Infant & Toddler Curriculum & Individualization

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Agenda

• Introductions
• Curriculum for infants and toddlers
• Role of observation and documentation in curriculum planning
• Connection to Early Learning Guidelines
• Implementation of the curriculum
• Resources and partners for supporting curriculum
The Magic of Everyday Moments

Brain Wonders: Nurturing Healthy Brain Development From Birth
What is the purpose of a curriculum for young children?

• Build responsive relationships
• Plan and manage a developmentally appropriate program
• Promote young children’s development and learning
• Maintain professional standards in the field of early childhood education
Curriculum...

- is determined by the children themselves
- is built around children’s interests, needs, developmental levels, unique personalities.
- is facilitated through the teachers – your goals for the group and individual children
- includes the family – culture, language, goals and values.
- involves long-range and short-range plans.
- is built upon observations that have been documented.
- is flexible and allows for individualization.
- is based on a process continuous reflection.
Infants and toddlers have their own curriculum.
How Do Infants & Toddlers Learn?

- Through responsive relationships.
- In a safe, interesting, developmentally appropriate setting.
- Through discovery, exploration & imitation.
- Through uninterrupted time to explore.
- Through hands-on opportunities.
- Through their senses.
Development occurs within the context of relationships.

- Everyday experiences shape early learning.
- Infant/Toddler goals:
  - State regulation leading to self soothing and self control
  - Development of trust with caregiver leading to ability to separate and explore environment
  - Sense of self and autonomy
  - Understanding social rules and empathy
- Match-Mismatch-Repair (Ed Tronick)
  - It’s through the process of reparation that we learn how to communicate and gain a sense of self.
Routines As Curriculum

Learning occurs during:

Greeting & Departing
Feeding
Diapering/Toileting
Napping
Babies need to be included in the process of caregiving. They need to be acted *with*, not *upon*.

-Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC)
Responsive caregiving and planning involves using daily caregiving routines and plans flexibly, adapting them to the moods, interests, and needs of the individual child and of the group as a whole.

-Caring for Infants & Toddlers in Groups
Types of Observation

In the Action

Out of the Action

After the Fact
Tips For Observing Infants & Toddlers

- Observe regularly.
- Assign a primary caregiver with principal responsibility.
- Choose 1 or 2 children to observe each day.
- Be ready to change your focus.
- Observe at different times of the day and in different situations.
- Take advantage of routines.
- Take notes.
- Share information with families.
Responsive caregiving and planning involves more than planning cognitively focused games and activities. The responsive caregiver has an overall plan for each day, including materials and activities that are appropriate for the developmental stage of the group. In addition, the caregiver continually observes each infant to discover what skills he is ready to explore and eventually master.

-Caring for Infants & Toddlers in Groups
Rather than a curriculum that is designed for an age group or a classroom, infant/toddler curricula are documented in individual plans.

- National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative at ZERO TO THREE
Within a safe environment, the responsive caregiver provides a thoughtful variety of toys matched to the infant’s interests and skills. She gives the young child uninterrupted time to explore and helps her to cope and persevere when frustrated.

- Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Groups
Intentional Teachers…

• act with knowledge and purpose.
• are planful, thoughtful, and purposeful.
• use their knowledge, judgment & expertise to organize learning experiences.
• recognize a teaching opportunity & take advantage of it (when an unexpected situation arises).
• act with specific outcomes or goals in mind for children’s development & learning.
The intentional teacher aims at clearly defining learning objectives for children, employs instructional strategies likely to help children achieve the objectives, and continually assesses progress and adjusts the strategies based on that assessment.

- The Intentional Teacher: Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children’s Learning by Epstein
Intentional Teachers

support child-guided learning experiences when children…

- are actively exploring materials, actions, and ideas and making connections on their own.
- are establishing relationships and learning from one another.
- are so focused on their enterprise that adult intervention would be an interruption.
- are applying and extending existing knowledge and skills in new ways.

employ adult-guided learning experiences when children…

- have not encountered the material or experience at home or in other settings.
- do not see, hear, or otherwise attend to something likely to interest them.
- explicitly ask for information or help.
- are distracted and need help.
- appear stalled, discouraged or frustrated.
- are not aware of the potentially unsafe or hurtful consequences of their actions.
The adult’s role is not to teach, but to observe and reflect on what infants/toddlers are experiencing and how they learn – and then to support the process through interactions, their relationship with the child, and provision of experiences in an environment that contributes to the child’s success.

- National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative at ZERO TO THREE
The Social Womb