

Application of Curriculum Framework in the Planning of Meaningful Learning Experiences

Initial Practice Based Professional Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators (EI/ECSE)

5.1



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Standard 5

Candidates collaborate with families and professionals to use an evidence-based, developmentally appropriate, and culturally responsive early childhood curriculum addressing developmental and content domains. Candidates use curriculum frameworks to create and support universally designed, high-quality learning experiences in natural and inclusive environments that provide each child and family with equitable access and opportunities for learning and growth.



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Component 5.1

- Candidates collaborate with families and other professionals to identify an evidence-based curriculum addressing developmental and content domains to design and facilitate meaningful and culturally responsive learning experiences that support all children and families' unique abilities and needs.

Objectives

- Describe how an evidence-based curriculum guides the design and facilitation of meaningful and culturally responsive learning experiences for all children and families.
- Describe a process used in collaboration with families and other team members to identify an evidence-based curriculum that addresses developmental and content domains in EI/ECSE.



Effective Curriculum Frameworks: DEC Position Statement (2007)

Effective curriculum is a “dynamic system”:

- Begins with authentic assessment
- Scope and sequence of instructional content is explicitly stated
- Learning activities and intervention strategies are intentional and grounded in evidence
- Supported by systematic/ongoing progress monitoring



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Activity

- Watch the [Animated Short: "Ian"](#) on the next slide
- Discuss the implications for an ideal curriculum framework that works for all of the children in this classroom



Activity Video: Animated Short: “Ian”



https://youtu.be/Hz_d-cikWml



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The Goal for All Children: A Unified Curriculum Framework

- A universal approach to early learning to meet the needs of all children within a developmentally grounded framework (Bruder, Ferreira, 2021)
- Children with disabilities should not require a separate curriculum framework
- Capability to provide individual adaptations, modifications, and accommodations for all children



Unified Curriculum Framework Criteria

- Evidence-based
- **Universally designed** to address the specific needs of children with and without disabilities
- Learning experiences occur within and across a child's **natural environments and routines**
- **Developmentally appropriate**
- **Culturally responsive**
- **Focus on team collaboration**



Evidence-Based Curriculum Frameworks

- What makes a curriculum “evidence-based”?
 - Practices that are based on high-quality research that has been replicated and proven to improve outcomes for children.
 - The interactions, teaching practices, and learning experiences within the curriculum are proven to be effective to further a child’s development and learning



Evidence-Based Resources

- How can you support families to identify and make decisions in evidence-based practices?
 - <https://ectacenter.org/topics/evbased/evbased.asp>
 - <https://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices>
 - [The CEEDAR Center at the University of Florida | The CEEDAR Center \(ufl.edu\)](#)



A Unified Curriculum Framework

Criteria: Universally Designed

- A structure to plan and design curriculum for all learners
- Accommodations and modifications are built into all aspects of the curriculum to meet the needs of children of all abilities



UDL Principles: Activity

- <https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>
- How does the UDL framework support full participation and optimal access to learning for all students?



Unified Curriculum Framework Criteria: Natural Environments and Inclusion

- Inclusion: a principle that supports the education of children with disabilities alongside non-disabled peers
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require schools/agencies to provide equal educational opportunities for children with disabilities
- IDEA specifically requires schools to support inclusion of children with disabilities through the least restrictive and natural environment mandates



Universal Curriculum Framework: Effective Practices for Natural Preschool Environments

- Curriculum modifications
 - A change made to the ongoing classroom activity or materials to maximize child participation
- Embedded learning opportunities
 - Using child interests by planning short systematic instructional interactions in daily classroom activities

Effective Practices for Natural Preschool Environments, Continued

- Explicit child-focused instructional strategies
 - Specific interventions driven by child objectives that may be different from the larger group
- Authentic assessment and progress monitoring
 - Collecting meaningful data to support planning/
intervention



Principles of Inclusion for Preschool Age Children With Disabilities

- Preschoolers learn best through meaningful everyday experiences and interactions within developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate routines, play, and activities in inclusive settings
- All families, with appropriate supports and resources, can promote their child's learning



Principles of Inclusion for Preschool Age Children With Disabilities, Continued

- A Child's individual strengths, needs, preferences, culture, and priorities are reflected and respected
- Professionals build partnerships with families and support them as primary decision-makers
- Preschool learning experiences are developmentally appropriate and evidence-based



Tools for Inclusive Practices: Activity

- <https://ectacenter.org/topics/inclusion/tools.asp>
- In pairs or groups, explore this website and identify tools you think would be useful to support a family of a child with a disability who is making decisions about a preschool classroom for their child. Be ready to explain your choices.



Universal Curriculum Frameworks: Developmentally Appropriate

- Anchored in theories of child development and learning
 - Sequences of learning relevant to all children
 - Situated within the interests and preferences of the child
- Practices are developmentally, individually, and culturally appropriate to each child
- All children participate
- Individual needs are addressed in the context of all learning activities

Activity:

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Watch [Video 1.17: Routine in a Program](#) on the next slide before reflecting on these questions;

- The game planned for the group usually involves one child shouting “Red Light!” or “Green Light” and gradually walking forward toward the leader
- How did this teacher plan her instruction to embed a developmentally appropriate learning opportunity for Jack, who is working on communicating with his peers and joining them in play activities?



Activity:

Developmentally Appropriate Practices



<https://connectmodules.dec-sped.org/connect-modules/resources/videos/video-1-17/>



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Unified Curriculum Frameworks: Culturally Responsive

- Based on knowledge of children and families
- Develop and teach culturally relevant expectations
- Take the child's perspective
- Examine personal implicit biases and assumptions
- Teach and model empathy



Unified Curriculum Frameworks: Culturally Responsive

- “Establishing positive relationships between the parents (or other caregivers) and their infants/ young children; among children with disabilities and their peers; and among professionals working with infants, children, and families is an essential goal of EI/ECSE” (Odom & Wolery, 2003)



Activity

After watching “[Inclusion and Joy](#)” on the next slide, reflect on the following questions;

- What benefits did you see and hear about as these two teachers discussed the use of their universal and inclusive approach to curriculum in their work?
- From the information gleaned from this short video, does the curriculum these teachers use include elements of a unified curriculum framework?



Activity Video: Inclusion and Joy



<https://vimeo.com/138219969>

Resources and References

- Bruder, M, B., Catalino, T., Chiarello, L. A., Cox Mitchell, M., Deppe, J., Gundler, D., Kemp, P LeMoine, S., Long, T., Muhlenhaupt, M., Prelock, P., Schefkind, S., Stayton, V., Ziegler, D. E. (2019). [Finding a common lens competencies across professional disciplines providing early intervention](#). *Infants and Young Children*, 32(4), 280-293
- Bruder MB, Ferreira KE. State Early Learning and Development Standards: A Unified Curriculum Framework for All Young Children. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*. January 2021. doi:[10.1177/0271121420981130](#)

Resources and References

- [Connect Modules \(dec-sped.org\)](http://dec-sped.org)
- Division for Early Childhood (DEC: 2007). [Promoting positive outcomes for children with disabilities: Recommendations for curriculum, assessment, and program evaluation](#)
- Desired Results Access Project: <https://draccess.org/>
- Odom, S. L., & Wolery, M. (2003). [A unified theory of practice in early intervention/early childhood special education: Evidence-based practices](#). *The Journal of Special Education*
- <https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>



Disclaimer

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