IMPLEMENTING A CURRICULUM RESPONSIVELY: SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

PRESENTER NOTES

This guide walks you through the in-service suite *Implementing a Curriculum Responsively: Supporting Individual Children's Development and Learning*. This suite includes PowerPoint slides and supporting materials. A PowerPoint presentation and optional slides were developed for use with teachers and family child care providers. Other PowerPoint slides were developed for use with home visitors. Learning activities, tip sheets, and activity sheets are labeled for their intended audiences.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Projector and audio equipment
- Flip chart or similar large paper
- Markers for writing participant ideas
- Hard copies of or access to the online Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF)

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- This presentation describes how teachers and family child care providers can implement their program's curriculum in ways that are responsive to children's development and learning.

- There is also a version of this presentation for home visitors that focuses on implementing a curriculum in ways that are responsive to individual children's development and learning in the home and group socialization settings.

- If participants include center-based teachers, family child care providers, and home visitors, you may choose to include materials from both versions of the suite. In the outline that follows, both sets of materials are listed.

- The presentation includes video clips that illustrate teachers intentionally using their curriculum to support children's development and learning.

- In this presentation, participants will: discuss the importance of learning about children's development and learning; explore ways a curriculum provides guidance on the learning environment, learning experiences, and adult–child interactions; and consider ways to use a curriculum's guidance to support children's development and learning.

- Learning activities offer participants opportunities to understand children's development and learning and use this information to individualize a curriculum's guidance on the learning environment, learning experiences, and interactions.

- You may want to revisit the *Implementing a Curriculum with Fidelity: Questions and Answers* resource. It provides important information about implementing a curriculum with fidelity while being responsive to children and families.

- Adaptation boxes are labeled throughout the presentation to individualize this training for your specific training group.

LIST OF AVAILABLE CONTENT

HANDOUTS

- Tips for Education Staff: Responsive Learning Environments
- Tips for Education Staff: Responsive Learning Experiences and Interactions
- Tips for Families: Talking About Your Child's Development and Learning
- Learning Activity for Education Staff: Teacher Delia Encourages Exploration: Infant–Toddler
- Learning Activity for Education Staff: Teacher Mari Supports Literacy: Preschool
- Helpful Resources
- Tools for Center-Based Supervisors: Supporting Staff to Use a Curriculum to Support Individual Children's Development and Learning

OPTIONAL SLIDES

- Optional Slide 1: Icebreaker Activity
- Optional Slide 2: Putting It Into Practice

OPTIONAL HANDOUTS

- Head Start Program Performance Standards Support Development and Learning
- Learning Activity for Education Staff: Putting It Into Practice

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

SLIDE	HANDOUTS NEEDED	OPTIONAL SLIDES	OPTIONAL HANDOUTS
1. Title and Intro			
2. House Framework for Effective Teaching Practices			▪ Head Start Program Performance Standards Support Development and Learning
3. House Framework for Effective Teaching Practices: Curriculum			
4. Objectives		▪ Optional Slide 1	
5. Active Role of Education Staff			
6. How Children Develop and Learn			
7. Connections to the Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF)			
8. Learning About Children's Development	▪ Tips for Families: Talking About Your Child's Development and Learning		
9. Curricula Offer Guidance on:			

SLIDE	HANDOUTS NEEDED	OPTIONAL SLIDES	OPTIONAL HANDOUTS
10. Learning Environments	▪ Tips for ES: Learning Environments		
11. Learning Experiences	▪ Tips for ES: Learning Experiences and Interactions		
12. Guidance on Responsive Interactions	▪ Tips for ES: Learning Experiences and Interactions		
13. Activity: Teacher Delia Encourages Exploration	▪ Learning Activity for ES: Teacher Delia Encourages Exploration: Infant–Toddler		
14. Activity: Teacher Mari Supports Literacy	▪ Learning Activity for ES: Teacher Mari Supports Literacy: Preschool		
15. Review	▪ Helpful Resources ▪ Tools for CB Supervisors	▪ Optional Slide 2	▪ Learning Activity for ES: Putting It Into Practice

ES indicates tips/activity sheet for education staff, and F indicates tips/activity sheet for families.

IMPLEMENTING A CURRICULUM RESPONSIVELY: SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

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SLIDE 1:

INTRODUCTIONS:

Begin the training by giving participants background information about yourself.

Provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves.

INTRODUCE THE TOPIC:

A curriculum provides guidance and materials for teachers and family child care providers to support young children's development and learning. A curriculum typically focuses on a particular age group, such as infants and toddlers or preschoolers. It offers guidance on learning environments, learning experiences, and adult–child interactions.

Early educators individualize the guidance in a curriculum in ways that are responsive to children's development, strengths, and needs. They also implement the curriculum in ways that are responsive to children's individual interests, temperaments, and cultural and linguistic experiences. This 15-minute in-service suite focuses on how teachers and family child care providers implement their program's curriculum in ways that are responsive to each individual child's development and learning.

For additional guidance on how to implement a curriculum responsively, visit the following resources available from the Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC):

- 15-Minute In-Service Suites on Highly Individualized Teaching and Learning that provide suggested curriculum modifications to support children with disabilities or at risk for developmental delays
- 15-Minute In-Service Suite on A Culturally Responsive Approach to Implementing a Curriculum
- 15-Minute In-Service Suite on Implementing a Curriculum Responsive to Children's Interests

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DISCUSSION:

Have participants share what curricula they use and how they think it helps them to respond to individual children's development and learning. This discussion will give you an idea of the types of curricula they use and how participants think about what responsiveness to children's development and learning means.

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The framework for effective teaching practices is known as the House. It represents five integral components of quality teaching and learning:

- The foundation – providing nurturing, responsive, and effective interactions and engaging environments for children
- The first pillar – choosing and implementing research-based curriculum and teaching practices
- The second pillar – using screening and ongoing assessment of children's skills
- The roof – individualizing teaching and learning
- The center – engaging parents and families

When connected with one another, the components form a single structure—the House Framework—that surrounds the family in the center because as we implement each component of the house, in partnership with parents and families, we support children's learning and development.

OPTIONAL FOR HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START:

- Head Start Program Performance Standards Support Development and Learning

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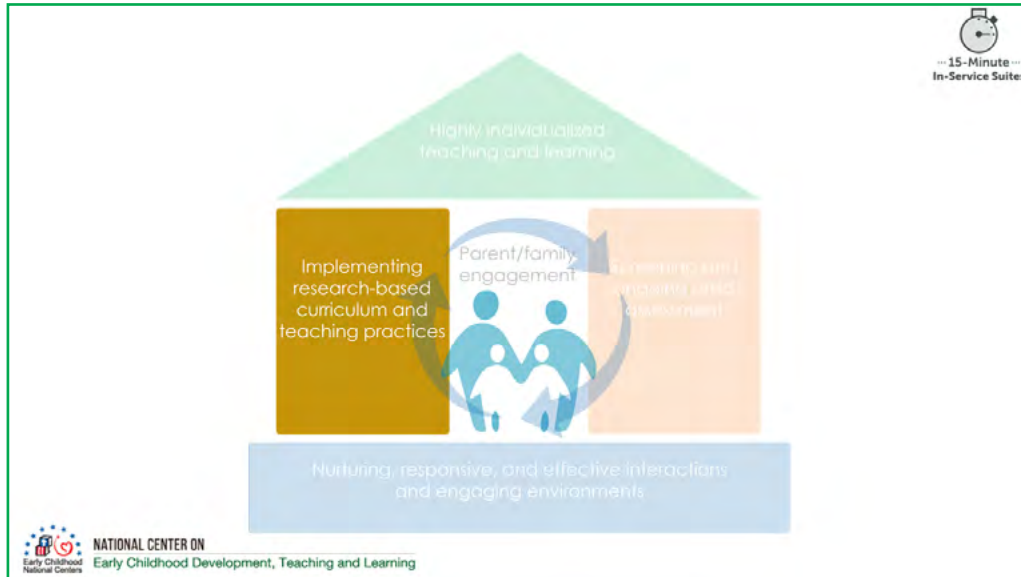
This suite focuses primarily on the first pillar of the house framework: implementing research-based curriculum and teaching practices.

Additionally, education staff learn about children's development and learning from both parent–family engagement (center of the house) and screening and ongoing child assessment (second pillar). Nurturing, responsive, and effective interactions and engaging environments represent different ways that teachers and family child care providers can be responsive to children's development and learning (foundation of the house). Finally, highly individualized teaching and learning (roof) refers to specialized supports for all children, including children with identified disabilities or suspected delays, to be able to access and participate in learning and social experiences.

Objectives

- **Discuss** the importance of learning about and understanding individual children's development and learning.
- **Explore** ways a curriculum provides guidance on the learning environment, learning experiences, and adult–child interactions.
- **Consider** ways to use a curriculum's guidance to support individual children's development and learning.

SLIDE 4:

Review the objectives for the session.

- **Discuss** the importance of learning about and understanding individual children's development and learning.
- **Explore** ways a curriculum provides guidance on the learning environment, learning experiences, and adult–child interactions.
- **Consider** ways to use a curriculum's guidance to support individual children's development and learning.

OPTIONAL MATERIALS:

- Insert Optional Slide 1

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7

Early childhood curricula are designed to support the learning and development of all children within a particular age group (e.g., infants, toddlers, preschool-aged) and program type (e.g., center-based, family child care, or home-based).

DISCUSSION:

How do education staff implement their program's curriculum in ways that are responsive to their children's development and learning?

Education staff play an active role in intentionally using a curriculum's guidance and materials to plan learning environments, learning experiences, and interactions that support each child's development and learning. Each child is unique, and there are no "one-size-fits-all" teaching approaches with young children.

To do this, teachers and family child care providers 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 to support each child's development and learning?

Through the use of ongoing child assessment and frequent conversations with families, it is possible to discover a lot about children's development and learning. It is possible to be responsive to children's development and learning while implementing the curriculum with fidelity, considering what the curriculum offers and ways to individualize learning opportunities and interactions.

How Children Develop and Learn

What I can't do yet
What I can do with help
Zone of Proximal Development
What I can do

A curriculum provides useful guidance to help education staff support children's learning in the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

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SLIDE 6:

Before we dig into using a curriculum responsively, let's review how children develop and learn.

This graphic of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a helpful way to think about where children are developmentally. The ZPD, introduced by psychologist Lev Vygotsky, includes the following:

- The innermost circle represents what children know and are able to do on their own, without assistance.
- The outermost circle represents skills and concepts children have yet to start learning.
- Everything in between is the "learning" zone, or the ZPD—the knowledge and skills children can learn with support from an adult.

The ZPD is the optimal zone for new learning. Children benefit from multiple, related learning opportunities in the "What I can do with help" circle. Teachers and family child care providers can responsively use their curriculum's guidance to support children with learning in their ZPD.

When adults help children learn within their ZPD, it's called *scaffolding*. Scaffolding includes different levels of support and feedback to meet individual children's needs. Some examples of scaffolding strategies include: providing hints, offering a range of possible supports, and using additional resources (e.g., books, visual reminders, other children).

Connections to the Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF)

15-Minute In-Service Suites

Use the ELOF to understand what children should know and be able to do.

	CENTRAL DOMAINS				
	APPROACHES TO LEARNING	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	COGNITION	PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
▲ INFANT/ TODDLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Mathematics Development	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
			Literacy	Scientific Reasoning	

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SLIDE 7:

DISCUSSION:

Ask participants how they think the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) supports education staff to understand children's development and learning so that they're able to implement their curriculum responsively?

The ELOF helps education staff understand child development, including what children should know and be able to do at different age levels. Children develop and learn skills, behaviors, and concepts in all of the ELOF domains and subdomains.

The ELOF helps early educators and families understand broad expectations for development, including appropriate learning goals and developmental progressions. The ELOF can be used as a tool to better understand children's development and learning.

Although the ELOF describes expected developmental progressions, children vary widely in their development and learning. They each develop at their own rate and may progress more quickly in one domain than another. In addition, not all children move through developmental progressions in the same way. The developmental sequences that children follow might differ.

Learning About Children's Development

Use data from ongoing child assessment. Learn from the child's family.
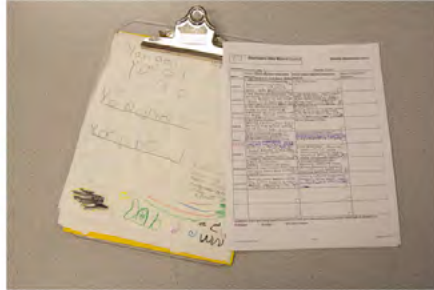
SLIDE 8:

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION:

How do education staff learn about individual children's current and emerging knowledge and skills?

Education staff can use data gathered from informal observations and ongoing child assessment to learn about children's development and learning. Reflecting on the following types of questions will help interpret the data gathered:

- What knowledge, skills, and behaviors is each child developing or learning in each domain?
- What has the child mastered?
- What is currently emerging?
- How can I build opportunities to practice emerging skills in the learning experiences I plan for each domain?
- Are there resources in my curriculum that support development of these skills and/or behaviors?

As education staff review ongoing child assessment data, it is important to talk with families about their observations of their child's current development and learning at home. In these discussions, you may also learn about families' cultures, including their values, expectations, and goals for their child's development and learning. This information can help education staff interpret what they learn from ongoing child assessment.

DISCUSSION:

Ask participants how they learn about a child's current and emerging knowledge and skills? How do they learn about the families' values, expectations, and goals for their child's development and learning?

DEBRIEF:

Education staff use information from ongoing child assessment to individualize supports for learning based on the child's current level of development. The ELOF can be used along with the ongoing child assessment tool to understand where a child is developmentally and where the child may progress next. In addition, staff need to consider a child's interests, temperament, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and other strengths and needs.

For further guidance on how to learn about individual children's development, use the following resources available from the ECLKC:

- Ongoing Child Assessment 15-Minute In-Service Suites
- Observation: The Heart of Individualizing Responsive Care
- Learning from Assessment (LFA) Toolkit
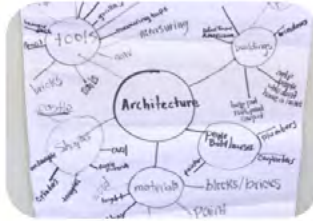
MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Handout: Tips for Families: Talking About Your Child's Development and Learning

Curricula Offer Guidance on:

Learning environments

Learning experiences

Adult–child interactions

SLIDE 9:

Based on their understanding of children's current and emerging knowledge and skills, education staff turn to their curriculum for guidance on:

- Learning environments
- Learning experiences
- Adult–child interactions

The following slides provide examples of what your curriculum may look like. Each represents only one example of the many diverse ways that curriculum approach each one of these areas.

SLIDE 10:

Some curricula provide a welcome guide, introductory manual, or a foundational volume that includes guidance on how to set up the learning environment. Other curricula may provide guidance on specific learning centers or interest areas throughout thematic units or investigations. The section(s) on the learning environment may offer:

- Guidance on how to set up the physical space and layout
- Suggested learning centers or interest areas
- Suggested learning materials
- Sample schedules, including daily routines

DISCUSSION:

Have participants take a moment to think about their curricula. What guidance does it offer on the learning environment?

Share these ways to use your curriculum's guidance and resources on the learning environment to be responsive to children's current developmental levels:

- Set up the environment in ways that provide opportunities for children to practice skills and concepts within their ZPD.
- Select learning materials and equipment for children at different developmental levels.
- Plan how to use scheduled time for small or large groups and choice time to scaffold the learning and development of children's knowledge and skills.
- Connect your curriculum's guidance on the learning environment to the ELOF learning goals and developmental progressions.

In this example from a toddler curriculum (on the slide), we see tips from a welcome guide about how to set up interest areas that are responsive to individual children's development and learning. We also see an example of a specific interest area that could be set up in an indoor or outdoor area. The guidance specifies materials, but there is flexibility in how children can explore in this interest area. A curriculum for toddlers may provide suggested vocabulary or open-ended questions to promote active exploration and extend children's learning (e.g., What does the sand feel like? Which bucket has more sand?). Education staff can use their understanding of individual children's emerging knowledge and skills, including fine motor skills and their language abilities in English and/or their home language, to scaffold their development and learning while playing in this interest area.

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OPTIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
- How might a family child care provider use this interest area responsively with older toddlers and preschool children who have different developmental levels?
- How might this interest area be adapted for a child with a sensory processing disability?

MATERIALS NEEDED:
- Handout: Tips for Education Staff: Responsive Learning Environments

Every curriculum provides a set of learning experiences, but the scope and sequence of learning experiences vary by curriculum. Some curricula offer a set of activities organized by age or domain that do not need to be implemented in a specific sequence. Education staff may select the learning experience(s) that best suit a child or a group of children. They each consider what they know about a child's knowledge and skills, based on informal observations or ongoing child assessment data. From there, they plan specific learning experiences that will support children's development and learning.

In this example on the slide, an infant and toddler curriculum provides learning experience cards organized by age and learning domain. Such cards may also provide helpful teaching practices, such as encouraging the toddler to persist if they spill the drink.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION:

How might education staff use these learning experience cards to be responsive to individual children's emerging knowledge and skills?

Other curricula offer a more structured sequence of learning experiences, with specific activities for each day or week. Education staff may need to plan how to implement the specific activities in ways that best meet the needs of the children in the group. Education staff may have to simplify an experience or make it more challenging based on the child(ren)'s developmental level(s). For example, a preschool curriculum might suggest counting a set of up to five manipulatives (e.g., blocks, beads, popsicle sticks). To simplify, a teacher may invite a child to count a smaller set. To add challenge, she may ask another child (the same age) to count up to 10. These are examples of how a teacher scaffolds learning and modifies learning opportunities or interactions to meet the needs of individual children.

Remember, children are continuously developing new knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Learning experiences that may currently fall outside of a child's ZPD may become part of the "learning zone" at a later point in time. Use the ELOF as a tool to understand what children should know and be able to do and what might come next in their developmental progressions in each domain.

For additional guidance on a curriculum's scope and sequence, visit the following resources available from the ECLKC:

- Curriculum Scope and Sequence
- Using Scope and Sequence to Plan Responsive Learning Experiences for Infants and Toddlers

DISCUSSION:

Have participants take a moment to think about their curricula. How does their curricula organize children's learning experiences?

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Handout: Tips for Education Staff: Responsive Learning Experiences and Interactions

Guidance on Responsive Interactions

15-Minute In-Service Suites

UNIT 6: PLANTS   **WEEK 3**

Small-Group Activity
Science Learning Goal: Child compares observable phenomena.

1. Remind children about their recent discussions of the plant life cycle.

2. Show the green and dried pea pods.

3. Ask the children:
   • How are the pea pods similar?
   • How are the pea pods different?

4. As children respond, facilitate the discussion around the shape, texture, size, color, taste, and/or scent of the pea pods.

To Simplify...
Ask the children to describe one of the pea pods.

To Add Challenge...
Invite children to predict what is inside of the pea pods.

Tips for Dual-Language Learners (DLLs)
Ask the questions in children's home languages. Allow children to respond in whatever language they feel most comfortable using.

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SLIDE 12:

Within the context of the environment, daily routines, or other planned learning experiences, responsive adult–child interactions provide an opportunity to support children's development and extend their learning within their ZPD.

Curricula may offer guidance in an introductory manual or foundational volume. Curricula may also have chapters or books that focus on each domain and list teaching practices to support individual children's development in the domain.

Guidance may include prompts or questions the teacher or family child care provider can use to spark children's thinking (e.g., What do you think will happen if . . . ?) or comments to connect to children's prior experiences (e.g., I wonder if you have cooked anything at home . . .). Curricula may also suggest vocabulary to use during activities or other interactions with children or support the use of children's home language. Other curricula offer vignettes or case studies of how a teacher engages in an extended interaction or feedback loop with a child.

Curricula may provide suggested materials or interactions for learning centers or activities. For example, a curriculum may specify scaffolding strategies within learning experiences, such as how to simplify an activity or how to add challenge with certain materials or learning opportunities. Sometimes, strategies must be adapted for children with suspected delays or identified disabilities. In addition, children who are dual-language learners may benefit from additional supports to access the curriculum experiences.

DISCUSSION:

For example, in this slide, we see a curriculum that provides embedded guidance on responsive interactions throughout its recommended activities. How does this learning activity provide guidance on interactions that are responsive to individual levels of development?

In this activity about pea pods, the curriculum provides specific teaching practices to simplify or add challenge to the discussion. Teachers can decide, based on their knowledge of the developmental levels of the children in their group, which teaching practices are most responsive to children's current levels of development and learning, including their home language and English knowledge and skills. This curriculum also offers specific tips to engage children who are dual language learners in this science activity.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Handout: Tips for Education Staff: Responsive Learning Experiences and Interactions

Activity: Teacher Delia Encourages Exploration

How do I implement my program's curriculum to support individual children's development and learning?

SLIDE 13:

Infant and Toddler Learning Activity: Teacher Delia Encourages Exploration

If audience works with infants and toddlers, use Slide 13. If audience works with preschoolers, use Slide 14.

INTRODUCE VIDEO

- In this video, an infant teacher, Delia, discusses Anthony's developing skills, behaviors, and concepts.
- Delia's infant and toddler curriculum provides a learning experience for toddlers to explore water in a sensory table during outdoor play. It also suggests that teachers sing songs with infants and toddlers to support their language development.
- As you watch the video, notice how Delia uses her curriculum guidance in a way that is meaningful for Anthony.

PLAY VIDEO

- Use the handout to record what you hear about Anthony's development and learning in different domains.
- Play the video a second time if participants need to gather more information.

ELBOW PARTNER DISCUSSION

- After watching the video, with a partner, think about how Delia used what she knew about Anthony's development and learning to individualize her program's curriculum.
- What are some of Anthony's current and emerging skills, behaviors, or concepts? Consider what skills and concepts Anthony is developing in his ZPD in the following domains: social and emotional, language, cognitive, and perceptual, motor, and physical development.
- What are some of the ELOF goals that are addressed as Delia plans the learning environment and experiences for Anthony and tailors her interactions with him?
- In what ways do you think Delia used her curriculum's guidance to be responsive to Anthony's emerging skills, behaviors, and concepts?
- What do you think Delia can do next to extend Anthony's social and emotional, language, and cognitive skills?
- Record on your handout what you discuss with your partner.

- Invite participants to share their observations and discussions.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Handout: Learning Activity for Education Staff: Teacher Delia Encourages Exploration: Infant–Toddler

Activity: Teacher Mari Supports Literacy

How do I implement my program's curriculum to support individual children's development and learning?

SLIDE 14:

Preschool Learning Activity: Teacher Mari Supports Literacy

If audience works with infants and toddlers, use Slide 13. If audience works with preschoolers, use Slide 14.

INTRODUCE VIDEO

- In this video, a preschool teacher, Mari, uses her program's curriculum to individualize a literacy learning experience for Leah.

- As you watch the video, notice how Mari uses what she knows about Leah's development to create a learning opportunity during her curriculum's choice time. In this curriculum, children are encouraged to make a plan, do something, and review what they have done. In this clip, Leah works on her plan in the art interest area.

PLAY VIDEO

- Use the handout to record what you notice about the learning environment, learning experience, and interactions.

- Play the video a second time if participants need to gather more information.

ELBOW PARTNER DISCUSSION

- After watching the video, with a partner, think about how Mari used what she knew about Leah's development to implement her curriculum responsively.

- What are some of Leah's current and emerging knowledge, skills, or behaviors? Consider what knowledge and skills Leah is developing in her ZPD in the following domains: approaches to learning and language and literacy.

- What are some of the ELOF goals that are addressed as Mari plans the learning environment and experiences for Leah and tailors her interactions with her?

- In what ways do you think Mari used her curriculum's guidance to be responsive to Leah's emerging knowledge, skills, behaviors?

- What do you think Mari could do next to extend Leah's literacy skills?

- Record what you discuss with your partner on the handout.

- Invite participants to share their observations and discussions. Focus the discussion on how Mari used her knowledge of Leah's level of development to individualize learning opportunities and interactions, based on Leah's learning and interes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Handout: Learning Activity for Education Staff: Teacher Mari Supports Literacy: Preschool

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SLIDE 15:

REVIEW THE MAIN POINTS OF THE PRESENTATION

In this presentation, we discussed how to implement your program's curriculum responsively to support individual children's development of skills, behaviors, and concepts described in the ELOF.

Think about the children in your care. What are some of the knowledge, skills, and behaviors they are developing? Plan how to use your curriculum's guidance and materials to support each child. Use the optional learning activity Putting It Into Practice to walk through the process of applying this information to the children in your group.

Your curriculum provides you with many tools and strategies to support children's development and learning, but you have the important role of making these curriculum resources to meet the individual learning and developmental needs of all children.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
- Handout: Helpful Resources
- Handout: Tools for Center-Based Supervisors

OPTIONAL MATERIALS:
- Optional Slide 2
- Optional Handout: Learning Activity for Education Staff: Putting It Into Practice