



April 4, 2024

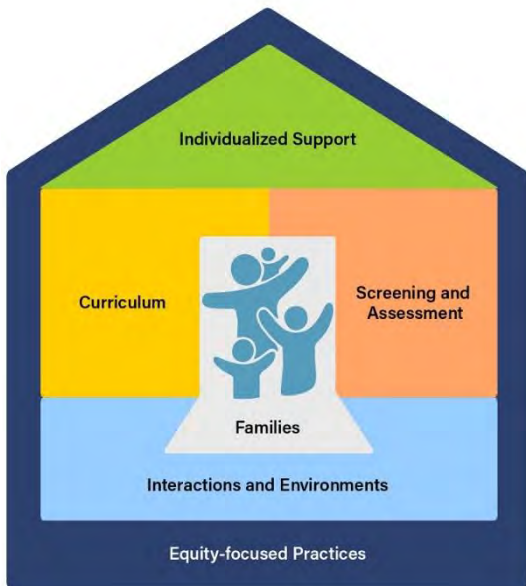
Highly Individualized Teaching with Infants and Toddlers

Viewer's Guide

This viewer's guide shares ideas and tools to support highly individualized teaching and learning. Resources, handouts, and tools included support planning for and implementing curriculum modifications and embedded learning opportunities. To deepen your learning additional resources can be found in the resources section of this guide.

Reflecting Together

Think of an infant or toddler in your care currently or in the past who you provided more individualized and intensive support to. What did you do?



Framework for Effective Practice

The National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning (NCECDTL) uses a house to represent six integral elements of quality teaching and learning for children ages birth to in all program options. The six elements of the House Framework include:

Foundation: Providing nurturing, responsive, and effective interactions, and engaging environments

First Pillar: Implementing research-based curriculum and teaching practices

Second Pillar: Using screening and ongoing assessment of children's skills

Roof: Embedding highly individualized teaching and learning

Center: Engaging parents and families

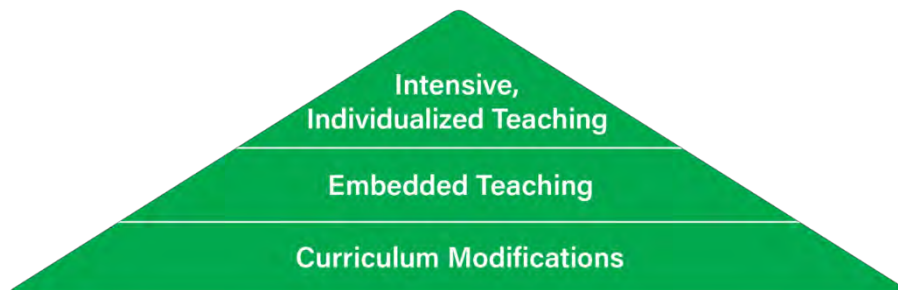
Siding: Strengthening equity-focused practice

When these elements are connected, they form a single structure—a house—that surrounds the family in the center. The family is at the heart of the house because each house element is implemented in partnership with parents and families in their cultural and community context. Infant and toddler educators may use this House Framework to understand how each element contributes to children's development and learning.



As you look at the pictures above, what do you see happening that you think is supportive of the young learners?

A Closer Look at the Roof



Curriculum Modifications: A change to the ongoing classroom activity or materials in order to facilitate or maximize a child’s participation in planned activities, interactions, and routines” — Sandall, Schwartz, Joseph & Gauvreau, 2019 There are eight general types of curriculum modification.

To learn more about each type of modification check out the [Training Suites on Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities: Curriculum Modifications](#) on ECLKC.

Environmental Support	Special Equipment	Simplify the Activity	Peer Support
Materials Adaptation	Adult Support	Child Preferences	Invisible Support

Curriculum Modification Examples



Snack Talk

- Environmental support
- Visuals of where toddlers will sit during snack and meal times
- “Snack talk” bin in the middle of the table which helps to simplify the activity of engaging in conversation with peers during mealtime



First Then Chart

- Environmental support
- Visual support that provides additional information to a child about what comes first and what comes next
- In this scenario it helps to simplify the play in the dramatic play area by providing a first check the baby with the stethoscope, then give the baby a bottle. This is a child who may need extra support to engage in imaginative play with others
- This type of modification, “a first then” chart, can also be used to help break down the daily schedule for a child who is having difficulty following the group daily routines. First, wash hands, then lunch – for example

Have you used similar supports and modifications in your practice? If so, how have they supported a child's access, participation, and development? If not, how do you imagine implementing similar supports?

Video Reflection: Record what you notice during the video. How is the teacher using the modification strategy? What is the child's response?

Embedded Learning Opportunities (ELOs)

Video Reflection: Record what you notice during the video. What is the teacher doing? What is the child's response?

Example: Planning for ELOs in a Family Child Care

Larisha attends an Early Head Start family child care program five days a week and receives IFSP services in this setting every other week. Larisha’s family, her family child care provider, and the early intervention professional working with her identify the following priorities:

- Feeding herself small pieces of food
- Pointing to toys or objects she wants
- Approximating one-word phrases

There are four other children enrolled in this program, so the EI specialist and child care provider identify some routines for Embedded Learning Opportunities. The provider notes that mealtimes and diapering are especially good times, since she is supporting children individually at this time.

They plan to work on feeding, pointing, and approximating words during this routine. She adds that playtime at the end of the day is also a good opportunity, as Larisha is often the last child picked up. During playtime, they plan to practice pointing to bubbles, Larisha’s favorite activity.

Adapted from Sandall, Schwartz, Joseph & Gauvreau (2019). Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs, 3rd Ed. Brookes Publishing.

Intensive, Individualized Teaching

Video Reflection: Record what you notice during the video. What is the teacher doing? What is the child’s response?

Example: Child Focused Instructional Strategies at Home

Yazmin is an 18-month-old girl who receives Early Head Start home-based services in her home. Her mother, Rosa, has been working with Yazmin’s pediatric physical therapist and her home visitor to embed her IFSP goals into their daily routines. Yazmin has made a lot of progress with her fine motor skills through some simple toy modifications, and through embedded learning opportunities.

However, she is not making as much progress on her large motor learning targets. Rosa and her home visitor make a plan to provide more practice throughout the day for Yazmin to crawl towards her favorite toys.

Rosa and her home visitor decide to embed one of the strategies used by Yazmin’s pediatric physical therapists into daily routines. By placing her favorite toy on a large cushion on the floor, they encourage Yazmin to crawl up on the cushion to grab her toy. With the cushion as a modification, Yazmin is able and motivated to move towards her toy. They do this a few times during a home visit and identify two other times of the day (in the morning, as they are watching television and in the evening after dinner) when Rosa or another family member can help Yazmin practice crawling.

Adapted from Sandall, Schwartz, Joseph & Gauvreau (2019). Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs, 3rd Ed. Brookes Publishing.

Getting Started with Highly Individualized Teaching

1. Identify and clarify the child and family’s routine
2. Gather information on individual child and family goals and objectives
3. Clarify the current concerns/learning needs of the child
4. Create a plan
5. Construct an activity matrix for group care and home
6. Implement the plan
7. Evaluate the plan and monitor child progress

Reflect or take notes on each step below:

1. Identify and clarify the child and family’s routine

2. Gather information on individual child and family goals and objectives

3. Clarify the current concerns/learning needs of the child

Toddler Classroom Example:

Daily Routines	What do we expect	How is the child doing?	What is the concern or learning opportunity?
Arrival/ Drop off	Children say goodbye, go to carpet and play with a toy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs support <input type="checkbox"/> Needs challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A Happy in mornings, gives dad a high five, heads to cars on carpet
Breakfast	Children wash hands, sit at table, request food, eat food with utensils or fingers and drink with a sippy cup	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Needs support <input type="checkbox"/> Needs challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has difficulty with remembering steps for handwashing and pumping soap Gets confused and frustrated with where to sit Has difficulty scooping up soft foods with spoon
Play time	Children move to an area and play with toys and materials, use words to request a turn	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Needs support <input type="checkbox"/> Needs challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grabs toys from others Sits very near, sometimes on other children
Diapering/ Toileting	Children go with teacher to be changed, help carry diaper or use toilet with support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs support <input type="checkbox"/> Needs challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A Notifies teacher when he needs to be changed. Begin potty training.
Outside Play	Children use gross motor skills to move bodies and play	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Needs challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loves basketball, bring out hoops and more balls

4. Create a plan

Toddler Classroom Example One:

Daily routine/activity	Concern?	How will we modify?	Materials and Prep	Who will prep by when?	Is it working?
Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has difficulty with remembering steps for handwashing and pumping soap Gets confused and frustrated with where to sit Has difficulty scooping up soft foods with spoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult support w/hand washing Visual of where to sit Adaptive bowl and spoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name and photo placemats Adaptive bowls and spoons 	Annie by 4/8 Ruby (DSC) by 4/10	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Notes:
Play time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grabs toys from others Sits very near, sometimes on other children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visuals of where to sit Adult support with requesting turns 	Carpet squares Timer	Annie by 4/8	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Notes:
Diapering/ Toileting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notifies teacher when he needs to be changed. Begin potty training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin potty training schedule 	Pull ups	Tina by 4/10	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Notes:

Toddler Classroom Example Two:

What will we teach?	When will we teach?	How will we teach?
Learning goal: Using two-word approximations to request turns	When the child wants something or a turn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide highly desired toys that require turn taking and offer only small portions of snack foods each serving Model using words, “my turn” or “more fish”

5. Construct an activity matrix for Early Head Start program or home

Example:

Daily Schedule	Goal: Using two word phrases	Goal: Playing with Toys	Goal: Saying All Done	Goal: Drinking from a straw
Play Time	“My turn” “Go car”	Stacking Cups (add Paw Patrol stickers to entice)		
Diapering & Hand Washing		Have a basket of small toys on the changing table, and hold up two toys for S to choose from while she is changed	“All done”	
Lunch	“More please”		“All done”	Special straw and cup
Play Time/Outside	“My turn”	Add stacking cups to the sand box		Special straw and cup for water break

6. Implement the plan

7. Evaluate the plan and monitor child progress



Teacher Toolbox

Check out these helpful tools on ECLKC:

- Training Suites on Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities: Curriculum Modifications
 - Child Participation Form: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/it-curr-mods-tools-child-participation.pdf>
 - Types of Curriculum Modifications: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/it-curr-mods-tools-types-of-mods.pdf>
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/training-suites-infants-toddlers-disabilities/curriculum-modifications>
- Training Suites on Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities: Activity Matrix
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/training-suites-infants-toddlers-disabilities/activity-matrix>
- Training Suites on Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities: Embedded Learning Opportunities
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/training-suites-infants-toddlers-disabilities/embedded-learning-opportunities>
- Inclusion Lab App
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/inclusion-lab-app>

Notes



Child Participation Form

Directions

Think of a child in your setting who struggles to participate. First, list the activities that are part of your daily activities and routines. Next, write down the general expectations you have for all children during each activity or routine. Then think about how the child is doing during each of these daily activities. Finally, for activities during which the child seems to need support or enrichment, specify the particular concern.

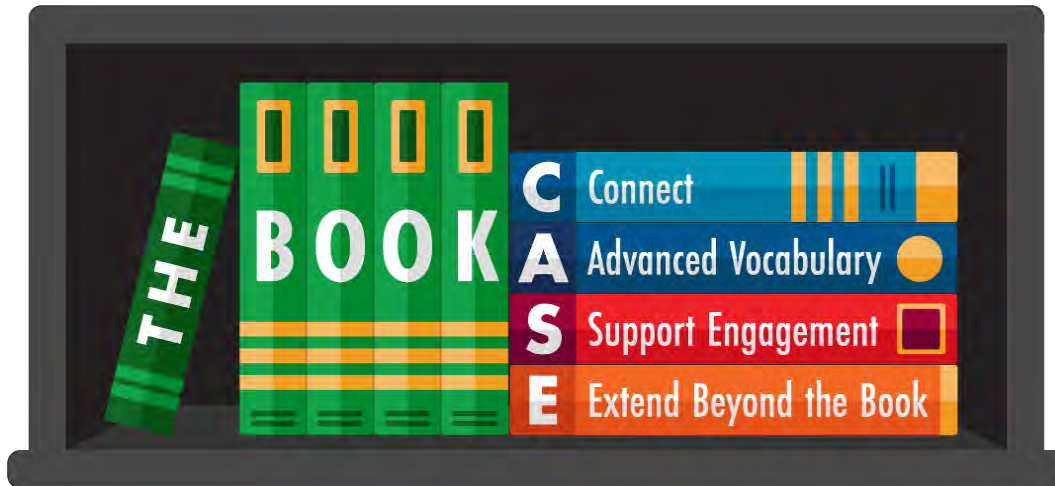
Child's Name: _____ Educator's Name: _____ Date: _____

Daily routines / Activities	What do we expect all children to do?	How is this child doing?	What is the concern?
		Good Needs support Needs enrichment	
		Good Needs support Needs enrichment	
		Good Needs support Needs enrichment	
		Good Needs support Needs enrichment	
		Good Needs support Needs enrichment	
		Good Needs support Needs enrichment	



Types of Curriculum Modifications

Modification type	Definition	Strategies	Examples
Environmental support	Altering the physical, social, and temporal environment to promote participation, engagement, and learning	Change the physical environment Change the social environment Change the temporal environment	
Materials adaptation	Modifying materials so that the child can participate as independently as possible	Have materials or equipment in the optimal position (height, etc.) Stabilize materials Modify the response Make the materials larger or brighter	
Simplify the activity	Simplifying a complicated task by breaking it into smaller parts or reducing the number of steps	Break it down Change or reduce the number of steps Finish with success	
Use child preferences	If the child is not taking advantage of the available opportunities, identify and integrate the child's preferences	Hold a favorite toy Use a favorite activity Use a favorite person	
Special equipment	Special or adaptive devices that allow a child to participate or increase a child's level of participation	Use special equipment to increase access Use special equipment to increase participation	
Adult support	An adult intervenes to support the child's participation and learning	Model Join the child's play Use praise and encouragement	
Peer support	Utilizing peers to help children learn important objectives	Model Helpers Praise and encouragement	
Invisible support	A purposeful arrangement of naturally occurring events within one activity	Sequence turns Sequence activities within a curriculum area	



Books are a great way to engage with children. There are books about many things in our world. So, matching books with the themes and activities helps with meaningful learning experiences. Choosing books on topics that infants and toddlers are interested in is another way to help them feel included and that their interests are important.

Making the CASE and Book List

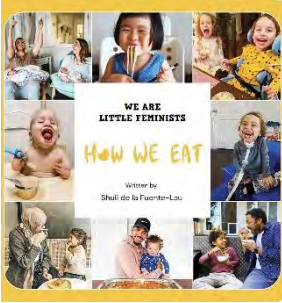


We Are Little Feminists: On-the-Go

Written by Brook Sitgraves Turner and Archa Shrivastav

An empowering and delightful board book filled with photos of children with disabilities using their movement and mobility aids on-the-go. Run, jump, climb, ride and glide along! (from <https://littlefeminist.com/product/we-are-little-feminists-on-the-go/>)

	Infants and Toddlers
Connect	This book is full of photographs of children with and without disabilities and how they move about the world. This book is connected to the Social Emotional domain of the ELOF.
Advanced vocabulary	Simple sentences with easy rhymes are great for introducing new vocabulary words like hike, bike, glide, and ride.
Support engagement	The photographs are excellent to talk about in addition to the text. As you read this book with children, talk about what you see in the photographs. Pay attention to what children point at or look closely at.
Extend	Think about the ability diversity present in your learning environment. Do you have plastic people who show diversity in abilities or photographs of people posted where the children can easily see them? Think about ways you can better incorporate diversity into the materials children have access to.

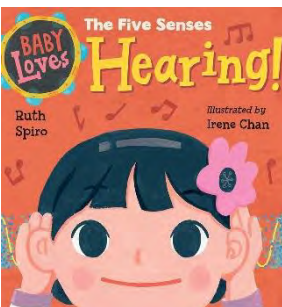


We are Little Feminists: How We Eat

Written by Shuli de la Fuente-Lau

Mealtime just got a whole lot more fun! HOW WE EAT helps families and educators discuss ability, culture, and food at home and in the classroom. (from <https://littlefeminist.com/product/howweeat/>)

	For Infants and Toddlers
Connect	This delightful photography book shows all the ways people eat. This book is connected to the Social Emotional domain of the ELOF
Advanced vocabulary	Words such as heart, tube, slurp, and chopsticks are great examples of the advanced vocabulary found in this title.
Support engagement	Just like with the other book in this series, talk about what you see children and families doing in the photographs. Be ready to add additional information as you look at the photographs with children.
Extend	Offer a variety of eating utensils (forks, spoons, chopsticks, etc.) to children during meal times. Talk about the different foods and how children eat them during snack and meal times.



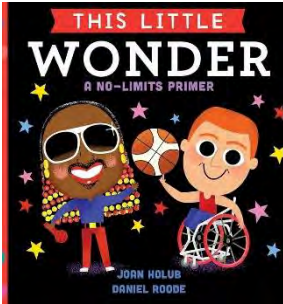
Baby Loves: The Five Senses - Hearing!

By Ruth Spiro, Illustrated by Irene Chan

This board books explores the world of sound, what it is, how it’s made and how we hear it. Learn about different ways people use sound to communicate and technological help to hear.

	For Infants and Toddlers
Connect	Part of the Five Senses series, this lovely picture book shows the way people hear or don’t hear sound. This book is connected to the Social Emotional domain of the ELOF.
Advanced vocabulary	This book has so much advanced vocabulary, you as the educator are sure to learn some new words too! It includes words such frequency, cochlea, and wave.

Support engagement	Think about how you could use an instrument while reading this book. The illustrations show a child using a guitar or ukulele, do you have one you could bring in and help children feel the vibrations of sound?
Extend	Think about more opportunities to incorporate ways a child can experience sound, think about the music being played, how children can feel the vibration of instruments or other musical opportunities. Also consider how sign language can be added and used throughout the day in daily routines and for communicating to and with young children.



This Little Wonder: A No Limits Primer

by Joan Holub, illustrated by Daniel Roode

Learn all about ten important people whose wonderful talents shine bright from the disability community.

	For Infants and Toddlers
Connect	This book features many well-known people and the diversity of their abilities. This book is connected to the Social and Emotional ELOF domain.
Advanced vocabulary	This title is full of great vocabulary including words like shine, soar, sign language, artist, and harmonica!
Support engagement	This book can be read a page at a time, focusing on one person and their accomplishments. Notice who the infants and toddlers are paying attention to while they explore the book independently and join them in sharing information about that person.
Extend	Consider putting together a laminated photo book with photos of the people mentioned in this book. Spend time looking at the variety of abilities found in the materials available to children. Keep them in a basket or other container that is easily accessible to children throughout the day.

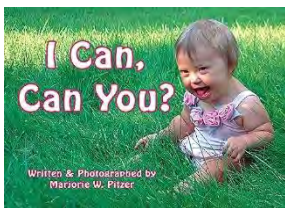


Counting: Braille

by DK Publishing

Explore different textures and counting techniques in this book, designed specifically for blind or visually impaired readers. It includes braille, large print and high contrast photography.

	For Infants and Toddlers
Connect	This book introduces children to the world of reading with their fingers! This is connected to the Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development domain of the ELOF.
Advanced vocabulary	Advanced vocabulary found in written text and in braille include words such as boots, park, breeze, and sticky.
Support engagement	Talk about the textures found in the book. Encourage children to run their fingers over the raised dots to feel the letters and numbers in braille form.
Extend	Consider adding more textures to your learning environment, both in book form and other materials and mediums.



I Can, Can You?

By Marjorie W. Pitzer

This is a joyful book of infants and toddler with Down Syndrome and all the things they can do!

	For Infants and Toddlers
Connect	This photography book features children with Down syndrome showing all the things they can do. This is connected to the Social and Emotional ELOF domain.
Advanced vocabulary	Simple text throughout this book introduces words such as swim, slide, and sign language.
Support engagement	Talk about the photographs and specifically about what the children are doing in the pictures, such as eating spaghetti, or coloring with sidewalk chalk.
Extend	Make your own version of this book, Take photos of the children doing various activities in your learning environment. Make a laminated photo book where children can look at the pictures, adding the text, "I can _____, can you?"

Explore the BookCASE on Your Own

The infants and toddlers in my learning environment love this book:

Make the CASE:

Connect:

Advanced vocabulary:

Support engagement:

Extend:

Books I would like to add to my learning environment:

All About You

Finding Your Support Team!

Emotional:

Instrumental:

Mentoring:

Helpful Resources

Online Resources

- Framework for Effective Practice
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/teaching-practices/framework-effective-practice/framework-effective-practice> (English)
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/practicas-docentes/framework-effective-practice/marco-para-las-practicas-eficaces> (Spanish)
- Interactive Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/interactive-head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework-ages-birth-five> (English)
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/marco-interactivo-de-head-start-sobre-los-resultados-del-aprendizaje-temprano-de-los-ninos-desde-el> (Spanish)
- Highly Individualized Practices Series: Webinar Series
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/highly-individualized-practices-series>

- Highly Individualized Teaching and Learning 15-minute In-service Suites
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/highly-individualized-teaching-learning> (English)
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/ninos-con-discapacidades/articulo/ensenanza-y-aprendizaje-altamente-individualizados> (Spanish)
- Inclusion Lab App
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/inclusion-lab-app>
- 15-minute In-service Suites: Curriculum Modifications: An Introduction
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/curriculum-modifications-introduction> (English)
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/video/modificaciones-al-curriculo-una-introduccion> (Spanish)
- 15-minute In-service Suites: Putting It Into Action
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/putting-it-action> (English)
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/ninos-con-discapacidades/articulo/llevarlo-la-practica> (Spanish)
- Training Suites on Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/training-suites-infants-toddlers-disabilities/training-suites-infants-toddlers-disabilities> (English)
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/ninos-con-discapacidades/training-suites-infants-toddlers-disabilities/conjuntos-de-materiales-de-capacitacion-para-bebes-y-ninos-pequenos-con> (Spanish)
- Parent-Implemented Intervention for Toddlers in the Home Setting
 - <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/node/3004>
- ECTA Practice Improvement Tools
 - <https://ectacenter.org/decrp/>
- Inclusion of Children with Disabilities: Training Guide
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/inclusion-children-disabilities-training-guide/inclusion-children-disabilities-training-guide> (English)
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/ninos-con-discapacidades/inclusion-children-disabilities-training-guide/inclusion-de-ninos-con-discapacidades-guia-de-capacitacion> (Spanish)
- Supporting Social and Emotional Learning for Children with Disabilities (Inclusion Webinar)
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/supporting-social-emotional-learning-children-disabilities>
- Instructional Practices to Support Individualization (Inclusion Webinar)
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/instructional-practices-support-individualization>

- Individualizing Instruction for Children with Disabilities Who Are Also Dual Language Learners (Inclusion Webinar)
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/individualizing-instruction-children-disabilities-who-are-also-dual-language-learners>
- Big 5 for All and Children with Disabilities Who Are Dual Language Learners
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/big-5-all-children-disabilities-who-are-dual-language-learners> (English)
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/ninos-con-discapacidades/articulo/los-5-factores-importantes-para-todos-y-los-ninos-con-discapacidades-que-aprenden-en-dos-idiommas> (Spanish)
- Visual Supports
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/visual-supports> (English)
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/es/children-disabilities/article/materiales-de-apoyo-visual> (Spanish)

Mobile Apps

- ELOF2GO Mobile App
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/elof2go-mobile-app>
- Text4Teachers
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/teaching-practices/article/text4teachers>
- Ready DLL Mobile App
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/ready-dll-mobile-app>

Online Communities

- MyPeers: Teacher Time Community
 - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/mypeers-collaborative-platform-early-care-education-community>