

## **Teach, Assess, and Adjust for Individualized Instruction**

Jennifer Fung: Hi, everybody. Good afternoon. Welcome. Thank you for joining us for our first Inclusion Series Webinar of the year, Teach-Assess-Adjust for Individualized Instruction. I am excited that you're here. I am excited about this webinar. Let's get started.

Before we get started, I want to make sure that everybody has downloaded or is aware of the Viewer's Guide, which was specially created for this webinar. The Viewer's Guide has more information. We'll be touching on a lot of topics today. The Viewer's Guide has more information; it has resources, it has questions and spaces for reflection. You can find that in the Resource Widget. There are lots of other resources in there. We'll talk about those as we move through the webinar. But make sure you take a look and download that Viewer's Guide if you haven't already.

My name is Jen Fung, and I am the Inclusion lead for the National Center on Early Childhood Development Teaching and Learning, or DTL, as we call it. I am your Inclusion Webinar host. Welcome again. Thanks for joining us. I'm really excited to jump in and talk about making data-based decisions to support highly individualized instruction. Before we do that, let's take a quick look at our learning objectives for today's webinar. Today, we're going to talk about decision-making, as I've said a couple of times.

We're going to be talking about a process, a decision-making process, called Teach-Assess-Adjust which may be familiar to some of you and may be new. But we'll talk a lot about that. When we're talking about this Teach-Assess-Adjust process that supports data-based decision-making. We'll identify some key questions and some key steps at each part or each component of that process.

We will talk about resources. In particular, one really exciting resource that can support this ongoing use of the Teach-Assess-Adjust cycle. Before we talk about decision-making, before we talk about Teach-Assess-Adjust let's just spend a little bit of time talking about highly individualized teaching and learning. In particular, let's take a look at what highly individualized teaching and learning is and how it's different from other practices that you may use and supports.

Then, let's talk about a couple key components and key practices of effective highly individualized instruction. We know that in any learning environment across age groups, across program options, learning at home, some children may require more specialized support at certain times and on certain skills or goals to access their learning environments and participate in activities, in social experiences and those great things that we know are present in high-quality learning environments.

We know that giving children just what they need to learn and participate, sometimes by providing highly individualized teaching and learning and support. This is an essential component of equitable, inclusive, high-quality early learning and care environments. When we

think about highly individualized teaching and learning, what's different? We know that when we plan instruction for all children, we usually begin by focusing on the quality of the environment.

We really pay attention to those engaging environments, well-organized environments, and routines, and thinking about those engaging and supportive instructional interactions. As part of this process, staff do a variety of things. We observe each child's interests and their temperament. We talk to and partner with and engage with the people that children value and spend time with people who know their children best to incorporate a variety of practices, activities, and supports.

We also learn about the cultural and linguistic background that's unique to each individual child and their family. We use all this information to individualize our instruction, our interactions, and our support. In order to do this, we know that we need to carefully observe how a child is participating in learning and, when needed, we need to adjust the type of support that's provided to a child based on the responses that we're observing.

Through this process of planning and providing individualized instruction and observing how children respond to that instruction and support, sometimes program staff might notice that a particular child needs more support than the regular curriculum or regular strategies offer. They might need something more; they might need something different than what would typically be used. And this might be when we'd consider using highly individualized strategies.

When we think about highly individualized instruction, some characteristics of highly individualized teaching and support strategies are that they're more intentionally and carefully selected to match a child's learning and behavioral characteristics. Some of the support or teaching practices we use might be more specialized, instruction or support might be offered more often, more frequently, and then the assessment information that we collect on how children are responding to our support and our instruction might be collected more often and looked at a little bit more carefully.

These highly individualized practices are used to help children, all children. It could be any child depending on a skill or a goal, but it might include children with identified disabilities or suspected delays. But really to help children who might be having a difficult time for many types of reasons to teach new skills or concepts. Highly individualized instruction, for example, might be used to support an infant's participation in their learning environment by using a special cushion to help stabilize them while they're sitting so they're able to reach for and grasp objects more confidently.

Or it might mean using a specialized instructional strategy to teach a child who's nonspeaking or preverbal to use a device or a picture system to communicate with the people around them. We'll talk a lot about different types of highly individualized strategies and when and why we might use them throughout our time together today. But now I want to turn it over to you, to our participants. When we think about highly individualized instruction and support and

matching our instruction and support so that it's most effective for an individual child, what's most important to make sure our highly individualized support and teaching is effective?

Go ahead and share with us in the chat. I forgot to say that. If you have questions, definitely include those in the Q&A or in the chat. Or if you have comments, thoughts to share with us, include those in the attendee chat. That's a new feature for us on the Inclusion Webinars. As folks are getting their thoughts together and starting to share, let's take a look at some of the effective instructional strategies, support strategies. I see somebody said meeting the child where they're at, making modifications to the environment, building relationships, modeling, child assessment, making sure that children are safe and feel welcome in their environment, and then meeting their needs might be more highly individualized.

These are all great. Thank you for sharing. Please keep sharing with us and with your colleagues in the chat. There are lots of things involved, as you've just identified and will continue to identify. There is a lot involved in providing highly individualized teaching and learning and support that's effective and, like we talked about, meets the child where they're at, is matched to that child's individual learning and behavioral characteristics.

Today, we're going to talk about two specific practices. We're going to talk about the use of tiered instruction and, as I mentioned earlier, the use of ongoing data-based decision-making. Let's start by looking at tiered instruction. When we're thinking about highly individualized teaching and learning and high-quality teaching and learning, we are always looking to provide the right type and the right amount of support to each child so that they're able to access their environment and continue learning.

When planning to provide this individualized instruction, it can be helpful to use a multi-tiered approach to planning, implementing, and evaluating the type and amount of support that we provide. When we're doing this, when we are working really hard, as we talked about at the beginning, to observe and be aware of areas where each child has individual needs and, again, match the type of instruction, the type and amount of support that we're providing, which is highly individualized instruction, it can be really helpful to use a tiered framework.

These tiered frameworks offer a way for us, as providers, as practitioners, to organize a variety of different evidence-based practices, instructional practices, support practices in terms of the purpose of the instructional or support strategy, the intensity, and the level of individualization. We know - this might be a familiar kind of graphic to you. This is a really general graphic that's often used to represent tiered instruction. We know there are lots of different tiered frameworks or tiered models, some of which you may be familiar with.

These frameworks have really been designed to teach young children a variety of different skills and behaviors. Some might be for social-emotional, some might be focused more on learning and development, but one thing that's consistent across these frameworks, regardless of what the framework is, is that there are tiers. These tiers they're called different things depending on the different frameworks, but they're generally referred to as universal, targeted, and intensive practices that are within those tiers.

Those tiers really help to classify the different types of instruction and support. Another thing that's common across these tiered frameworks is that from bottom to top, the teaching and support practices represented in each tier become more specialized and intensive as children show us through their response to our teaching and our support that they need something different, that they need a different type or a different amount of support to continue making progress.

Let's take a look at each of these tiers really quickly and talk about what's - how the different practices across tiers are kind of organized. Within the universal tier, these tiers, again, regardless of framework, really represent practices that address common goals and outcomes that are often taught and focused on in early learning and care environments. The practices in the universal tier are the base of a high-quality, effective program. And the practices and the supports that are within that universal tier are practices and supports that all children will benefit from.

As we move up in a tiered framework to the targeted tier, this is when we would use the strategies in that tier. They're more focused practices that are meant to address targeted goals and outcomes for some children who might not be responding or making progress to those more universal goals that are targeted with strategies in the universal tier. Strategies, practices, and supports in the targeted tier are used to provide instruction and support for children who need more focused support to help them continue to make progress, to access their learning environment, and to participate.

Then, in the intensive tier, the top tier, this tier represents highly specialized, highly individualized strategies and practices that address goals, and outcomes, and skills that are very individualized to a particular child. These practices in the intensive tier are used when a child needs more specialized instruction, more frequent support that's really carefully and intentionally matched to their learning characteristics and to the target goal or skill that we're working on.

As I mentioned, you might be familiar with a tiered instructional model or a tiered framework. So many practices that our Head Start and Early Head Start programs use are, in fact, tiered approaches, including the Head Start Framework for Effective Practice, which we'll take a closer look at in a couple moments, or the Pyramid Model, which many of you may be familiar with as well.

I mentioned when we were talking about tiered frameworks more broadly, the content areas that are focused on across different tiered models or tiered frameworks are different, but, again, they all identify strategies at a universal tier that all children need to learn and develop, practices at a more individualized level that some children may need to continue to learn and develop and participate at the targeted tier, and then practices at an even more individualized level that fewer children may need to learn, participate and meet their goals.

Again, that's at that more intensive tier. Just a reminder that within each framework, regardless of what the model is, regardless of what the particular framework is, from bottom to top, those

teaching and support practices at each tier get more specialized and intensive and are really used to support children who need a different type or a different amount of instruction. Fun fact, I just mentioned it. But the Head Start Framework for Effective Practice is a tiered instructional framework.

The Framework for Effective Practice features the following tiered levels. This graphic that you see here on the screen of the Framework for Effective Practice might look a little bit different because some of the areas are grayed out and some of the areas are highlighted with color. The areas in this graphic that are highlighted with color are the instructional tiers of the Framework for Effective Practice.

What you see here on the screen is, at the bottom, the blue tier, that's our foundation. That's our nurturing and responsive and engaging environments and interactions. Within the Framework for Effective Practice, this foundation tier represents instruction and support practices that are foundational to a high-quality environment. These practices are necessary for all children to learn and develop.

You can see at the top of the Framework for Effective Practice or the top of this house graphic, as we often call this framework, you see green, which is the roof of the Framework for Effective Practice, which represents highly individualized teaching and learning. But, within this graphic that you see here, the roof of the house is broken down into three different instructional tiers. The bottom of the roof, that represents the instructional tier that is called curriculum modifications.

Curriculum modifications are used when a child needs more individualized support to participate or to engage more fully in an activity or routine with the rationale being that if a child's participating more fully, they will likely learn more readily. Curriculum modifications, many of you may be familiar with those. For those who might not or as a reminder, curriculum modifications are small changes, small additions, small modifications to the learning environment, to activities, to materials, to a way that we might interact with a child that are used intentionally to increase that child's participation in the learning environment.

Again, these are highly individualized practices. These strategies, these curriculum modifications are intentionally selected, they're individualized, to match a child's learning characteristic and the challenge or the barrier that they might be experiencing with their participation or with accessing their learning environment. Moving up to the next instructional tier in the roof, that second tier in the roof represents teaching strategies known as embedded teaching.

Where curriculum modifications are used to support learning by increasing participation, embedded teaching is used to support learning by providing more frequent instruction on a skill or learning objective. Instruction in the embedded teaching tier might be used when a child's learning kind of has stalled or slowed or maybe when they're struggling to use a specific skill that's part of a larger developmental goal or objective.

Embedded teaching we use to give children extra chances, extra opportunities throughout their day to learn and practice a new skill by purposefully embedding many teaching opportunities into ongoing activities, routines, and transitions, again, with the rationale that deliberate, intentional, ongoing multiple instructional opportunities can help a child make progress towards their learning goals.

At the top of the roof of the Framework for Effective Practice, there is an instructional tier called intensive individualized teaching. The instructional strategies that are represented in this tier are used to support learning on a very specific goal or objective for an individual child by using a teaching strategy or an instructional strategy that's more specialized and more structured.

Instruction at the intensive individualized tier might be used when curriculum modifications or embedded teaching strategies have been used but might not be supportive enough and a child is still making very slow progress or not making progress. Intensive individualized teaching strategies might be used if a child has a really unique goal, such as using a walker for mobility or using, like I mentioned earlier, a picture system or an augmentative communication device.

Or intensive individualized teaching might be used if a child is missing a prerequisite skill or components of a specific skill, such as joint attention or imitating other children or imitating adults or playing appropriately with toys. The strategies that we're using here are more structured and more specialized and are focused on a highly individualized goal for a particular child.

To align the Framework for Effective Practice with the tiered instructional framework that we presented or that we talked about earlier, the strategies in the foundation of the house or the Framework for Effective Practice represent those universal practices. In the roof, the curriculum modifications and embedded teaching strategies and practices represent the targeted tier and then the strategies and practices in the intensive individualized tier represent those intensive strategies.

That was tiered instruction, which, as I said and as we identified, is a key component of providing effective, highly individualized instruction. That was a big kind of high-level overview. There is more information in your Viewer's Guide if you're wanting to learn more about either the Framework for Effective Practice, if that's not a familiar framework to you, or if you're wanting to learn more about tiered instruction and tiered framework and how that supports highly individualized instruction.

Now let's take a look at the second kind of key practice or key component of providing effective highly individualized instruction that we identified using ongoing data-based decision making. When we're talking about tiered instruction, to know what tier we need to focus our supports and our instruction in for a particular child's learning characteristics or a specific goal, really the only way to effectively know which tier to focus our instruction and support in is to use ongoing data-based decision making to really guide our instruction.

There isn't, unfortunately, a one-size-fits-all approach to planning for individualized instruction and support. And what we know is that the type and the amount, so across those tiers, the type and amount of support or instruction a child needs, we know that changes often depending on the activity, depending on the learning objective, and depending on the child that the – or the progress that the child has been making.

Again, the best thing we can use and the best thing we can do to organize and support our providing highly individualized instruction is to use data-based decision-making to guide our instruction.

This happens through an ongoing process of planning for instruction, planning for support based on a child's needs and what goal we're focusing on or what objective we're focusing on, providing that individualized instruction, collecting information, collecting data on how the child responds to that planned instruction and support, and then making informed decisions based on the data that we've collected about how we might need to adjust the level of support, the type of support so that a child can keep learning.

We know that this is something that we do for all children as part of a high-quality learning environment. But when we're using highly individualized instruction for children who need more support or different support, our planning and our evaluation of the instruction and support that we provide often needs to be more precise and it might need to happen more frequently. Let's take a look at how this can happen.

We know ongoing data-based decision-making is an evidence-based practice - or an evidence-based practice, and it's essential to providing effective, highly individualized instruction and support. And we know that using ongoing data-based decision-making continuously engaging this cycle isn't only used by Head Start and Early Head Start staff, but within Head Start, we have a framework that represents this cyclical data-driven process. And that is the Teach-Assess-Adjust Framework.

Some of you may be familiar with this Teach-Assess-Adjust process. It was introduced in the 15-Minute In-Service Suites, the Highly Individualized 15-Minute In-Service Suites that focused on the roof of the Framework for Effective Practice. But this might look new or unfamiliar or some of you may have forgotten about it. But we're going to spend a few minutes looking closely at this Teach-Assess-Adjust Framework and thinking about the questions we want to answer at each step of the process and the steps that we want to take to make sure that our instruction is effective and continues to meet a child's learning needs.

When we look at this Teach-Assess-Adjust Framework, here are the questions that we want to ask and the things that we want to focus on at each step of the process to really plan, individualize, and adjust our teaching. At the Teach step, we're really looking closely at what are we teaching, how are we teaching it, and do we have a plan and are we following the plan. Those are the questions that we really want to answer.

We're going to look more closely at each step of this process, but at a high level, here's what we're thinking about at each step of this process. At the Adjust step, we're really wanting to answer the question, "Is the child getting it? How is the child responding to our planned instruction and support?" At the Adjust step, we are asking ourselves, "Do we need to make a change? And does the child need different instruction or different support?"

Let's take a look at each step. At that first step of this process, at the Teach step, this is when we're planning our support, our instruction that's individualized to match a child's learning characteristics, their behavioral characteristics, and the goal or objective that we're trying to teach or that we're targeting. The first step when we're thinking about engaging in this Teach step of the Teach-Assess-Adjust process is really carefully identifying what skill, what behavior we want to teach.

When we're thinking about this, we're considering things like, is this a high-priority skill for the child, is it a priority for the child's family, will it help them continue to learn or engage or participate more readily in their learning environments and interact with the people around them. When we're thinking about what skill or behavior to teach, we also want to think about how clearly defined it is.

We also want to think about does the child have the prerequisite skills for this particular skill or goal or objective. Then, once we've identified what we want to teach, we want to think about how we're going to teach it. We do that by thinking about and identifying potential individualized support or instructional strategies that are matched to what we know about how the child learns and to the skill or the objective that we have chosen for the child.

Once we've chosen an individualized support or instructional strategy, then we want to develop a plan that's clear and carefully describes when and how to use the strategy or the support that we've chosen, how we're going to monitor the child's response to our instruction or support, and also we want to think about, as we're making a plan, how we're going to modify - or, not modify, how we're going to monitor our use or our implementation of that strategy or that support.

When we're thinking about implementation, we're thinking about how often are we providing instruction and what is the strategy or support and how do we use that effectively, how do we use that as it's meant to be used. Those are some things that we think about at that Teach step when we are planning for instruction and providing instruction with fidelity, following the plan that we've created.

At the Assess step, this is when we're thinking about collecting data on how the child responds to the instruction and support that we've planned for and provided in the Teach step. When we're thinking about this specific step, the Assess step, and collecting information that helps guide our instruction, we really want to make sure that we're thinking about the type of information that we're collecting, the type of data that we're collecting and the amount of data that we're collecting about the child's learning.



We want to make sure that we have the right type and amount of data and information so that it can be useful in helping us determine how the child is responding and how the child is progressing or isn't progressing based on the support and instruction that we're providing.

At this Assess step, we're really thinking about the type of data that we want to collect. Are we collecting data on the number of times a child uses a specific skill or behavior? That's called frequency data. Are we collecting data on the amount of time or the length of time that a child can engage in a particular activity? How many, how long are they using their walker, how many steps are they taking? That's called duration data. There are lots of different types of data that we might be collecting and that depends on the skill that we're trying to teach the child.

We also, when we're thinking about this Assess step and planning to use it effectively, we want to think about not only what type of data we're collecting, but when and how we're collecting data. Are we using a datasheet, are we using a device to time if we're collecting duration data, where are we storing that data, how are we communicating that information with all members of the child's team?

And then something else that we really want to think about in addition to how are we collecting the data, how often are we collecting the data, how are we going to get enough information that's going to be useful to us as we're making instructional decisions, we also want to think about what do we do with all that data, how often do we look at the data and kind of make a summary that helps us see a pattern in the child's learning and their progress to really, again, engage in that Adjust step where we might need to make an instructional decision or decide how to move forward with instruction and support.

The Adjust step, like I just said, is when we take our data and we take that information, we summarize it, we look for patterns, and we make data-informed decisions based on that information about how to move forward with instruction, how to adjust the type of support we're providing, how to adjust the level of support that we're providing so that a child can keep participating and keep learning.

At this Adjust step, some key things that we want to engage in, some key questions that we want to ask ourselves, the first step is to summarize and review all the information and the data that we've collected on a child's response to our planned instruction. Through reviewing that data, we really want to determine what the child's response looks like, what the child's progress looks like and think about at this step is the child making progress.

And if the child is making progress, is it enough progress or could we adjust our support, could we adjust our instruction so the child could make more progress? And then we want to make an informed decision about how to move forward with instruction. Do we need to change the goal? Do we need to change what we're teaching? Do we need to change the support, the instruction? Do we need to change how we're teaching? Do we need to provide instruction more often?

There are many different decisions that we could make about how to change our instruction. But the most important thing is that we are basing those decisions on the information that we're gathering and that we're gaining about the child's response to our instruction and to our support. Let's take a look at what this Teach-Assess-Adjust process looks like in action. We're going to look at a little case study here.

I'd like you to meet Molly. Molly is a two-and-a-half-year-old little girl who qualifies for early intervention services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA. She qualifies, for those who are familiar, for Part C services under IDEA. Part C services are for children who are birth up to age three. Molly is receiving Part C services.

Some of Molly's strengths; she's a visual learner, she really likes letters, she likes toy vehicles, she loves music and singing. She is learning to communicate. One of her strengths is to lead a person, to grab someone's hand. She does this at home and at school. She leads a person by the hand to tell them that she wants something or to tell them that she needs help.

One of Molly's priority learning goals that's on her individualized plan is to increase her communication and, in particular, thinking about the types of communication, the reasons why she communicates to increase the number of requests that she makes when she asks for something. Increasing communicative requests, this is a priority goal for Molly's family.

One of the reasons why the family has identified this as a priority goal, one of the reasons why this is a specific target objective is that she's been getting frustrated. Like I said, she's using hand-leading to try to communicate when she wants something. If the people in her environment, if her parents, if her family members aren't understanding and aren't kind of getting it right when they're trying to give her something or if they don't quite understand what she's trying to communicate, she's getting frustrated.

Thinking about highly individualized instruction and support for Molly, here is what the team has in place for her. When we're thinking about tiered instruction and the Framework for Effective Practice, at the foundational tier, here are a few things that her team has in place for Molly in terms of support. Relationships with adults. In her learning environments at home, the adults in her environments are very responsive to her communicative intent.

But, again, they often aren't sure what she's specifically asking for. Her learning environments are well organized and predictable. Generally, in terms of the schedule, the routines, she knows what to expect and she can generally follow the routine pretty well. In her learning environments, there are a variety of materials that really capture her interests and capitalize on her strengths.

And, in her learning environments, there is a lot of scaffolding for her communication. The adults in her environments model a variety of different communicative modalities or forms by using words, by using gestures, by using simple signs and also by using some picture symbols. And adults are accepting and responding to a variety of different forms of communication from

Molly, whether that's eye gaze, whether that's her reaching towards something, whether that's her making sounds or word approximations.

Those are some foundational strategies that are in place. Based on Molly's individual learning plan, as the team, the classroom team, was getting ready to have Molly start in their program, they thought, "Let's also maybe try some modifications to our learning environment to really help support her participation."

They decided to use some strategies at the curriculum modifications tier. At this tier, they're using visual supports. One, to help her understand the routines and help her understand the expectations in the learning environment. But they've also put some visual supports in place to help her communicate with others. In particular, and we'll watch a video in a moment, and you'll see this, but there's a communication board that's got line drawings or picture symbols on it that's present in the environment to help Molly communicate her wants and her requests.

As a note, there's another child in the learning environment, in the classroom, who uses an iPad as an augmentative and alternative communication, what we say AAC, as an AAC device. Molly's really interested in this other child's AAC device and she looks at it when the child is using it and sometimes, she reaches to activate the symbols on the iPad, on the AAC device, to activate that voice output feature.

Then, one more curriculum modification that's being used is peer support. The classroom staff are really intentional about encouraging Molly to be near or encouraging other children, her friends, who have strong communication skills to play with her or to sit near her. That's an example of a peer support curriculum modification. Now let's take a look at what Molly's response is to this instruction and to these support strategies that's currently happening in her environment, so those foundational strategies and those curriculum modification strategies.

When we play this video, watch for how she's responding to those support strategies and those instructional strategies that are currently in place, how is she currently communicating, and do the supports that are in place, do those appear to be enough to promote her learning on this specific target objective of increasing communication requests.

[Video begins]

Speaker 1: Oh, car, yeah. And bus. We'll drive them. Vroom, vroom.

Molly: Vroom, vroom.

Speaker 1: Vroom. Yeah, I hear you. Vroom, vroom. Vroom, vroom. Oh, it's on top. Okay, here I go. I'm going to make mine go. Ready, set, goooo. Gooooo. Goooo. Help. Oh, yeah, you want to do it by yourself. Here you go. No thanks. No thanks, car. Okay. Oh, all right, teachers, we have one more minute. Help, help, help, help. Ohhh.

[Video ends]

Jennifer: Thinking about what we saw in that video, Molly was interested. She had a really engaging adult next to her who was scaffolding play, scaffolding communication by modeling ready, set, go. And she was pausing and waiting for Molly to communicate either by looking or reaching or making a vocalization. And you saw — maybe you noticed in that first part of the video that Molly did reach her hand towards the teacher and look towards the teacher when she wanted the car to drive. But then, in the second part of that clip, you noticed that it was hard.

Even though the teacher had Molly's attention, there was something that she was interested in, the teacher was really trying to be responsive to her reaching, to her crying, but it was hard for her to figure out what it was that Molly wanted or didn't want and to be responsive to her strategy. The communicative strategies that Molly was using weren't clear and Molly was frustrated.

Based on Molly's response to those foundational strategies and to the curriculum modification strategies that were in place, her team decided to change their instruction for Molly and to increase the intensity of instruction and the level of individualization, the level of individualized instruction that they were using for Molly. They decided to move up in the Framework for Effective Practice in instructional tiers.

They decided to focus on instruction in the embedded teaching tier. When they were making their instructional decisions, when they were making a change, they decided to change what they were teaching and how they were teaching.

When they were focusing on an instructional change in terms of what they were focusing on, they decided rather than focus on gestures or focus on eye gaze as a form of communication they decided to modify the learning objective along with Molly's parents and her team to focus on making requests using an AAC device, using an augmentative and alternative communication device, specifically the iPad because of Molly's interest in the other child's iPad, also because of her visual strengths as a learner.

That was an instructional change they made, a slight change in what to teach. Rather than generally increasing communication requests, using an iPad to request. And then, in thinking about their instructional change, how to teach. Like I said, they decided to focus on instructional strategies in the embedded teaching tier. Thinking about providing more frequent instruction on the skill of using the iPad to communicate.

When they were thinking about and making a plan of how to teach using embedded teaching, they were also thinking about when to teach, because embedded teaching involves planning for multiple instructional opportunities throughout a child's day. They really wanted to think about, "Okay, if we're teaching Molly how to request, we want to embed our instruction and teaching on that skill of requesting using the iPad during activities and routines that are really motivating and engaging for Molly."

When she's engaged, thinking that she's more likely to request. They thought about focusing their instruction and embedding their instruction during free play, outdoor play, and snack. Then, thinking about how to teach what specific instructional strategies, they are using embedded teaching, particularly modeling and an instructional strategy called incidental teaching. What you see here on the screen are two different planning forms that Molly's team used at this Teach step.

In particular, you see an activity matrix and then you also see an instructional plan. The instructional plan, the embedded teaching plan, describes what the goal is, what the objective is, what the teaching strategies are and then carefully describes how to use those specific selected instructional strategies. The activity matrix is an extension of that plan.

The activity matrix focuses on when to provide those instructional opportunities, again, knowing that embedded teaching requires providing more frequent instruction. Just to note, these forms are available in the Resources Widget. You can download and take a look at these completed plans and see what specifically was included in the teaching plan and on the activity matrix for Molly for this particular goal.

Let's take a look at a video and look at how Molly responded to that planned instruction in the embedded teaching tier. Again, as you're watching this video, think about, maybe make a note in your Viewer's Guide or share in the chat, what does it look like Molly's response to that planned embedded instruction is and does embedded instruction at this tier appear to be intensive and individualized, is it enough to promote her learning on that new target's objective of requesting using an AAC device.

[Video begins]

Speaker 2: Go round and round all day long.

Molly: Baby.

Speaker 2: Baby? Let's go get the baby. Come on. Let's go get the baby. Or —

AAC Device: Water table.

Speaker 2: Oh, water table? Scarves?

AAC Device: Bus.

Speaker 2: Oh, bus. Here's the bus.

Molly: Baby.

Speaker 2: Bus.

Molly: B, b.

Speaker 2: Yeah, you wanted one of those things. What are you thinking? Should we get a toy?

Speaker 1: Ready.

Speaker 2: That's milk.

Speaker 1: Should I do a little bit more? A big one.

Speaker 2: Whoa.

Speaker 1: A big one.

Speaker 2: That's milk.

Speaker 1: Whoa. And you wanted water in a pink cup?

Speaker 2: That's milk.

Speaker 1: Oh, it's your lucky day, Robin. All right, grab your pink cup. Awesome, got your pink. Here comes your water.

AAC Device: Cereal.

Speaker 2: Oh, you're thinking about more —

Speaker 1: Oh, crackers, sure.

Speaker 2: Crackers.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Here you go, my friend.

Molly: Crackers.

Speaker 2: You can sit down. More cheese?

Speaker 3: Crackers.

Speaker 1: More crackers. Here you go.

Speaker 4: More cheese.

Speaker 1: More cheese. I think — oh.

AAC Device: Water.

Speaker 1: Oh, I have water, yeah.

Speaker 2: Water.

Speaker 1: Here's water. Some more cheese? Okay, this will be the last —

Speaker 2: Cracker.

Speaker 1: The last piece of cheese for everybody because we're almost out. Here's your water. The wheels go - oh, the Alphabet Song. A, B, C, D, E, F - Alphabet, G, H, I, J, K, Alphabet Song. Apple, apple, a, a, a. Oh, do you want monkeys? Monkeys.

AAC Device: Five Little Monkeys.

Speaker 1: Five little monkeys jumping on the bed, one fell off and bumped his —

Speaker 5: Head.

Speaker 1: Head. Momma called the doctor and the doctor said -

AAC Device: The Alphabet Song.

Speaker 1: Yay, no more monkeys jumping on the bed.

[Video ends]

Jennifer: In the video, and please feel free to share your reflections in the chat, your observations, what you observed. But because we're getting close to time, I'm going to move forward so we can see how Molly's team engaged in the Assess and Adjust steps of that Teach-Assess-Adjust process.

You may have noticed in there, Molly was definitely interested in, she was looking at, she was pushing the buttons on the iPad. But you may have noticed how intentional she was and whether the button that she pushed represented what she actually wanted. In that first video, she pushed the button baby, and teacher got the baby. And she didn't take it. The teacher was not sure if that's what she wanted.

She pushed bus, the teacher grabbed the bus, and the fact that Molly didn't immediately take the bus and was sort of still looking around, it made the team wonder does she really understand that these buttons represent these objects, how intentional is her use of that iPad, of that device as a communicative system. But the only way to know was for Molly's team to engage in the Assess phase.

During this phase of the Teach-Assess-Adjust cycle, Molly's team collected data, collected information daily. They decided that they needed daily data on the number of instructional opportunities that were provided and how Molly used the skills. And, in particular, the data that they collected on the use of the AAC device was the number of independent requests, the number of times that Molly independently rather than you could see sometimes in that last part of the video clip the teacher guided her hand to push the button when it looked like Molly wanted something, but wasn't independently activating the button on the AAC device.

The team collected data, again, on the number of instructional opportunities they presented and how often Molly independently requested. They collected daily data, but then they also did a weekly summary so that during that weekly summary the team really looked at and sort of thought about did they provide enough instruction, were there enough instructional opportunities across those activities and routines that they had identified on the activity matrix. They also talked about the amount of support that was needed from an adult.

Was it a physical prompt, was it a teacher guiding Molly's hand towards the iPad to push it, so the amount of support and the type of support that Molly needed to use the skill. And then they also talked generally about their perception of Molly's progress, how is she doing, how is she responding to the type and the amount of support that we're providing. Quick note that this form, just like the completed forms at the that we looked at for Molly, this completed child progress datasheet is available in the Resources Widget.

Quick note that when you're looking at this form, if you download this this datasheet to look at, in some of the spaces, there's a black plus sign, or a black plus symbol. That means there's more text than just fit in the box, and you can click that black plus sign to expand the box so you can see the full amount of information that's in there.

Thinking about the Adjust step for Molly, during the Adjust step of the process, the team really looked at those three weeks of child progress data and the summaries that they had done for each of those three weeks to really think about how is Molly responding to the planned instruction at the embedded teaching tier, what is her progress and do we need to make any instructional changes.

Based on their review, they used this data-based decision-making tool, this form, the team determined that they had a clear plan. The teaching plan was clear. The team members knew what was involved in the plan and they followed the plan well. They really felt like they used embedded teaching, and they provided enough teaching opportunities.

But, when it came time to look at Molly's progress and her learning, they decided as a team, including Molly's family, that she wasn't making sufficient progress with embedded teaching. Most importantly, she was still frustrated, and they weren't seeing the number of independent requests that she was making increase. As I mentioned, they were still wondering about how intentional she was about which button she activated and what she actually wanted. They decided to make an instructional change based on their data. They decided to increase the intensity in the level of individualization.

They decided to move to the intensive individualized teaching tier and use strategies at that tier. They decided to change what they were teaching. They decided to move from the iPad as an augmentative and alternative communication system to moving to a picture symbol system called PECS, or the Picture Exchange Communication System, to use that specialized protocol. As part of of changing their instruction and moving to that top tier, they decided to work with her speech-language pathologist who was on her IFSP team to really provide training and support to the team on that PECS protocol.



And, as a note, like the other forms that we've looked at, this form, this data-based decision-making form, is available in the Resources Widget. When we're thinking about this Teach-Assess-Adjust process, we know it is effective, but how do we do that? In the remaining time that we have left, I want to make sure that there is an app for that. DTL just released this month our newest mobile app. It's called Inclusion Lab.

Inclusion Lab was designed for disability services coordinators, coaches, education managers, people who support education staff to make and use these instructional — make instructional decisions, plan, and use highly individualized support. The app is designed to support you to support staff who are engaging in that Teach-Assess-Adjust cycle and using highly individualized practices across the tiers of the Framework for Effective Practice.

All of the forms that you saw that Molly's team used as they engaged in the Teach-Assess-Adjust process, all of those forms and more are available within the Inclusion Lab app. What you see here on the screen are screenshots from the Inclusion Lab app. You can see, as I mentioned, that the app content and the resources and the guidance is really framed around that Teach-Assess-Adjust process and answering those high-level questions that we talked about. For Teach, what are we teaching and how are we teaching it? For Assess, is the child getting it?

And, for Adjust, do we need to make a change and does the child need a different type or amount of instruction? There's guidance, there's resources, there's tools to help teams engage in that ongoing Teach-Assess-Adjust cycle. As a note, the screenshots that you see here on the screen are from the foundation tier and supporting teams to engage in that Teach-Assess-Adjust process in the foundation tier. But, across the tiers, within curriculum modifications, within embedded teaching, within intensive individualized teaching, within those tiers, the content is organized in the very same way across teach, a step-assess and Adjust steps of that Teach-Assess-Adjust process.

There's more information about Inclusion Lab in your Viewer's Guide. You can download Inclusion Lab for free today on your mobile device. It's available in the Google Play Store or it's available for iOS in the Apple App Store. Definitely download that, check it out. Like we said, check out the Viewer's Guide for more information. Join us on our Disabilities and Inclusion My Peers Community, where we will share more information and, hopefully, have time — or have the opportunity to engage with your colleagues and your peers around the app, questions about the app, and find out how other folks are using the app.

Thank you again for joining me today. I know that was a lot of information packed into a one-hour webinar. Thank you for hanging in there with me for these extra three minutes so we could finish our case study and share the Inclusion Lab app. Also, mark your calendars for our next Inclusion Series Webinar, which will be on Tuesday, May 28th, and we will be talking about highly individualized instruction and support for children who have autism. Thank you, everybody, again, for joining us. Thank you for your great questions and your great participation in the chat. Have a great day.

