



headstartinclusion.org

# Embedded Learning Opportunities

Head Start Center for Inclusion



## Today's Objectives

- Meet Mia and see how her team used embedded learning opportunities to support her learning.
- See what embedded learning opportunities might look like in a classroom.
- Consider how embedded learning opportunities can be used to take advantage of teachable moments.



# How do we create embedded learning opportunities?

- Provide targeted or specialized instruction.
- Plan for instruction during everyday learning opportunities.
- Promote child engagement and learning in everyday activities, routines, and transitions.
- Plan for specialized instruction and focus on individualizing your teaching.



# Key Features of Embedded Learning Opportunities

- Address skills that are important to everyday activities.
- Teach skills to a child in activities alongside all children.
- Use typically occurring activities and authentic materials.
- Use short teaching interactions.



# Let's Take a Look



Head Start  
*center for*  
inclusion

---

**What Instructional  
Procedures Do You**



Video





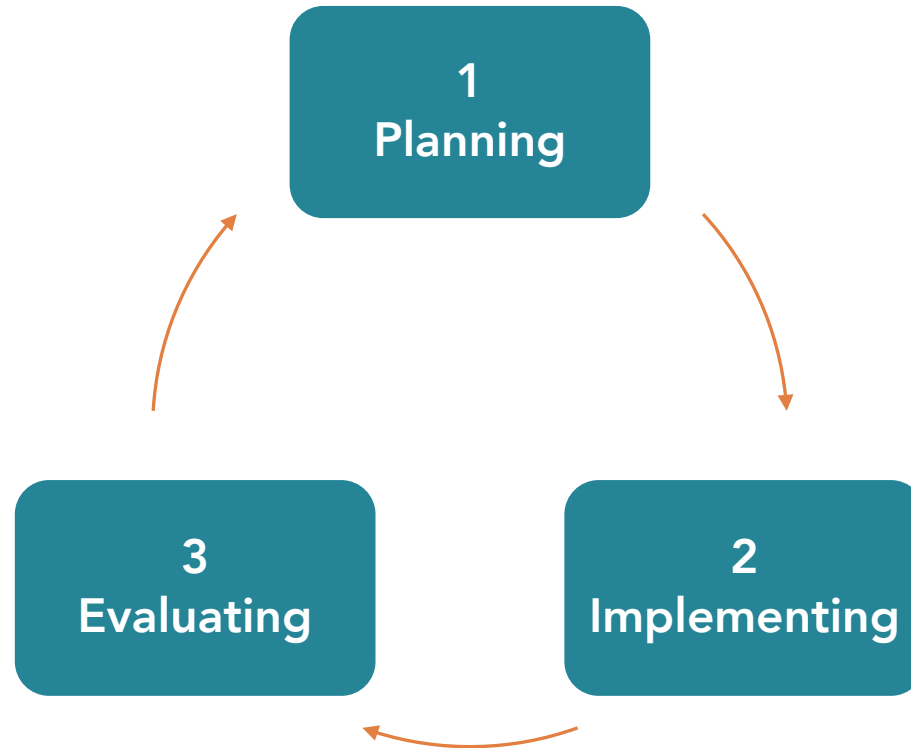
## Meet Mia

- Mia is 4 years old and has Down Syndrome.
- She attends an integrated Head Start program five days a week.
- Ms. Mary is worried about Mia's progress on IEP objectives.
- She currently sets aside 10 to 15 minutes each day to work with Mia on IEP objectives. Mia also receives 30 minutes of speech language services twice a week down the hall.
- Is there a better way to make the most of Mia's everyday learning opportunities?





# Three Steps





# Understanding Embedded Learning Opportunities

**What** to teach

**When** to teach

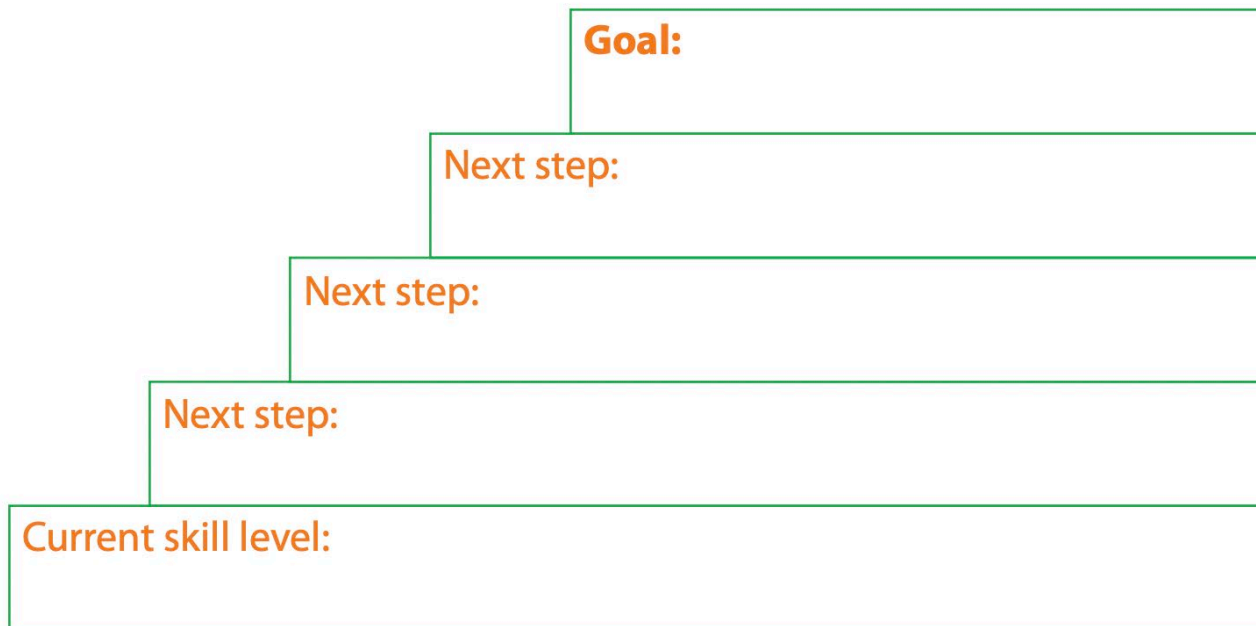
**How** to teach





# What to Teach

## Identifying Learning Objectives





# Learning Objectives

- Learning objectives are based on content that children need to learn to participate meaningfully in everyday activities.
- Learning objectives include information that will help to design embedded learning opportunities.
- Learning objectives focus on what the child needs to learn “right now.”
- A learning objective is a behavioral objective that states the behavior or skill the child will learn to do.



# Identifying Learning Objectives

We identify children's learning objectives from a variety of sources:

- The child's Individualized Education Program
- The child's Individualized Learning Plan
- The classroom curriculum, state standards, or benchmarks
- Family input
- Our own knowledge of child development and learning
- Observation and assessment



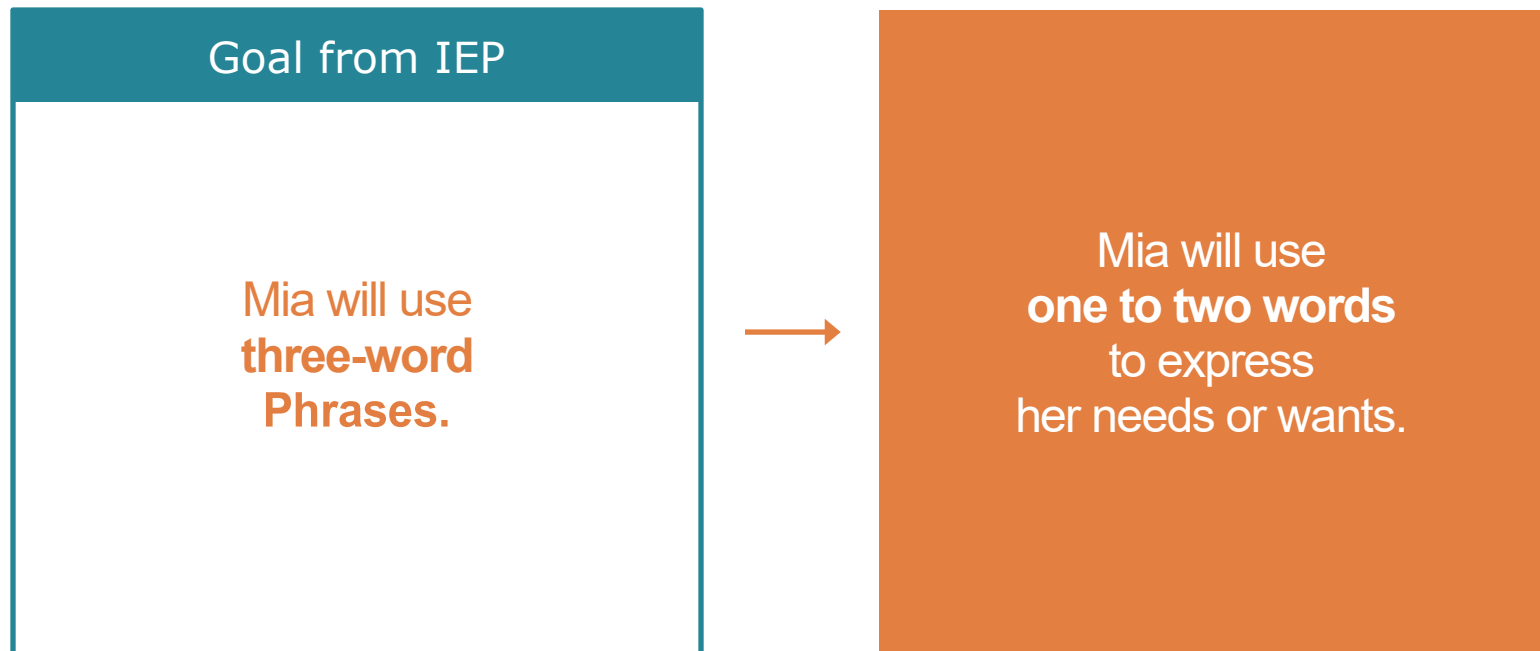
# Mia's IEP Goal

During routine daily activities, **Mia will use three-word phrases** to ask for things or to tell people things. Mia will use three-word phrases six times during a language sample collected over two data collection days.





# Identifying a Learning Objective for Mia



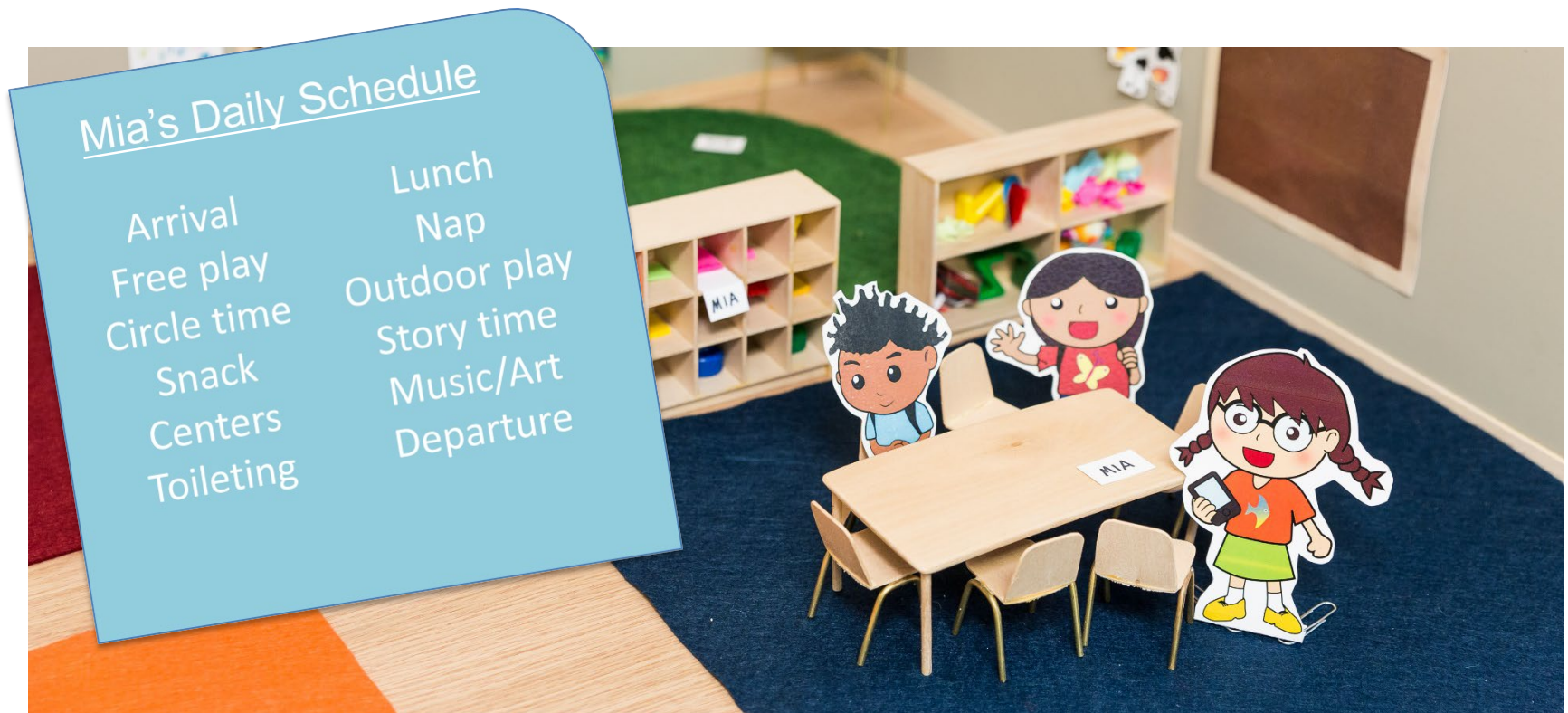


# When to Teach Activities, Routines, and Transitions





# Helping Children Learn in Everyday Activities





# When to Teach

## Learning Target

(Consider the child's abilities, priority skills, preferences, & support needs)

## Activity, Routine, or Transition

(Characteristics & "demands")

**High-Quality Teaching & Embedded Instruction**





# Selecting Times and Activities

An **activity matrix** helps ensure teaching occurs. It reminds educators or families about:

- The planned activities and routines.
- The priority learning targets for children who need individualized and intentional learning opportunities.
- Planned times to embed learning opportunities.



## Making an Activity Matrix

	Mia	Matthew
Arrival		
Free Play		
Circle		
Outside		
Snack		
Small Group/ Class Activity		
Departure		
Transitions		

### Step 1

List a predictable, balanced classroom schedule of activities - list the activities and times of day in the left-hand column of the chart

### Step 2

Create columns to the right for particular children



# Activity Matrix for Mia

Mia	
<b>Arrival</b>	Follow one-step directions.
<b>Free Play</b>	<b>Use 1–2 words to express her needs or wants.</b> Name a variety of objects in books.
<b>Circle</b>	Imitate a peer.
<b>Outside</b>	<b>Use 1–2 words to express her needs or wants.</b> Put coat on with minimal adult support.
<b>Snack</b>	<b>Use 1–2 words to express her needs or wants.</b> Follow one-step directions.
<b>Small Group/ Class Activity</b>	<b>Use 1–2 words to express her needs or wants.</b> Imitate a peer.
<b>Departure</b>	Put coat on with minimal adult support.
<b>Transitions</b>	Follow one-step directions.



# Group Activity Matrix

	Anna	Kiana	Xander
Arrival	Remove coat	Respond to Greeting x3	
Free Play	Complete closed ended task x2	Accept and use toy offered by peer	Initiate Request to Peer x2 Join in ongoing play
Circle	Jump up with 2 feet together x3	Imitate Gross Motor Actions	Answer "where" question
Outside	2 word phrase with 1 descriptive x2	Follow 1-step Directions x3	Catch and throw for 3 cycles
Snack	2 word phrase with 1 descriptive x3	Drink from open cup x4	Respond to peer request x3
Free Play	Complete closed ended task x2	Use 2 hands together	Initiate Request to Peer x3



# A Well-planned Activity Matrix

## Things to think about:

- Match the child's learning objective to the activity.
- Consider natural locations where the behavior occurs.
- Be aware of staff who are available during daily activities.
- Identify the number of opportunities needed for practice.



# How to Teach Planned Instructional Sequences





# Planned Instructional Sequence (PInS)

- A short teaching interaction to teach a child a skill
- Used to teach any skill
- Fits into ongoing classroom activities, routines, and transitions



# 4-step PInS Process

- 1) Cue.
- 2) Provide help if needed.
- 3) Observe child's response.
- 4) Give feedback.





Mia will use **one to two words** to express her needs or wants.

## Cue

*What will Ms. Mary say or do?*

She will provide a container with the lid still on.

## Child Response

*What will Mia do?*

Mia will say, "Help."

## Feedback

*How will Ms. Mary respond?*

She will help Mia open the container and praise her for asking.



# PInS for Mia

Head Start  
*center for*  
inclusion

---

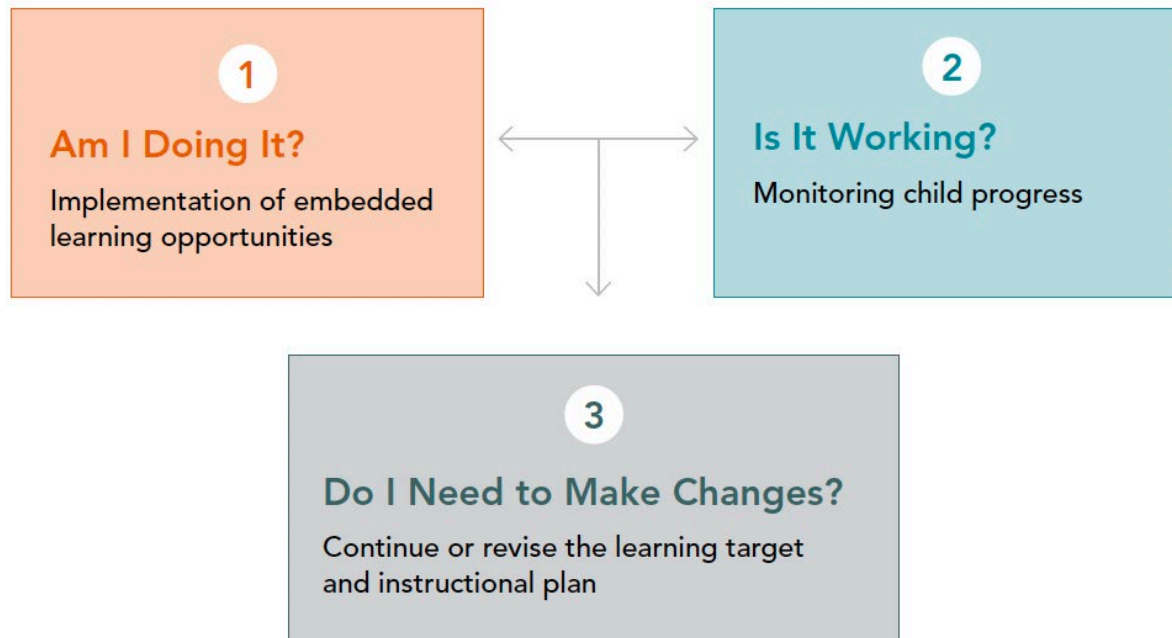
**Mia's Everyday  
Learning Opportunities**

Video

A large white play button is centered over the video player. To the right of the play button are two simple line drawings of children. The taller child on the left is holding a rectangular object, and the shorter child on the right is holding a circular object. Above the shorter child is a scribbled circular shape.



## 3 Key Questions for Evaluating ELOs





# Supporting Mia's Learning

- Mia's team decided to use embedded learning opportunities to support her learning.
- They began by considering:
  - **What to teach** — learning objectives
  - **When to teach** — ongoing activities, routines, and transitions
  - **How to teach** — intentional and systematic instruction





# Reviewing Embedded Learning Opportunities

All young children need sufficient learning opportunities to:

- Help meet individualized learning needs by identifying priority learning objectives.
- Maximize motivation by considering their interests and preferences.
- Learn and practice important skills in meaningful contexts.

To provide embedded learning opportunities, Mia's team considered what to teach, when to teach, and how to teach.



# Acknowledgements

- Material in this module adapted from “Impact of Professional Development on Preschool Teachers’ Use of Embedded-Instruction Practices,” a Goal 2 Development and Innovation research project funded by the Institute of Education Sciences and awarded to the University of Florida (R324A070008).
- Information and opinions expressed in this module are those of the authors, not the Institute of Education Sciences.
- Permission to use and adapt these materials has been granted to the Head Start Center for Inclusion.
- Thanks to the preschool educators, children, and families who helped evaluate these materials.



## Thank You!

- Check out the materials that accompany this in-service suite for further tips, ideas, and checklists that can guide your practice.
- See the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center website for more resources:  
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>

Head Start  
center for  
inclusion

Tips for Educators  
Embedded Learning Opportunities

### Evaluating the Use of ELOs

**Making Data-based Decisions**

When we evaluate the use of embedded learning opportunities, we focus on three primary questions to provide a framework for data-based decision making.

- 1 Am I Doing It?**  
Implementation of embedded learning opportunities.
- 2 Is It Working?**  
Monitoring child progress.
- 3 Do I Need to Make Changes?**  
Certifies or revise the learning target and instructional plan.

**1. Am I doing it?**

It is important to design a strategy for evaluating children to make progress on their learning objectives. A strategy can identify whether you are implementing embedded learning opportunities and whether you are implementing them so that complete instructional sequences occur.

- Collect data on how many complete instructional sequences you provide.

**2. Is it working?**

You will want to evaluate whether providing embedded learning opportunities is working by tracking the effects of the instruction on the child. To do this, you will need to collect data to monitor child progress.

- Collect data on how many times the child used the correct behavior.

**3. Do I need to make changes?**

To decide if you need to make changes, look at the data you collected to answer: 1) Am I doing it? and 2) Is it working? See how many complete instructional sequences are being delivered. Next, review child progress data. Use both sources of information to guide your decision.

- See the materials that accompany this in-service suite for an activity matrix you can use to collect data.

Head Start Center for Inclusion. Funded by the Office of Head Start, Department of Health and Human Services.  
This document is provided by the "Office of Professional Development on Teachers' Use of Evidence-Based Practices" (OTTEBP) project, which is funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (grant number: #120207000). Permission to use and adapt these materials has been granted to the Head Start Center for Inclusion.