Head Start
center for

inclusion

Presenter Notes

Purpose

These notes are designed to help trainers present **Curriculum Modifications for Infants and Toddlers** and conduct the associated learning activities. Curriculum modifications are changes to the environment, activity, or materials that promote infant or toddler participation in planned activities, interactions, and routines.

Materials Needed

- Curriculum Modifications for Infants and Toddlers Presentation Slides (22)
- Presenter Notes
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activities:
  - Routines and Participation
    - Facilitator Notes
  - Choosing Modifications
    - Facilitator Notes
    - Child Vignettes
    - Presentation Slides 12-19 (Printed): Photos of Infant and Toddler Areas and Routines
- Tools for Educators
  - Child Participation Form
  - Types of Curriculum Modifications
- Helpful Resources
- Flip chart, or similar, and markers for taking notes during small group discussions

Before You Begin

- The purpose of these training resources is to give trainers and participants information about curriculum modifications and adaptations for infants and toddlers. Examples include modifications and adaptations that can be used in a variety of home and program settings.
- This training module is one in a series of in-service modules about planning and offering individualized interventions for infants and toddlers who need extra support.
- The presentation slides are animated. Animations throughout the presentation highlight many aspects of curriculum modifications. It is recommended that trainers spend a few minutes before the presentation to review the presentation and consider how they will match it to the presenter notes.
- The included learning activities offer participants opportunities to think about and plan for curriculum modifications in their own settings.

Presenter Notes

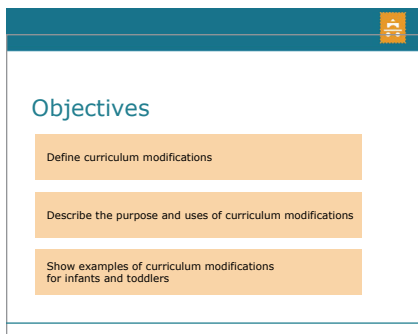## Slide 1: Curriculum Modifications for Infants and Toddlers

Introductions:

- Introduce yourself
- Ask participants to introduce themselves (for example, ask them to briefly describe their experience caring for infants and toddlers, including young children with disabilities)

The purpose of these training materials is to help participants understand the value and uses of curriculum modifications and adaptations for infants and toddlers, especially for those with disabilities or delays.

Note to Presenter:

These slides may be used as a training session focused on infants and toddlers. Selected slides may also be used to supplement the in-service suites found on the **Highly Individualized Teaching and Learning** page on the ECLKC website (including **Curriculum Modifications: An Introduction** and/or the suites on each of the modification types.)

Slide 2: Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Define what is meant by curriculum modifications
- Describe the purpose and uses of the modifications
- Give examples of curriculum modifications appropriate for infants and toddlers in a variety of contexts

Recognize that much growth, development, and learning happen during the period we call infancy and toddlerhood. Try to use examples appropriate for young infants, young toddlers, and older toddlers. Remind participants to be mindful of individualization needs based on the specific infant or toddler's development, family engagement, and linguistic and cultural background.
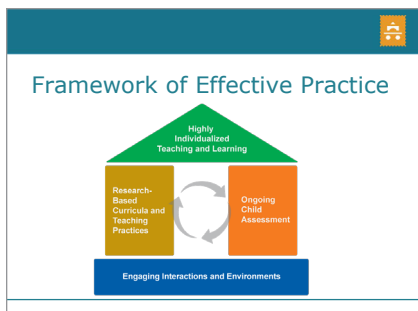
Slide 3: Framework of Effective Practice

Note to Presenter: This is an animated slide.

The House Framework portrays effective practices to support development and learning and school readiness for all children, including infants and toddlers.

Highly individualized teaching and learning practices, including Curriculum Modifications, are supported by the foundational practices that are effective for all children.

The roof of the House Framework represents highly individualized teaching and learning. Notice the tiers or levels of support, which all rest on the foundation of engaging interactions and environments. The tiers show increasing specificity and intensity of support. Curriculum modifications are used with children who will benefit from individualized adjustments to the existing curriculum. Some children need individualized learning opportunities to obtain and use their learning objectives.
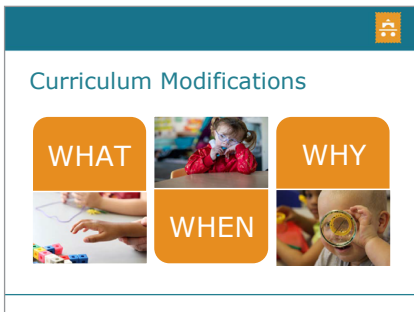
Slide 4: What, When, Why

To get started, let's answer some basic questions.

- What is a curriculum modification?
- When do I use a curriculum modification?
- Why should I use a curriculum modification?
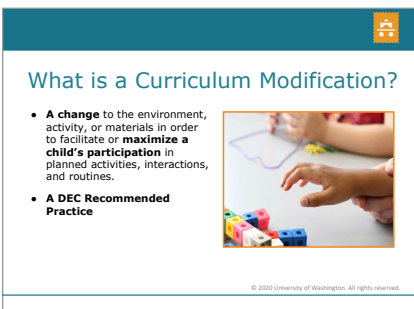
Slide 5: What is a Curriculum Modification?

A change to the environment, activity, or materials in order to facilitate or maximize a child's participation in planned activities, interactions, and routines.

What we call curriculum modifications are supported by research and experience. There are two relevant Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices: DEC is the major professional and advocacy organization in early intervention/early childhood special education.

Environment Practice 4 states "Practitioners work with the family and other adults to modify and adapt the physical, social, and temporal — meaning the timing, sequence, and pace of routines throughout the day — environments to promote the child's access to, and participation in, learning experiences" (DEC, 2014).

Instruction Practice 4 states "Practitioners plan for and provide the level of support, accommodations, and adaptations needed for the child to access, participate, and learn within and across activities and routines" (DEC, 2014).

In using the word "curriculum" to describe the modifications or changes we might make, we are making the point that for young children, the environment — the materials, the experiences, and routines — are all part of the curriculum. The curriculum is not simply a set of prescribed activities or lessons.

Optional. Show or have participants find the DEC website and the Recommended Practices section of the website (**https://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices**).
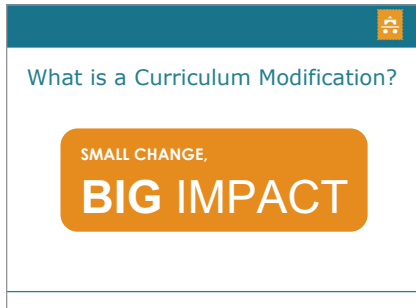
Slide 6: What is a Curriculum Modification?

A curriculum modification is a relatively small change. It should not take a great deal of time nor a lot of resources to plan and implement. Still, the change can have a big impact by enabling the child to access and take advantage of many learning opportunities.

For example, 2-year-old Jamie attends a multi-age family child care home. He is not yet standing independently; the sensory table is not accessible to him. His caregiver takes some plastic tubs, fills them with the same materials as in the sensory table and puts them on the floor. Jamie and other children can use the tubs to gain sensory experiences, play with containers, develop fine motor and other skills.
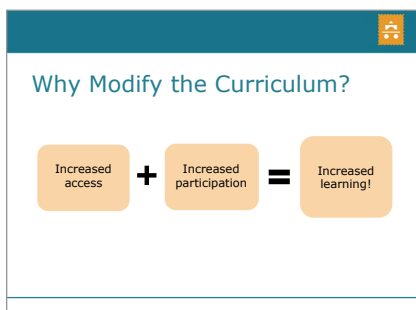
Slide 7: When Do I Modify the Curriculum?

A curriculum modification is used when the child is interested but not participating, or not fully participating, in the environment, materials, experiences, and routines at home or in home-based or group learning settings.

The assumption is that the foundation of the learning environment is strong. Warm and responsive interactions happen often, and engaging and interesting environments are available.

The teacher or caregiver's observations tell them that the child is interested but does not participate.

Optional. Refer to the example of Jamie. Ask participants if they have observed other examples of infants and toddlers in their care who are interested but not participating. Turn and talk: participants share an example with the person next to them.

Slide 8: Why Modify the Curriculum?

Modifications and adaptations are used to help an individual child access the learning activities, materials, experiences, and routines.

Enhanced access should lead to increased participation and engagement.

Participation and engagement should lead to increased learning.

Slide 9: Learning Activity: Routines and Participation

See the Routines and Participation: Facilitator Notes for instructions. Participants will use the Child Participation Form.

Discuss findings. Are there certain activities that require assistance? Did participants include all the transitions from activity to activity? What else did they notice?

Note to Presenter: Step 4 of the learning activity asks participants to identify a focal child and determine if that child needs support to participate in home or center activities. This step can be adjusted if not all participants are working with infants and toddlers.

Slide 10: Participation

Participation is one of the defining features of effective inclusion.

Participation is often used interchangeably with the concept of engagement. Child engagement refers to the amount of time a child is actively participating in an activity in a contextually appropriate way. The amount or level of engagement is associated with learning.

Engagement is typically shown through intense involvement in an activity, persistence in completing a task, deep concentration, fascination with people or materials, and absorption in play.

Even in high-quality learning environments, individual children may differ in their engagement with the environment. Thus, modifications or adaptations may be needed for individual children so that the child can participate in everyday activities and routines.
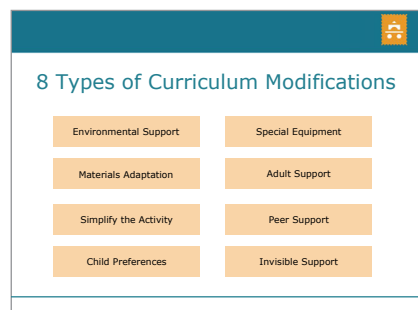
Slide 11: 8 Types of Curriculum Modifications

It can be useful to think of eight different types or categories of modifications. There are thousands of different possible modifications. Organizing them into categories may help the child's support team (educators, caregivers, parents, etc.) think first about the type of modification that is the best match for the child's learning need, and then select or design the individual modification.

Use the Types of Curriculum Modifications handout and name each of the types of modifications. Note that this handout may be used for the Choosing Modifications learning activity.

The following slides give the definition/description and offer a few photos that illustrate some possible modifications.

Note to Presenter: As you introduce each of the modification categories, help participants understand how the modification can be used across settings—home-based, center, and/or family child care programs, as well as offered to families to use at home. Simple modifications are intended to help the child participate in activities that are important to the family and to the child's other caregivers.

Slide 12: Environmental Support

Altering the physical, social, and temporal environment to promote participation, engagement, and learning.

In these photographs, we see:

- Dangling objects are placed at eye level, and the child has a bolster for support.
- During a transition, the educator/caregiver purposefully limited the size of the group.
- In group time, the educator adjusted the amount of time spent on the activity with an individual child in mind.

Slide 13: Materials Adaptation

Modifying materials so that the child can participate in as meaningful a way as possible.

In these photographs, we see:

- Use of modified cups so that the child can drink without spilling. There are other ways the utensils and dishes are modified, such as using suction cups to stabilize a bowl.
- Use of markers that are easy for the child to grasp. Pieces of foam and tape can help build up markers and other toys.
- Adapting chairs or furniture so that the child sits securely with feet on the floor.

Slide 14: Simplify the Activity

Simplifying a complicated task by breaking it down into smaller parts or by reducing the number of parts.

In these photographs, we see:

- Bits of cereal are on the tray rather than in a bowl, making them easier to see and handle.
- Projects simplified in a variety of ways: one child makes a simple mark on a paper, another draws a shape, a child squeezes glue and turns over a shape, another child pats down the shape.

Slide 15: Child Preferences

If the child is not taking advantage of the available opportunities, identify and integrate the child's preferences. This can be especially helpful to support learning opportunities during routines.

In these photographs, we see:

- The child brings a favorite toy to the next activity.
- The child is working on language skills while engaged in a preferred activity, e.g., eating.
- Here the child gets to sit with a favorite person — one of the educators — to encourage playing with objects.

Slide 16: Special Equipment

Using special or adaptive devices that allow a child to participate or increase the child's level of participation.

In these photographs, we see:

- Chairs selected to give the child needed support. Chairs with armrests and footrests provide support for a child who is not yet sitting with confidence.
- A child using a commercially available walker to assist with her mobility.
- A variety of pillows, rolled blankets, towels, or bolsters which can be used to position a child so that they can better see and use their hands.

Special equipment is also used to help individual children with communication. This might be real objects or pictures that the child can point at in order to make a request or comment.

Slide 17: Adult Support

Having an adult intervene to support the child's participation and learning.

In these photographs, we see:

- An adult joining the child at eye level and sharing that child's interest.
- Adults providing encouragement and demonstrating how to participate.

Slide 18: Peer Support

Utilizing peers to help children learn important objectives.

In these photographs, we see:

- Peers providing support through praise and encouragement.
- Peers providing support by modeling or demonstrating how to play and participate, or by joining the child's play.

Slide 19: Invisible Support

Purposeful arranging of naturally occurring events within an activity. Think of invisible supports as routines within routines.

In these photographs, we see:
- The routine is going to another room for gross motor play. The child learns that first we stand by the door (on our square), next we open the door, and then we walk to the other room.
- The caregiver changes diapers in a consistent way, narrates the diaper change, and ends with a fun little exchange.

Slide 20: Learning Activity: Choosing Modifications

See Choosing Modifications: Facilitator Notes for instructions.

The purpose of this activity is to provide additional practice in applying knowledge of modifications and adaptations. There are two activity options listed in the facilitator notes.

Note to Presenter: Use this activity to gauge participants' understanding of curriculum modifications as a method for helping individual children increase their access to, and participation in, everyday activities and routines.

Slide 21: Review

Review the objectives for this module.

Have participants identify one "wow" — an idea or example that surprised them and that they plan to use. Have them identify one "wonder — an idea that they still wonder or have questions about. Suggest resources for further learning, pass out the Helpful Resources handout, and/or follow up with another professional development activity.

Slide 22: Thank You!

Thank audience members for their time and participation before ending the session. Recommend that they visit the Children with Disabilities page on the ECLKC website for more helpful resources.

References

Division for Early Childhood. (2014). DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education.

DEC/NAEYC. (2009). Early childhood inclusion: A joint position statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute.