



This guide walks you through presenting **Activity Matrix: Organizing Learning throughout the Day**. An activity matrix is an important and effective tool for teachers to organize learning opportunities for children who may need additional support during daily classroom activities and routines. These presentation notes are suggestions so please use the materials as you see fit. This in-service includes PowerPoint slides and supporting materials.

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Presenter's PowerPoint slides (14)
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activity: Building an Activity Matrix
- Learning Activity: Providing the Right Materials
- Tips for Teachers
- Tools for Teachers
- Tools for Supervisors
- Helpful Resources
- Flip chart, or similar, and markers for writing participant ideas
- Participants should bring a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), or other learning objectives, for up to 3 children in their class.

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- The purpose of this presentation is to provide participants with a tool for organizing learning opportunities for children who need additional support during daily classroom activities and routines.
- This is one in a series of in-services about planning and providing individualized teaching for students who need extra learning support.
- This in-service should be taught alongside *Embedded Learning: Providing Learning throughout Daily Routines and Activities*. (Coming soon.)
- This PowerPoint (PPT) is animated and throughout the presentation it highlights various aspects of activity matrices. It is advised that trainers spend a few minutes prior to the presentation to run through the PPT and match it to the presentation notes.
- Learning activities offer participants opportunities to begin thinking about and organizing an activity matrix for use in classrooms.



## SLIDE 1: ACTIVITY MATRIX: ORGANIZING LEARNING THROUGHOUT THE DAY

### Introductions:

- Begin the training by giving participants background information on yourself.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves (e.g., where they are working, their current roles, etc.). This is most useful if you have participants from different grantee sites.
- Discussion: Have participants share challenges they face when trying to ensure teaching is provided on individual child objectives. What frustrations or successes do they encounter?



### NOTE

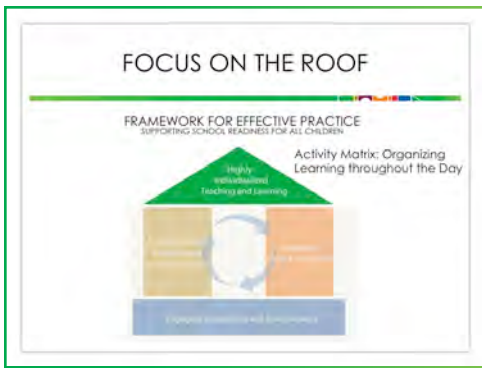
Write the participant comments down on a whiteboard, large butcher paper, etc. You can refer to these later and discuss how an activity matrix might help to address some of the challenges.

### Introduce topic:

“Today’s topic focuses on developing activity matrices.”

“An activity matrix is a tool to help teachers organize learning opportunities by planning where and when extra opportunities can occur, especially for children who need extra support.”





## SLIDE 2: FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

*Animated slide: Each numbered item corresponds to when the trainer should click to the next part of the slide.*

Review NCQTL framework for effective practice:

- The HOUSE structure supports school readiness for all children.
- The foundation represents effective and engaging interactions and environments.
- The pillars represent research-based curricula and teaching practices and ongoing child assessment.
- The roof represents highly individualized teaching and learning.
- All components interact with each other and are essential for effective everyday practice for all children.
- Click 1: Our in-service brings us to the roof of the house framework, **highly individualized teaching and learning.**
  - » While activity matrices can be used for all children, they are especially useful when planning for children who need extra support.
  - » This may be a child with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a child who needs special behavior support, or a child who isn't making progress and needs extra support in a particular area of learning.
  - » Additionally, it can be a child who seems to be excelling in some areas of learning and who may need more challenging activities.
- Click 2: This in-service will focus on building activity matrices for children who need individualized support.



**ACTIVITY MATRIX**

	Mia	Addie	Carlos
<b>Arrival</b>			
<b>Free Play</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes about 10 minutes to get into it when</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When another child touches</li> <li>• Identifies the problem or is confused with another child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When using pictures</li> <li>• Suggests or makes plans</li> </ul>
<b>Circle</b>		<b>Labels an emotion</b>	
<b>Outside</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds when someone else initiates an interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When she has a toy, she identifies the problem or is confused with another child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When using pictures</li> <li>• Suggests or makes plans</li> </ul>
<b>Meal</b>		<b>Labels an emotion</b>	
<b>Class Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When introduction is done</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When using pictures</li> <li>• Suggests or makes plans</li> </ul>
<b>Departure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds when someone else initiates an interaction</li> </ul>		
<b>Transitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes about 10 minutes to get into it when</li> </ul>	<b>Labels an emotion</b>	

**EMPHASIZE \***

The teachers use all daily activities and routines for learning opportunities, including transitions and outside play time.

**SLIDE 3:  
ACTIVITY MATRIX**

This is an example of an activity matrix.

*Animated slide: Each numbered item corresponds to when the trainer should click to the next part of the slide.*

This matrix is designed for three children who need extra support.

- Click 1: Mia is a 4-year-old who loves books and art activities. She tends to play alone and has difficulty using words to communicate with other children. Mia is a child with identified special needs and has an Individualized Education Program, or IEP.
- Click 2: Addie is a 3-year-old who loves running around outside and being near her peers. However, interacting with peers can be challenging for Addie. She often has difficulty asking for and sharing toys. At times, Addie may be destructive and ruins the work of her peers. Addie has a Behavior Intervention Plan, or BIP.
- Click 3: Carlos is a talkative and friendly preschooler whose favorite activity is building elaborate constructions with Legos and blocks. He is doing well in all learning areas except for art and writing. Carlos has turned 5 and will soon go to Kindergarten. The teaching team decided to plan for extra opportunities throughout the day for him to practice pre-writing skills.

**Notice:**

- Click 4: Learning opportunities are distributed across activities so teachers don't feel overwhelmed to provide learning opportunities at only a few concentrated times of day.



## AN ACTIVITY MATRIX



1. Is an effective way to organize teaching and learning opportunities.
2. Maximizes learning time by planning for teaching to occur throughout all activities, routines, and transitions.
3. Helps all staff be aware of individual child learning objectives.
4. Matches the child's learning objective to the activity.
5. Can be implemented for any child, but is especially useful for those who need extra support.

## SLIDE 4: AN ACTIVITY MATRIX

*Animated slide: Each numbered item corresponds to when the trainer should click to the next part of the slide.*

List several reasons why an activity matrix is important.

- » Click 1: It is an effective way to organize teaching and learning opportunities.
- » Provides a visual structure and reminder for all classroom staff about important times to provide teaching.
- Click 2: Maximizes learning time by planning for teaching to occur throughout all activities, routines and transitions.
- Click 3: Helps all staff be aware of individual child learning objectives.
  - » All staff members are aware of learning opportunities they can provide.
- Click 4: Matches the child's learning objective to the activity.
  - » For example, if a child is working on appropriately interacting with books, a teacher might be sure to plan for teaching to happen during free play in the library or housekeeping center.
- Click 5: Can be implemented for any child, but is especially useful for those who need extra support.
  - » By using a matrix, teachers and staff are able to ensure that a child who needs extra support is being provided with multiple opportunities to learn an identified skill throughout the day.

## CREATING AN ACTIVITY MATRIX

Step 1: List the activities and times of day in the left-hand column of the chart.

Step 2: List children in the top row.

	Mia	Addie
Arrival	1. Talk about people in vehicles in zone.	
Free Play		
Circle	2. Responds when another child initiates an interaction.	
Outside		1. Builds partner skill to play + responds to direction of a teacher who initiates play.
Meal		
Class Activity		
Departure		
Transitions	2. Talk about people in vehicles in zone.	2. Builds on previous

## SLIDE 5: CREATING AN ACTIVITY MATRIX

*Animated slide: Each numbered item corresponds to when the trainer should click to the next part of the slide.*

When creating an activity matrix:

- Click 4: First list the class routines and transitions down the left-hand column.
  - » Ensure that the routines and transitions represent a well-balanced day.
  - » For example, try not to have too many sitting activities back to back (e.g., circle, small group, lunch). Rather, arrange the day so that you might have circle, free play, lunch, outside, then small group.
- Click 4: Next, across the top rows, list the children you will focus on.
- Click 4: After creating the frame of the matrix, you can begin to add each child's learning goals into the matrix.





## LEARNING ACTIVITY:

### BUILDING AN ACTIVITY MATRIX (PART I)

This learning activity will be completed in two parts. For Part 1, participants identify daily activities and routines and specific children. Later in Part 2 participants will identify learning objectives (see learning activity for slide 9).

Now we will take a few minutes to create the framework for an activity matrix.

#### NOTE

If participants are attending with classroom team members, then one form can be filled out for each classroom team. If preferred, individuals can also fill out their own form.

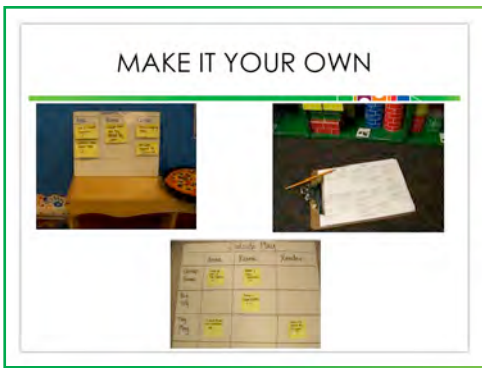
#### HANDOUT

Pass out *Learning Activity: Building an Activity Matrix*.

1. Instruct participants to list their daily activities, routines, and transitions down the left-hand column.
  - » If participants are in half-day programs, they can list meals (e.g., breakfast, lunch) as one activity. If participants are in a full-day program, it may be worth listing all meals separately in the schedule. With many meals and snacks in full-day programs, teachers may choose to work on more objectives during these times.
2. Next participants identify 1–3 children to focus on. List these children across the top row.
  - » If participants are not comfortable having the child's name on the activity matrix, suggest using the child's first initial or a symbol.

Once complete, participants should keep this for part 2 of the *Building an Activity Matrix* learning activity.





## SLIDE 6: MAKE IT YOUR OWN

*Animated slide: Each numbered item corresponds to when the trainer should click to the next part of the slide.*

One benefit of an activity matrix is that it is a flexible tool that can be created to fit the needs of individual classrooms.

Here are just a few examples of how teachers use a matrix to plan for extra learning opportunities.

- Click 1: This teacher decided to use **post-it notes** as a convenient way of organizing her matrix.
  - » Learning objectives can be written on the post-it notes and placed around the classroom in different activity areas.
  - » Post-it notes are a nice portable method.
- Click 2: The second matrix is a **computer generated matrix**.
  - » They can be created and updated easily on a computer.
  - » Some teachers print these out and post them throughout the classroom for staff to refer to throughout the day.
  - » It has been put on a **clipboard** for portability.
  - » This teacher has also decided to record information about child progress on the activity matrix. Using a matrix is a convenient method for ongoing child assessment or tracking child progress.
- Click 3: The third matrix is **handwritten on butcher paper** and also uses post-it notes.
  - » It can be placed in one central location for easy reference.
  - » Post-it notes can be moved around on the matrix to find the best match between activity and learning objective.

Make it your own!

- Success in using an activity matrix comes through making it useful for your classroom team.
- Post-it notes, whiteboard and markers, butcher paper, clipboards—use a format that works for you!
- Try one method and change if it is not working.

### DISCUSSION

Provide a few minutes for participants to think about what might work in their classrooms.

Have participants pair up with a partner or divide into small groups by classroom teams. At the end of the discussion time, participants can share ideas for all to think about.

Guiding directions:

- Talk with your colleagues about the type of matrix that might work for your classroom team and discuss the pros and cons of this method.
- Remember, an activity matrix should be available for reference at all times of the day, including outside time. Are there places you can post an outside matrix for reference during outdoor play?

### EMPHASIZE

Try different methods and pick what works best for you!





## SLIDE 7: VIDEO: ACTIVITY MATRIX IN ACTION

Introduce video.

Let's watch a video. This teacher teaches in a full-day, year-round program. She explains how she uses an activity matrix in her classroom.

VIDEO

DISCUSSION

Ask the participants for their observations.

Points for consideration:

1. Maximizing learning time by planning to teach targeted learning objectives during various activities.
2. The format of the activity matrix:
  - » Individualized for this classroom.
3. Matching learning objectives to the activity:
  - » Teaching role playing during dramatic play.
  - » Pre-writing during small group.

TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING: START SMALL

	Miss	Addie	Colton
Arrival			
Free Play	1. Observe and provide to child in play	2. Observe and provide to child in play	3. Observe and provide to child in play
Circle			
Outside	1. Observe and provide to child in play	2. Observe and provide to child in play	3. Observe and provide to child in play
Meal			
Class Activity	1. Observe and provide to child in play	2. Observe and provide to child in play	3. Observe and provide to child in play
Departure			
Transitions	1. Observe and provide to child in play	2. Observe and provide to child in play	3. Observe and provide to child in play

## SLIDE 8: TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING: START SMALL

Animated slide: Each numbered item corresponds to when the trainer should click to the next part of the slide.

Next we'll talk about strategies for implementing an activity matrix.

- Click 1: Start small. Begin with planning for only one child.
- Click 2 and 3: and as you get comfortable begin to slowly add other children to the matrix.

TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING: START SMALL

	Miss	Addie	Colton
Arrival			
Free Play	1. Observe and provide to child in play	2. Observe and provide to child in play	3. Observe and provide to child in play
Circle			
Outside	1. Observe and provide to child in play	2. Observe and provide to child in play	3. Observe and provide to child in play
Meal			
Class Activity	1. Observe and provide to child in play	2. Observe and provide to child in play	3. Observe and provide to child in play
Departure			
Transitions	1. Observe and provide to child in play	2. Observe and provide to child in play	3. Observe and provide to child in play

## SLIDE 9: TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING: START SMALL

Animated slide: Each numbered item corresponds to when the trainer should click to the next part of the slide.

Another way to start small is to focus on just one activity of the day.

For example, design the matrix for only one activity—free play. As you feel more comfortable, 1 (and 2) add other times of the day.







## LEARNING ACTIVITY:

### BUILDING AN ACTIVITY MATRIX (PART II)

Now we will take some time to work on filling in an activity matrix.

#### NOTE

Participants should work individually or with the same partners as during the last activity.

Now that the daily activities are listed, as well as the children who will be a focus for instruction, we will start to insert their learning objectives.

1. A pencil may be helpful (so objectives can be moved, if necessary).
2. Identify 1–3 learning objectives per child.
3. Start putting objectives into activities that fit best. Then, if some parts of the day start to get too crowded, move the objectives to other activities.

Repeated learning opportunities on learning objectives throughout the day are okay, and encouraged.

4. If it works better, start small.
  - » Begin with one child and place his/her objectives throughout the day or
  - » Focus on more than one child, but just one activity of the day.

#### DISCUSSION

After participants have had time to work on this, bring the group back together for discussion. Ask the participants to share:

1. What they see as being beneficial about an activity matrix.
2. What challenges they faced when building the activity matrix.
3. How will they use an activity matrix in their classroom?



**TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING:  
MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU!**

	Mia	Addie	Carlos
Arrival			
Free Play	1. Take out the collection of objects for color.	2. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	3. Write the color words on the board.
Circle	4. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	5. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	6. Write the color words on the board.
Outside	7. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	8. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	9. Write the color words on the board.
Meal			
Class Activity	10. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	11. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	12. Write the color words on the board.
Departure			
Transitions			

## SLIDE 10: MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU!

*Animated slide: Each numbered item corresponds to when the trainer should click to the next part of the slide.*

Balance the learning objective placement on the matrix. It is easy to provide extra instruction during free play, but think creatively about where else a skill can be taught.

There may be times of day when it feels too busy or unrealistic to teach some skills. For example, you may find that there isn't enough adult support to teach sorting during class activity time. You can start to move learning objectives around and see where they better fit. For example:

- Click 1: Move "sorts a collection by color"
- Click 2: to another time of the day.

This is one of the many benefits of an activity matrix; you can plan for learning opportunities at any time of the day!

### EMPHASIZE \*

Balance the learning objectives across activities and routines.

**TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING:  
PROVIDE THE RIGHT MATERIALS**

	Mia	Addie	Carlos
Arrival			
Free Play	1. Take out the collection of objects for color.	2. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	3. Write the color words on the board.
Circle	4. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	5. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	6. Write the color words on the board.
Outside	7. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	8. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	9. Write the color words on the board.
Meal			
Class Activity	10. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	11. Read the story "Colorful Day" and discuss the characters' feelings about the color.	12. Write the color words on the board.
Departure			
Transitions			

## SLIDE 11: TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING: PROVIDE THE RIGHT MATERIALS

*Animated slide: Each numbered item corresponds to when the trainer should click to the next part of the slide.*

One very important aspect of implementation is to make sure the materials needed for teaching are available.

During planning sessions, keep the activity matrix available for reference.

By referring to the activity matrix during planning, the teacher can see what materials are needed for a child to practice their learning objective during specific activities throughout the day.

- Click 1: For example, the teacher has planned for Addie to work on labeling emotions during circle time. The teacher then plans to read a book about emotions, and ask Addie questions about how the character in the story feels. Materials are provided so teaching can occur.
- Click 2: The teacher plans for Carlos to work on pre-writing skills during free play. Materials such as crayons, paint brushes, and colored pencils are available to all children as part of the normal classroom environment.

Some learning objectives don't require extra materials, just extra attention to providing learning opportunities.





## LEARNING ACTIVITY:

### LEARNING ACTIVITY: PROVIDING THE RIGHT MATERIALS

For the next activity, we will focus on providing materials to match a child's learning objectives.

This activity can be completed with a partner or as individuals. If it makes sense for the participants, they can do this activity using the activity matrices previously completed.

#### HANDOUT

Distribute *Providing the Right Materials* learning activity.

Instruct participants to:

1. Look at the chart.
2. Think about the materials needed for the child to demonstrate knowledge of the learning objective.

For example, if during free play the teacher wants Mia to talk about people or objects in view, what materials need to be available?

Perhaps, nothing more than the usual classroom materials, but if the teacher knows Mia really likes red blocks; the teacher might make plans to add red blocks to the block area to increase the likelihood that Mia will talk more.

3. Write down suggested materials in the space provided in each box.
4. Some activities may not require materials. Rather the teacher needs to plan for the presence of other children or adults in order for the child to practice their learning objective.

It is still good to write this down so the classroom staff can keep these needs in mind.



TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING:  
REVIEW LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



EMPHASIZE \*

Reviewing the matrix with all staff members ensures that everyone participates in maximizing each child's learning opportunities.

## SLIDE 12: TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING: REVIEW LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Finally, it is important to talk with classroom staff about the children's learning goals.

Before school, while setting up the classroom, spend 5–10 minutes reviewing what staff members can work on with individual children throughout the day.

At the end of the day, have staff gather around the activity matrix and review the day's happenings. For example, a teacher can ask a staff member if she observed Addie identifying a problem when in conflict with a peer during outside play. This is a good way to reflect on the day and to gather information, or data, about what the children were doing during that day.



REVIEW

---

- Maximize learning time by organizing opportunities for learning.
- All staff are able to participate in teaching.
- Format can be made in various ways to better work for your classroom.

## SLIDE 13: REVIEW

Review the benefits of an activity matrix.

1. Activity matrices are an organizing tool for teaching.
  - » They help teachers think about **where** and **when** they will provide extra learning opportunities for children.
  - » This organization and planning maximizes learning time for children.
2. All staff are able to participate in teaching.
  - » With an activity matrix posted in the classroom, all staff members are reminded of times in which they can provide instruction for individual children.
  - » Extra learning opportunities are likely to help the child learn more quickly!
3. Matrices can be made to match your classroom needs!
  - » Find a system that works for your classroom.
  - » Try a variety of methods in order to best meet your individual needs.

## HANDOUT

Distribute and review handouts if not distributed during the presentation.

Based on participant roles:

*Tips for Teachers:* This tip sheet for teachers includes simple, straightforward suggestions about activity matrices that teachers can easily utilize in the classroom.

*Tools for Teachers:* This is a blank activity matrix for participants to use in their own classroom.

*Helpful Resources:* This is a list, for the participants, of additional resources related to activity matrices.




 THE NATIONAL CENTER ON  
 QUALITY TEACHING AND  
 LEARNING



For more information, contact us at: [NCQTL@UW.EDU](mailto:NCQTL@UW.EDU) or 877-731-0764  
This document was prepared under Grant #90HC0002 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, by the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning.

## SLIDE 14: CLOSING

Provide participants with NCQTL contact information and encourage them to visit our website for additional resources on effective teaching practices.



For more information, contact us at: [NCQTL@UW.EDU](mailto:NCQTL@UW.EDU) or 877-731-0764

This document was prepared under Grant #90HC0002 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, by the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning.

NOVEMBER 2012