

Implementing a Curriculum Responsively: Supporting Children's Development and Learning

Narrator: Welcome to this presentation of the 15-Minute In-Service Suite on "Implementing a Curriculum Responsively By Supporting Children's Development and Learning." This suite describes how education staff in all program settings can implement curricula and partner with families to provide learning experiences that respond to children's development and learning. This suite is one in a series of modules that help education staff and home visitors implement a research-based curriculum responsively, building on children's and families' cultures and on children's learning, development, and interests.

The Framework for Effective Practice, or House Framework, helps us think about the elements needed to support children's preparation and readiness for school. The elements are the foundation, the pillars, and the roof. When connected to one another, they form a single structure that surrounds the family in the center because as we implement each component of the house, in partnership with parents and families, we foster children's learning and development. This suite supports the left pillar of the House Framework: implementing research-based curriculum and teaching practices.

Education staff play an active role in intentionally using a curriculum's guidance to plan environments, learning experiences, and adult-child interactions. In order to do this, teachers, family child care providers, and home visitors need to ask themselves, "What do I know about each child's development and learning? What does my program's curriculum offer? How do I implement my program's curriculum responsively?"

Whether you are a teacher, family child care provider, or home visitor, implementing a curriculum responsively begins by learning about individual children's levels of development. Children develop knowledge, skills, and behaviors across all the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes' framework domains. You can use the ELOF to understand children's developmental progressions. Home visitors partner with families to learn about children's development.

They invite families to share observations of their children's development and learning. Education staff also use data they gather from ongoing observations and child assessment to learn about children's current and emerging knowledge and skills. With an understanding of children's knowledge and skills, education staff turn to their developmentally appropriate research-based curriculum for guidance and materials. They review their curriculum's guidance on learning environments, learning experiences, adult-child interactions. Teachers and family child care providers use their curricula to set up the environment, so children can building new skills and practice emerging ones.

Teachers and family child care providers also provide materials for children at different developmental levels. This is another way to be responsive to individual differences. Home visitors use their curricula to help families identify what materials they already have in their home that can support their children's development and promote learning. For learning experiences, teachers and family child care providers may offer activities that best suit a child

or a group of children. In addition, they need to plan to simplify an activity or make it more challenging based on the developmental levels of different children in the group. Similarly, home visitors collaborate with families to choose learning experiences from their home-based curricula that support children's current levels of development. Home visitors may need to help families simplify an experience or make it more challenging based on their children's developmental level.

Woman: She had this box wrapped up in white paper, so we brought in the crayons, and then since he's into putting things in and out, she had the bottle and the spoons.

Narrator: All education staff need to consider opportunities that build on the children's cultures and languages. Staff work with families to incorporate culturally meaningful materials and experiences into the curriculum.

Finally, responsive interactions provide opportunities to support children's development. Curricula typically offer a range of strategies teachers and family child care providers can use to extend children's learning. Teachers use their knowledge of individual children's development to decide which teaching practices and interactions are appropriate.

Sometimes, they might adapt strategies for children with disabilities. In addition, children who are dual language learners may benefit from additional supports to access the curriculum experiences. Similarly, responsive parent-child interactions provide an opportunity for parents to support and extend their children's development and learning.

Home visitors share examples of strategies from their programs curriculum with families. Implementing your program's curriculum to support children's development is an ongoing process. Children learn and grow rapidly during the first 5 years of life.

Use ongoing child-assessment data and discussions with families to identify ways to implement a curriculum responsively. We hope you have new ideas that will help you use your curriculum to individualize learning experiences and interactions based on children's development. For more information, see the complete 15-minute suite on "Implementing a Curriculum Responsively: Supporting Individual Children's Development and Learning," and take a look at our tips and tools and helpful resources.