



Brief Descriptions of the CONNECT Modules

Module 1: Embedded Interventions

Definition: Embedded interventions are strategies that address specific learning goals within the context of everyday activities, routines, and transitions at home, at school or in the community. Other commonly used terms to describe embedded interventions include: routines-based interventions, embedded instruction, and embedded learning opportunities.

Strategies include:

- 1) Environmental Modifications - Adults can make environmental modifications to implement embedded interventions. For example, families and practitioners can change the setup of a room, modify materials or equipment, simplify a task in terms of duration or difficulty, and provide special equipment.
- 2) Peer Supports - Adults also can enlist peers to help children reach goals and participate fully in the classroom, home, or community. Families and practitioners can encourage peers to invite the child to join an activity, help the child complete a task, show the child a new skill, and respond to the child appropriately.

Module 2: Transition

Transition practices are an intentional set of activities that promote communication between sending and receiving practitioners, engage families in collaborative planning, and support the preparation and adjustment of children and families to a change in settings or programs. Central to these practices is a close, positive relationship between the child, family, and teacher in the receiving program.

Strategies include:

- 1) Staff to Staff Communication - Sending practitioners identify child needs related to transition, sending practitioners develop a transition plan that includes activities for the child and family, and sending and receiving practitioners make frequent contact to discuss the child and family's progress on the transition plan.
- 2) Engaging Families - Receiving practitioners conduct a home visit before the child enters the new setting to build rapport with the child and family, gather information, and discuss general classroom structure, activities, and routines. Home visits provide a comfortable and effective way for teachers to gather information about child and family needs.
- 3) Identifying the individual needs of the child and family – e.g., Arrange for the child and family to visit the class to orient to them to the new environment.



Module 3: Communication for Collaboration

Definition: Effective communication with professionals and families consists of specific communication strategies.

Strategies include:

- 1) **Attending and Active Listening** - Attending and active listening are effective communication strategies that can be used throughout the process of working together with professionals and families. Attending and listening actively convey respect and help you get to know people better.
- 2) **Seeking and Verifying Information** - Seeking and verifying are effective communication strategies that can be used throughout the process of working together with professionals and families. Seeking and verifying information helps you to identify concerns and perspectives, and conveys an open and non-judgmental attitude.
- 3) **Joining and Supporting** - Communication focused on joining and supporting are effective strategies that can be used throughout the process of working together with professionals and families. These communication strategies convey support, responsiveness to others' ideas, and a genuine desire to work together to achieve mutual goals.

Module 4: Family-Professional Partnerships

Definition: Family-professional collaboration builds opportunities for both relationship building and the active participation of parents and practitioners in achieving mutually agreed upon goals. The collaborative efforts build and strengthen family and professional capacity to provide or mediate the provisions of resources, supports, and services that ensure inclusion of children with disabilities in typical school and community activities (NPDCI, 2011).

Examples and Applications of Partnership-Oriented Practices

Trust exists on a continuum, and families are at various points on that continuum when their child starts in an early childhood program. However, a trusting partnership evolves over time rather than happening quickly at the beginning of a relationship. Building trust can be thought of in terms of three phases:

- 1) **Developing an initial friendly relationship** – Being on beginning ground
- 2) **Making shared decisions** – Being on middle ground
- 3) **Addressing challenging issues** – Being on firm ground

Module 5: Assistive Technology Interventions

Definition: Assistive technology (AT) interventions involve a range of strategies to promote a child's access to learning opportunities, from making simple changes to the environment and materials to helping a child use special equipment. Combining AT with effective teaching promotes the child's participation in learning and relating to others.

Strategies include:

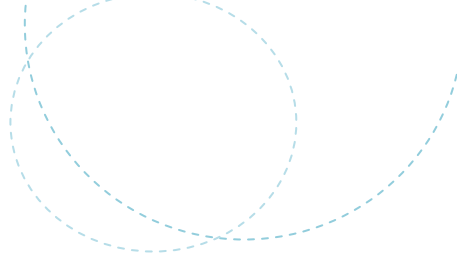
- 1) Using equipment - Assistive technology equipment generally refers to items purchased--often through specialized vendors--to give children access to opportunities in all aspects of life. Examples of AT for young children include bath chairs and feeding tools, adapted toys with a switch interface, hearing aids, augmentative communication devices, wheelchairs, walkers, and standers.
- 2) Creating adaptations - Assistive technology interventions for young children often include easy, inexpensive adaptations to the environment and materials. Adaptations mean making simple changes to existing items (e.g., toys, books, and spoons), are usually "low tech" in nature and often created by parents, teachers, and therapists.
- 3) Using effective teaching strategies to promote participation - Simply providing equipment and adaptations to children is not sufficient to help them learn. Teachers, family members, therapists, and other adults need to help children learn how to use the equipment and adaptations appropriately to promote their participation. This can be done by first telling and showing a child how to use equipment or materials and by giving children opportunities throughout the day to practice. Then, once a child understands how to use the device or materials and has had a chance to practice, the next goal would be to help the child participate more fully in activities or with other children.
- 4) Giving children many opportunities to use assistive technology throughout the day - Young children need to use AT equipment and adaptations in real tasks throughout each day in order to become effective and efficient.

Module 6: Dialogic Reading Practices

Definition: Dialogic reading is a specific type of interactive reading that relies on a set of strategies called PEER (**P**rompt- **E**valuate-**E**xpand-**R**epeat) designed to create a conversation with children and help them take an active role in storytelling

Strategies include:

- 1) Selecting Books for Dialogic Reading - Before engaging in dialogic reading with young children, it is important to carefully select and prepare the book so that you can maximize the benefits of the storybook reading.
- 2) Planning for Dialogic Reading - After selecting a book, it is important to plan for dialogic reading by creating **prompts** (the **P** in PEER), to help children participate during storybook reading and by preparing the book that you will read ahead of time.

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- 3) **Creating the Prompts** - Creating prompts for dialogic reading involves going through the book and developing a set of strategies that correspond to specific parts of the book. You can use CROWD to create the specific prompts. CROWD stands for **C**ompletion, **R**ecall, **O**pen-ended, **W**h- questions, **D**istancing—a specific set of prompts used during dialogic reading.
 - 4) **Determining How to Use the Prompts** - Every time you use a CROWD prompt, follow a specific sequence used within dialogic reading. This specific sequence is called PEER and it stands for **P**rompt, **E**valuation, **E**xpansion, and **R**epetition.
 - 5) **Conducting Dialogic Reading** - In addition to the CROWD prompts and PEER sequence, you can think of dialogic reading as having three main components, introducing the book, reading the book, and closing the book.

Module 7: Tiered Instruction

Definition: Tiered instruction is a framework for linking assessment with instructional and behavioral supports that are matched to children’s learning needs. Tiered instruction also is called Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavior Support (PBS).

The key components of tiered instruction are:

- 1) **formative assessment** - Assessment within tiered instruction is formative which means that practitioners gather information on children’s behavior and skills to inform instructional decisions. In addition to directly assessing children’s learning and development, teachers can use other forms of assessment such as observations and work sampling to make instructional decisions. It is critical that teachers collaborate with families, specialists, and others to plan and organize targeted interventions and to assess how well children respond to them.
- 2) **instruction and targeted interventions** - Tiered instruction consists of both foundational practices that teachers use with all children as well as targeted interventions and supports that are used with some. Central to tiered instruction is having an effective core curriculum and intentional teaching.

Reference

National Professional Development Center on Inclusion. (2011). *Research synthesis points on practices that support inclusion*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, Author. Retrieved on January 12, 2012 from <http://community.fpg.unc.edu/npdci>.