noise level, visual and auditory input, physical arrangement of the room or equipment, and accessibility of materials are important considerations.



Inclusion

- Modifications of instructional materials
- Level of personal assistance
- An alternative activity

Modification of instructional materials - It is sometimes necessary to physically adapt instructional or play materials to facilitate a child's participation. Materials can be physically adapted by increasing: stability (Dycem™ or Velcro™ on materials), ease of handling (adding handles, making materials larger), accessibility (developing a hand splint to hold materials, attaching an elastic cord or string to objects so they can be easily moved or retrieved), visual clarity or distinctiveness (adding contrast or specialized lighting), or size.

— **Level of personal assistance** - A child's need for assistance may range from periodic spot checks to close continuous supervision. Assistance may vary from day to day and be provided by adults or peers.

An alternative activity - This curricular adaptation should be used as a last choice



Review

Part 1: Professional Learning Community

- Opportunities for Collaboration
- Removing Barriers
- A Focus on Results
- Commitment
- Security
- Continuity of Care

Part 2: Questions to Consider for Planning and Programming

- Curriculum Design, Plan & Format
- How to Write Curriculum
- Environment
- Health and Safety
- Communication

Part 3: Supporting Parents

- Parent – Provider Relationship
- Inclusion





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