New Perspectives on Infant/Toddler Learning, Development, and Care

Session Three: The Teacher and the Environment in the Daily Curriculum

Facilitator Materials

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Notes for Facilitator: This session includes two complex activities. Before conducting the activities, prepare by reviewing the activity instructions and the related participant handouts. The supplemental handouts are not necessary for the activities, but they provide additional information participants may find useful.

New Perspectives on Infant/Toddler Learning, Development, and Care

Session Three:
The Teacher and the Environment in the Daily Curriculum

I. Introduction

Facilitator Task

On-site Introductions

II. Stages and Individuality

Video Clip: Opening scenes from "The Next Step"

Video: Flexible, Fearful, Feisty: 9 Temperamental traits

Facilitator Task

Activity One: Responding to Ages and Temperaments

Questions and answers with guests.

III. Physical Learning and Social Learning

Video Clip: Physical Learning and Social Learning scenes from "The Next Step"

IV. Language and Intellectual Learning

Video Clip: Language and Intellectual Learning scenes from "The Next Step" and "Early Messages"

Questions and answers with guests.

V. Planning a Child's Next Day

Video Clip: Curriculum Planning Process

Facilitator Task

Activity Two: "A Boy Named James"

Video Clip: A Boy Named James, Scenes from "Flexible, Fearful, and Feisty"

VI. Conclusion

Video Clip—The Next Step: Including the Infant in the Curriculum

Introduction
Infants are always learning—learning about whom they can trust, trying new ways to use things, finding out about social rules, exploring fantasy. Learning is a part of everything infants do. Cognitive research shows that infants' interests and motivation are central to their learning. So the logical next step in support of infant learning is to make sure it begins with the infants' interests.

In fact, infants have their own curriculum, which they actively pursue. It's as if even before birth they've enrolled in four courses. As we'll see infants' mastery of their courses is the foundation for developing the physical, social, language, pre-math and pre-literacy skills they will need to succeed in school.

Physical Development 101
Infants pursue this course with exuberance. They start out life with biologically built in reflexes and their ability to move naturally unfolds. They are driven to experiment with and practice large muscle skills and small muscle skills. Whatever the level of their ability infants strive to increase their physical competence.

The caregiver's job is to make it safe and easy for them to do so. Infants are constantly trying to figure out what they can do with their bodies. And test how far they can go and still be safe. By late toddlerhood, with help and encouragement, these self-motivated learners have mastered an incredible array of the physical skills they'll use in school. But these aren't the only skills they're developing. They are also keenly interested in building social relationships.

Social Relations 101
Children start their work in this course by searching for trusting and secure connections. They naturally seek out support and expect their caregivers to be there for them. Each day they work hard to maintain and deepen emotional ties. Children also rely on caregivers to provide them with a secure base for learning.

In fact, relationships are where a good deal of early learning takes place. Without this secure base intellectual discovery would be severely limited. By imitating and interacting with trusted caregivers young children learn to communicate, use objects, and get along with people - skills all necessary for school success.

Infants are exquisitely attuned to both the positive and negative responses they get from those they are close to and use those responses to begin to define who they are. This early development of a sense of self and social competence is crucial to all other learning.

Language Development 101
Language development goes hand in hand with the growth of trusting relationships. Infants actively and continually engage in communication, and seek out ways to better understand the world. Their fascinated with the human voice and repeatedly imitate their caregivers' vocalizations. They also practice, with their caregivers and by themselves, rhythms of speech, strings of words and sentences they hear – all important steps in building vocabulary. Knowing how to modify our communication comes naturally if we attend to the child's cues. When infants look away, become fussy or don't show any interest in us, we adjust our messages.

Here are the various ways to make language understandable for infants:
Slow Rate of Speech
Higher than Normal Pitch
Repetition
Speech has a Sing-song Quality
Clear Pronunciation
Short Sentences
Grammatically Simple Sentences
Simple Words

Through interaction with those close to them they learn the give and take of communication and keep getting better at it. As they become more sophisticated with language they start to use it to guide action. Children's ever-increasing mastery of language enables them to take on more and more complex social and intellectual challenges.

Intellectual Development 101
With regard to intellectual development infants learn in two ways – through relationships and from making discoveries on their own. Cognitive research shows that infants learn by observing and imitating those around them, and by continually inventing new and better ways of doing things. Starting with simple strategies such as mouthing or shaking infants learn about an object's hardness or stickiness and also what they can do and what they can't do with different kinds of things. They are beginning to use mathematical reasoning to classify things into groups. Through practice and play they get good at for example pouring water, or bouncing balls – and become confident enough to experiment - pouring balls, trying to bounce water – making brand new discoveries -- and developing new strategies.

By combining new strategies with familiar ones infants build a scientific understanding of how things move and fit in space. They explore ways to use their body as a tool, or an object as a tool, or even their caregiver as a tool. They learn about the relationship between cause and effect, and experiment with how

to cause things to happen. They come to understand that people and objects still exist and can be kept in memory when they're out of sight.

Young children begin their fascination with intellectual activity at birth. They busy themselves trying to figure out basic principles that are the foundation of all future learning. Through their study and our assistance they develop a complex understanding of the logic and science of the world.

Video Clip: Flexible, Fearful, or Feisty: 9 Temperamental Traits

All children display temperament. But what exactly is temperament? What do you look for and how do you decide what to do about it? The first thing to do is learn the different temperamental traits. Researchers have identified nine of them.

Activity Level
One of the nine indicators of temperament is Activity Level – it ranges from low to high.

Biological Rhythms
Then there are Biological Rhythms – when a child eats, sleeps and toilets, may be regular or irregular. This child never seems to nap at the same time, while others are more consistent.

Approach/Withdrawal
Some children tend to withdraw from people and things, while others approach.

Adaptability
Some children adapt quickly to a new routine or situation. Others, like this boy, adapt more slowly.

Mood
Another indicator is mood. It can range from positive to negative.

Intensity of Reaction
Then there is intensity. Not much of a reaction to the fall; quite a reaction to sharing the blocks.

Sensitivity
Children differ in sensitivity to things like bright lights, loud noises and touch. This child is sensitive to touch.

Distractibility
Children also differ in how easily they are distracted from activities. Even with the background noise this boy continues to explore the hourglass. In contrast, watch how the boy in red keeps switching his attention.

Persistence
The last of the nine indicators is persistence. Some children are not very persistent while others, like this boy, keep on trying even when faced with difficulty.
Think of these nine indicators as signals or messages that the child is sending out. If we are sensitive to them they will tell us a great deal about the child and how we can best respond.

Video Clip: Curriculum Planning Process

Now, let's turn to the Curriculum Planning Process in which teachers take on the role of a researcher, conducting ongoing observation, documentation and discussion to help create new experiences for the children each day.

Observe
Start the process by observing -- What is the child doing? How does the child react to materials and other children? What are the child's interests and needs?

Document
Document your observations using a variety of tools to record what is happening.

Reflect and Plan
Then reflect on what you've documented. After you've gained insights into the impact of the environment and materials on the children and how you've interacted with them then you can begin to plan changes and create new experiences.

Implement
Finally you will implement the plan based on your analysis.

As you can see, this process is continuous. Each day we build on the last day's experiences, observe again and continue the cycle.

Activity One: Responding to Ages and Temperaments

Purpose
This activity is designed to help participants combine the information they have acquired about ages of infancy and individual temperaments by exploring appropriate responses to a particular child through all three ages of infancy.

Participant Handouts:
- Responding to Ages and Temperament Activity
- 9 Temperamental Traits
- Ages of Infancy

Supplemental Handouts:
- Security, Exploration, and Identity: Practical Definitions
- The Uniqueness of the Infant/Toddler Period

Activity:
1. Ask participants to read the handout "Responding to Ages and Temperament," and ask them to choose one of the following children for the activity.
2. Ask them to get into small groups with others who have chosen the same child.
3. Once they are in small groups, have each group answer the questions below for the child their group has chosen. Remind them that the goal is not to change the child but to work with who the child is. A group may decide that the child they have chosen has a disability or other special need.

Rodney

Rodney is a child who is generally pretty easy to care for. He tends to be quiet, and he is usually cooperative during routines.

His temperamental traits include:
- Regular biological rhythms: He eats, sleeps, and toilets at predictable times
- Positive mood: He smiles or laughs easily.
- Adaptability: He soon becomes comfortable with new situations and people.
- Low intensity: His reactions to experiences are mild.
- Low sensitivity: He is not easily bothered by touch, light, or sound.

As his teacher, in what ways would you support Rodney's developing sense of self (identity formation) when he is a young infant, mobile* infant, and older infant? In other words, what messages do you as the teacher want to give to him about himself, what messages do you want him to get from you? How would you communicate these messages through your interactions and the way you set up the environment?

Gianna

Gianna is a child who tends to be cautious. She warms up slowly to new situations and new people.

Her temperamental traits include:

- Adapts slowly: She observes for a long time when faced with a change in routine, a new person in the room, or even a new toy.
- Withdraws: She pulls back from anything unfamiliar.
- Highly Sensitive: She is very sensitive to touch, light, sound, changes in temperature, etc.

As her teacher, how might you support Gianna's exploration of the environment and her exploration of relationships with others as she moves through the developmental stages of young, mobile* and older infancy? In what ways would you adapt interactions and the environment for her?

Wanda

Wanda is a child who tends to be quite active and is often perceived as challenging. She jumps in quickly and loudly communicates her feelings of pleasure or displeasure.

Her temperamental traits include:

- Highly Active: She moves quickly and frequently.
- High Intensity of Reaction: She responds and communicates in ways that may seem overly dramatic.
- Highly Distractible: Outside noises and activity can easily catch her attention and draw her away from her current interest.
- Highly Sensitive: She is very sensitive to touch, light, sound, changes in temperature, etc.
- Irregular biological rhythms: It is hard to predict when she will be hungry, tired, or need a diaper change/toilet.
- Mood: She can be moody and emotionally disagreeable.

As her teacher, how might you support Wanda's sense of security as she moves through the ages of infancy of young, mobile* and older? In what ways would you adapt interactions and the environment for her?

**Note: The term "mobile infant" refers to the heightened interest in discovery and exploration occurring during these months. A child with a disability or other special need that limits physical mobility is still an active explorer and able to express curiosity and active motivation for discovery.*

Supporting small groups: Move through the small groups and offer guidance if needed.

4. Call the groups back when you have about 5 minutes left and ask people to report on some of their ideas. You will not have time to hear from everyone, particularly if you have a very large group, so ask for volunteers to give the ideas they find the most interesting.

Wrap-Up:

5. Remind participants that temperament and the developmental issues of the ages of infancy affect all areas of learning.
6. Documenting a child's behavior and communicating with family members are two important ways to begin to understand the child's temperament and developmental issues.

Participant Handouts, Activity One—Responding To Ages and Temperaments

Activity One Handout: Responding to Ages and Temperaments

Please choose a child below for the activity.

Rodney

Rodney is a child who is generally pretty easy to care for, he tends to be quiet and he is usually cooperative with routines.

His temperamental traits include:

- Regular biological rhythms: He eats, sleeps, and toilets at predictable times
- Positive mood: He smiles or laughs easily.
- Adaptability: He adapts easily to new situations and people.
- Low intensity: His reactions to experiences are low key.
- Low sensitivity: He is not easily bothered by touch, light, or sound.

As his teacher, in what ways would you support Rodney's developing sense of self (identity formation) when he is a young infant, mobile* infant, and older infant? In other words, what messages do you as the teacher want to give to him about himself, what messages do you want him to get from you? How do you communicate these messages through interactions and in the environment?

Gianna

Gianna is a child who tends to be cautious. She warms up slowly to new situations and new people.

Her temperamental traits include:

- Adapts slowly: She observes for a long time when faced with a change in routine, a new person in the room, or even a new toy.
- Withdraws: She pulls back from anything unfamiliar.
- Highly Sensitive: She is very sensitive to touch, light, sound, changes in temperature, etc.

As her teacher, how might you support Gianna's exploration of the environment and her exploration of relationships with others as she moves through the developmental stages of young, mobile* and older infancy? In what ways would you adapt interactions and the environment for her?

Wanda

Wanda is a child who tends to be quite active and is often perceived as challenging. She jumps in quickly and loudly communicates her feelings of pleasure or displeasure.

Her temperamental traits include:

- Highly Active: She moves quickly and frequently.
- High Intensity of Reaction: She responds and communicates in ways that may seem dramatic or over the top.
- Highly Distractible: Outside noises and activity can easily catch her attention and draw her away from her current interest.
- Highly Sensitive: She is very sensitive to touch, light, sound, changes in temperature, etc.
- Irregular biological rhythms: It is hard to predict when she will be hungry, tired, or need a diaper change/toilet.
- Mood: She can be moody and emotionally disagreeable.

As her teacher, how might you support Wanda's sense of security as she moves through the ages of infancy of young, mobile* and older? In what ways would you adapt interactions and the environment for her?

**Note: The term "mobile infant" refers to the heightened interest in discovery and exploration occurring during these months. A child with a disability or other special need that limits physical mobility is still an active explorer and able to express curiosity and active motivation for discovery.*

Activity One Handout: 9 Temperament Traits

Activity Level:	Amount of movement and body activity
Biological Rhythms:	Regularity of biological functions (e.g., sleep-wake cycle, hunger, bowel elimination)
Adaptability:	How quickly or slowly the child adapts to a change in routine or overcomes an initial negative response
Approach/Withdrawal:	How the child responds to a new situation or other stimulus
Sensitivity Threshold:	How sensitive the child is to potentially irritating stimuli
Intensity of Reaction:	The energy level of mood expression, whether positive or negative
Distractibility:	How easily the child can be distracted from an activity like feeding or play by some unexpected stimulus (e.g., the ring of a telephone or someone entering the room)
Quality of Mood:	The amount of pleasant and cheerful behavior (positive mood), as contrasted with fussy and disagreeable behavior (negative mood)
Persistence:	How long a child will keep at a difficult activity without giving up

Adapted from "Temperamental Traits", *The Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers, Module I*

Activity One Handout: The Ages of Infancy

Infancy, as all of life, consists of stages of development. Each stage has its own challenges which bring special meaning to that period of life.

Regardless of age, infants need the infant care teacher's help with the developmental issues of security, exploration, and identity. During different stages of infancy, the type of help children need will change. In other words, although the developmental issues of security, exploration, and identity are present throughout infancy, the prominence of each issue changes as the child grows.

Young Infants: birth to 8 months

Above all, young infants need to feel that they are secure and to know that someone special is going to take care of them. When young infants are given consistent, warm care mainly by one infant care teacher, they feel secure. But providing only security to young infants is not enough. By being sensitive and open to the *whole* experience of infants, you can help them flourish.

Mobile Infants: 6 to 18 months

Sometime around six to nine months of age, the urge of a secure baby to explore the environment begins to get the best of him or her. Mobile infants are captivated by their growing desire and ability to move. The world is expanding for them, and discovery of that world takes center stage. The infant's increased interest in exploration is a cue for you to modify your style of care for that child.

The term *mobile infant* refers to the heightened interest in discovery and exploration occurring during these months. A child with a disability or other special need that limits physical mobility is still an active explorer, curious and actively motivated to make discoveries. The teacher can provide mobility by bringing an infant to different spaces and different materials in the environment.

With mobile infants your role as an infant care teacher is to provide a secure base of support from which the children can venture out. For children with special needs, you can support their desire to explore by providing the infant with abundant opportunities to interact with the world. Under your warm and watchful eye, mobile infants will develop feelings of confidence and competence. They will start to see themselves as doers.

Older Infants: 16 to 36 months

Older infants become increasingly independent as they take charge by choosing for themselves what to do and by trying out their ever-expanding abilities. Children at this stage are developing a heightened sense of identity, both a *social self* and an *independent self*. They are experiencing the power of being their own person.

By giving choices whenever possible and by introducing social guidelines, the infant care teacher can help older infants find appropriate ways to assert themselves. Whether you work with a mixed-age group of children or with children very close in age, shifting the type of care you provide based on the stage each child is going through is important.

Adapted from "The Ages of Infancy" child care video magazine, 1990.

Activity One Handout, *Supplemental:*

Security, Exploration, and Identity: Practical Definitions

The developmental issues of security, exploration, and identity are evolving in every child under three, but they are emphasized differently at each stage. The role of the infant care teacher is to relate to the child in a way that is responsive to the infant's stage, without losing sight of the other issues. Below are some examples of how teachers can support children through the developmental stages and issues; there are many other ways beyond these examples.

Security

Security is the primary issue of the young infant (birth to 8 months). The young infant thrives on the warmth and caring that comes from a close relationship with the caregiver. Feelings about security influence the young infant's inclination to explore, and they become part of the child's identity.

You can support the infant's need for security by:

- Providing primary care (one infant care teacher is primarily responsible for the child's care, communicating with the family members, and curriculum planning)
- Avoiding overstimulation
- Engaging the infant as an active participant in routines
- Providing predictability and close contact

Exploration

Exploration takes center stage as the infant becomes more mobile. Often curious and on the move, the mobile infant (6 to 18 months) seems to get into everything in a quest to learn about the world. The mobile infant begins to build an identity as an explorer and increasingly ventures out when he or she feels secure.

You can support the infant's drive to explore by:

- Providing a secure base for exploration—remaining available even if the child moves away from you, so that he or she can check back in
- Making the environment safe and interesting
- Bringing things of interest to the infant, and taking the infant to interesting things (this role of the teacher is emphasized when an infant is not able to move on his or her own due to a disability or other special need)

Identity

Identity becomes prominent in a child sometime during the second and third years of life. The older infant (16 to 36 months) is often concerned with who he or she is and who is in charge. Relationships, autonomous expression and control are closely tied to the older infant's identity. A sense of security continues

to develop within the child, who increasingly explores the world, but with more of a sense of self (**I** explore).

You can support the infant's quest for identity by:

- Providing social guidance
- Not taking resistance personally or too seriously
- Supporting fantasy and creative expression
- Providing family photos in the environment

Adapted from "The Ages of Infancy" child care video magazine, 1990.

Activity One Handout, *Supplemental:*

The Uniqueness of the Infant/Toddler Period

J. Ronald Lally, Ed.D
Peter L. Mangione, Ph.D.
Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers
WestEd, Center for Child & Family Studies

Although we know that development is a continuous process through which a child gradually grows and changes, we need to keep in mind that each period of development has its own issues and opportunities. Since brain development research has reached the general public, most of us have become aware that the infant/toddler period is a pivotal one in which neural pathways are formed for learning and development.

The rapid development of the brain during the early years does not mean that it is the most important period in life. Each period is important. We do not see optimum attention to infants and toddlers as an inoculation from negative impacts on development in subsequent periods. We do see, however, that the infancy period is important in its own right and that the way infants and toddlers think, feel, and function differs from that of all other periods of life. The developmental periods of preschool, school age or middle childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age are unique as well. Each period of life has its own special challenges, issues, and developmental milestones.

This paper will point out the uniqueness of the infancy period and discuss how it influences the way adults should relate to and treat infants. That treatment should be, in fact, different from the treatment of older children and adults. There are three areas in which infants and toddlers differ as compared with older children.

1) **The inborn inclination to learn and develop is genetically programmed.** All humans are internally driven to learn and develop. This internal drive functions in slightly different ways and degrees at different points of development. Where content of learning is concerned, the infants' drives are much more specific than those of older children. Babies have their own learning agenda. For example, infants and toddlers are genetically programmed to:
    - seek out significant relationships through which they can be nurtured and protected
    - learn language
    - become more skillful in their small muscle and large muscle functioning
    - construct knowledge about the functioning of people and things in the world around them
    - learn appropriate ways of relating to others

Infants will actively pursue and engage in learning in these content areas. Therefore, those who want to help infants and toddlers learn need to understand this learning agenda and find ways to facilitate and build on it rather than devising an alternative.

The need for adults to motivate infants' and toddlers' interest in learning is fundamentally different from the need for adults to motivate older children. For example, the impulse to master algebra or ice skating or reading is not necessarily present in an older child's developmental path. Interest in these topics comes from socialization and their introduction by adults, coupled with a more generalized genetic programming to learn.

For the older child, selecting and presenting topics for mastery as well as motivating the child to pursue mastery are appropriate actions taken by adults. For the infant, these actions are not appropriate. This distinction in the adult's role is not absolute, but rather one of emphasis. In addition to being responsive to older children's interests and encouraging social interaction as a basis for learning, adults regularly introduce and lead learning activities. The content of lessons and how adults relate to the child's drive for mastery is treated differently. With older children, because the topics of learning are not as genetically programmed the adult balances guided learning activities with opportunities for children's creative expression and active exploration. In contrast, with infants the adult consistently focuses on being responsive to their curriculum. Without attention and adaptation to each unique developmental period, what the infant and the older child bring to learning would be missed.

2) **The nature of learning is holistic.** Infants are taking in information not subject-by-subject but learning, almost seamlessly, physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and language lessons all at the same time. They pick up from their actions, interactions, and observations bits of information simultaneously, through which they build knowledge and skills in all areas of development. Because infants learn this way, adults need to take a much more organic approach as they relate to infants' learning. The adult watches an infant's cues and is responsive to them, and while doing so discovers new ways to support the child's learning. In an organic approach, exactly what will happen is not predictable, but emerges as the child interacts with others and explores the environment. In contrast, structuring lessons for 15 – 20 minutes on a particular content area—for example, language or shapes—will almost always result in the adult missing the larger learning experience in which the infant or toddler is perpetually engaged. Because the infant receives information from every domain simultaneously no matter which one we wish to emphasize, it is recommended that plans to help with infant learning be created in ways that reflect an awareness of the impact of the experience on all the domains of learning and development simultaneously.

3) **Infants move rapidly through three major developmental stages.**

From birth through about six to eight months. During the first six to eight months of life most infants organize their focus of attention and behavior around developing a sense of security. Infants' explorations and their growing knowledge of themselves as individuals with separate identities are played out on the stage of seeking, perceiving, and relating to security.

From about six months through 16-18 months. As children grow a little older, their focus turns to exploration through movement, manipulation, and visual inspection. The developmental organization of children in this stage shifts. Still needing and seeking security, these children relate to security in a different way. No longer do they constantly seek to be given to, held, or immediately gratified by their trusted caregiver. Now, captivated by the exciting world out in front of them, they want to explore. They look to their caregiver to validate their explorative bursts by showing confidence in their developing competence to move out into and manipulate the world. Their sense of identity changes as they see themselves as active explorers no longer physically bound to the trusted adult, but on their own for brief periods. Adults during this stage then need to alter both the way they provide security and the way that they relate to the children's growing sense of self. Based on the way the adults adapt their behavior to the children's second stage, the children learn that their natural urge to explore is either supported or thwarted. If children in this stage of infancy are placed in a safe and secure environment, are allowed to use the caregiver as a base of security from which they can journey back and forth for emotional refueling, and see that their caregivers are available to make eye contact, they prosper. If the caregiver does not make the switch in behavior and continues to relate to the children as if they were still in the first developmental stage, they do not prosper.

From about 16-18 months through 36 months. As children move to the third stage of infancy their focus changes once again. For the rest of the infancy, children seem to be consumed by issues of me and mine, and notions of good and not so good. Interactions and negotiations with others lead to learning about themselves as independent, dependent, and interdependent beings. Their explorations and feelings of security are best interpreted through this new lens. Formation of the first understandings of a self lead children during this stage to explore not only the environment but their power, and to resist those who provide security to see how far they can go on their own and see how much they can rely on the relationship to be there. They explore both making choices and taking

responsibility for actions that go along with their choices. Here again the adult must make a switch in how to relate to the child. Now the adult provides security both by setting boundaries to help these children learn the rules of social behavior and by letting each child know that the adult is still there for him or her when those boundaries are breeched.

These three areas of uniqueness—genetic wiring, holistic learning, and rapidly changing developmental perspectives—make the infancy period different from all other age periods. This uniqueness makes it incumbent upon the adult providing care for infants or toddlers to treat them differently from older children. For example:

- Because the infant is genetically programmed for specific learning, the role of the adult in supporting learning is to be respectful and responsive to the child's lessons, rather than generating lessons for the child.
- Because early learning is holistic, plans to facilitate the infant's learning need to be holistic.
- Because security, exploration, and identity formation are manifested differently during the infancy period, the way adults respond to these needs should fit with the child's developmental stage.

In a nutshell, because infants are unique, different from older children in important ways, infants need to be related to differently.

Activity Two: A Boy Named James

Purpose:
This activity allows participants to actively integrate all of the information from the three sessions to make a responsive plan for one child. It is an exercise in applying curriculum planning.

Participant Handouts:
- Tomorrow's Plan for James
- Text for Video Clip: A Boy Named James
- The Process of Curriculum Planning for Infants and Toddlers

Supplemental Handouts:
- Foundations for the Curriculum Planning Process—Six Essential Program Policies
- Information about The Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers
- "Environments for Infants and Toddlers," by Louis Torelli

Activity:
1. Ask participants to take out the handouts mentioned above and to get into small groups to watch the video clip of James. Explain that during this activity they will move through the first three steps of the curriculum planning process.
    - First they will observe James in the video.
    - Next they will take individual notes on their observations of James. This will be their documentation.
    - Finally, they will work as a group to reflect together on their notes and make a plan for James for the next day.
2. Watch video clip. *Remind them that the clip is short and will run two times.* Narration is included below.

Text for Video Clip: A Boy Named James
Scenes from "Flexible, Fearful, or Feisty"

The boy playing with the red ball is James. He is a flexible child.

Watch how he expresses himself. He doesn't demand attention, but he wants it. He doesn't make a fuss, but shows his needs in quiet ways.

His message might only be communicated by a glance, but his need can be just as great as a child who is more obvious. So with this type of child the caregiver checks in from time to time. Sometimes only eye contact is needed. But sometimes the child needs more intimate contact. Even when other children are demanding your attention if you keep track of the flexible child you'll know when he needs you to get close.

When the caregiver comes, watch James express his pleasure. It, too, is subtle. In group care it's easy to get distracted, but the flexible child will really appreciate your attention.

3. Ask participants to take a couple of minutes to jot down notes on their observation of James. What have they noticed that they think is important about James' interests, capabilities, and behavior?
4. Ask participants to use the "Tomorrow's Plan for James" handout to guide them as they share and reflect on their notes with the members of their group. They should take some time to discuss his age, developmental issues (security, exploration, and development), and temperamental traits that they observed.
5. Ask participants to plan for James's next day in child care. Given what they saw happening in the clip, how will they plan learning experiences for James in all four areas of development that fit his temperament and stage of development.
6. Ask as many participants as time allows to report on their plans for James.

Keep in Mind: We do not want to change James but to expand, enrich, work with, and build upon his own curriculum—namely his own interests and capabilities. Make sure this concept guides participants as they report on their plans.

Participant Handouts, Activity Two—A Boy Named James

Activity Two Handout: Tomorrow's Plan for James

1. ***Observe*** the video clip on James two times.

2. ***Document*** your observations here.

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. ***Reflect*** on your observations with your small group. Discuss your notes. Do the observations made by your colleagues give you new insight into James? Make some notes here about what you noticed about James:

   - Temperament

     _____
     _____
     _____

   - Developmental Issues:

     Security

     _____
     _____
     _____

     Exploration

     _____
     _____
     _____

     Identity

     _____
     _____
     _____

   - Relationships with teacher and other children

     _____
     _____
     _____

- Interests and abilities

_____
_____
_____

4. ***Make a Plan*** for James' next day in care based on your observations. Remember to think about program policies that will be helpful. Consider the following:

   - Physical development and learning

     Interactions

     _____
     _____
     _____

     Environment

     _____
     _____
     _____

   - Social development and learning

     Interactions

     _____
     _____
     _____

     Environment

     _____
     _____
     _____

   - Language development and learning

     Interactions

     _____
     _____
     _____

     Environment

     _____
     _____
     _____

- Intellectual development and learning

  Interactions

  _____
  _____
  _____

  Environment

  _____
  _____
  _____

Text for Video Clip: A Boy Named James
Scenes from "Flexible, Fearful, or Feisty"

The boy playing with the red ball is James. He is a flexible child.

Watch how he expresses himself. He doesn't demand attention, but he wants it. He doesn't make a fuss, but shows his needs in quiet ways.

His message might only be communicated by a glance, but his need can be just as great as a child who is more obvious. So with this type of child the caregiver checks in from time to time. Sometimes only eye contact is needed. But sometimes the child needs more intimate contact. Even when other children are demanding your attention if you keep track of the flexible child you'll know when he needs you to get close.

When the caregiver comes, watch James express his pleasure. It, too, is subtle. In group care it's easy to get distracted, but the flexible child will really appreciate your attention.

Activity Two Handout:

The Process of Curriculum Planning with Infants and Toddlers

THE CURRICULUM PLANNING PROCESS

The curriculum planning process is one in which teachers take on the role of a researcher conducting ongoing observation, documentation and discussion to help create new experiences for the children each day.

Rather than doing particular activities with children at a particular age, infant care teachers step back and observe, think about, examine and question the meaning of what the children are doing.

1. Observe- Start the process by observing. What is the child doing? How does the child react to materials and other children? What are the child's interests and needs?

2. Document- Document your observations using a variety of tools to record what is happening.

3. Reflect and Plan- Reflect on what you've documented. After you've gained insights into the impact of the environment and materials on the children and how you've interacted with them then you can begin to plan changes and create new experiences.

4. Implement- Finally, you will implement the plan based on your analysis. Remember that infants and toddlers are active and dynamic; they will use materials and ideas differently than you anticipated. In one program, teachers have a chart that notes the daily plan and next to it is a space for teachers to write what actually happened.

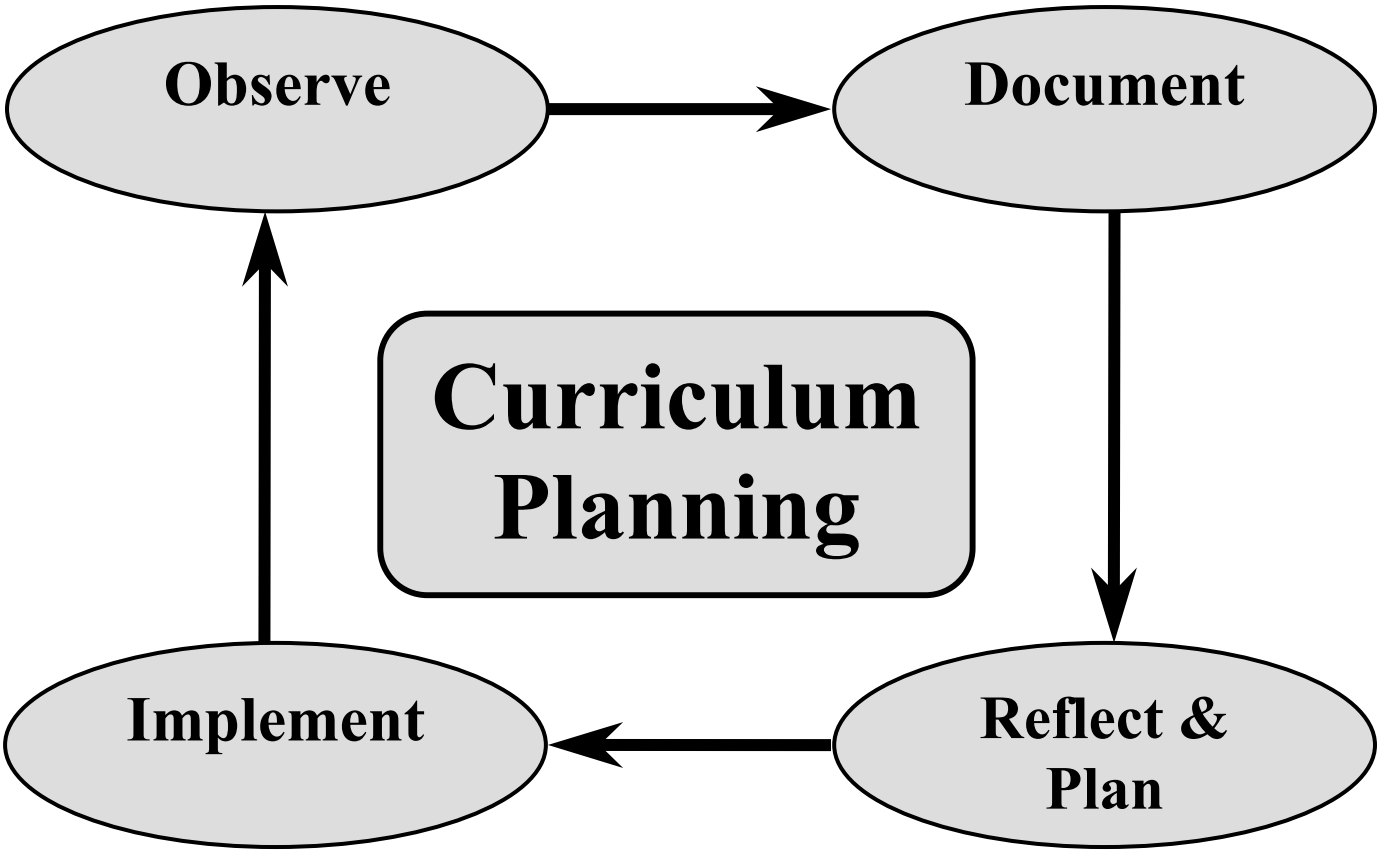
Implementation leads teachers to begin the process again by *observing* how the children responded to the plan.

As you can see, this process is continuous. Each day we build on the last day's experiences, observe again and continue the cycle.

This dynamic responsive approach to curriculum places the child's interest at center stage and maximizes opportunities for learning.

Please see the illustration on the next page.

The Curriculum Planning Process



Activity Two Handout, *Supplemental:*

Foundations for the Curriculum Planning Process—Six Essential Program Policies

These six policies provide an important foundation for high-quality infant/toddler care, and ensure a strong foundation for the curriculum planning process.

1. Inclusion of children with disabilities or other special needs allows for all children to experience rich, appropriate, and responsive care and to participate as valued members of the group.

2. Responsive care means the teacher adapts to each child. The child gets the message that he or she is important, that her needs will be met, and that his choices, impulses, and abilities are understood and respected.

3. Primary care means that each child has a teacher who is responsible for his or her daily care. A secondary or back-up teacher is designated to be available when the primary care teacher is absent.

4. Small group size means that teacher-to-child ratios of 1:3 or 1:4 in groups of 6-12 children (depending on the age) are recommended. The guiding principle is "The younger the child, the smaller the group."

5.Cultural responsiveness not only means sensitivity to each child, but to the child's family and the family's beliefs, values and practices. Cultural responsiveness is crucial to children's formation of a healthy sense of self.

6. ***Continuity of care*** means keeping a child with the same infant care teacher and group for the entire time the child is in care. This supports the development of relationships that serve as a base for learning.

Mission Statement

The Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers (PITC) seeks to ensure that infants get a safe, healthy, emotionally secure, and intellectually rich start in life. Its three-pronged mission is to

1. increase the availability and quality of child care for all children under age three;
2. disseminate information that increases the practice of responsive, respectful, and relationship-based infant/toddler care; and
3. influence national, regional, and local policies and practices so that the needs and interests of individual infants, toddlers, and their families are the foundation for all curriculum development and program activity.

Philosophy

Good infant care is neither babysitting nor preschool. It is a special kind of care that resembles no other.

The *PITC* approach equates good care with trained caregivers who are preparing themselves and the environment so that infants can learn. For care to be good, it must explore ways to help caregivers get "in tune" with each infant they serve and learn from the individual infant what he or she needs, thinks, and feels.

We believe infant care should be based on relationship planning—not lesson planning—and should emphasize child-directed learning over adult-directed learning. Rather than detailing specific lessons for caregivers to conduct with infants, the *PITC* approach shows caregivers ways of helping infants learn the lessons that every infant comes into the world eager to learn.

The *PITC* philosophy also sees the setting for care as critical. Therefore, it helps caregivers design environments that ensure safety, offer infants appropriate developmental challenges, and promote optimum health for children. An equally important program component is the strengthening of the child's developing family and cultural identity by making meaningful connections between child care and the child's family and culture.

Six program policies anchor our work: primary care, small groups, continuity of care, individualized care, cultural responsiveness, and inclusion of children with special needs. These policies create a climate for care that reinforces our responsive, relationship-based approach. They allow relationships to develop and deepen over time between caregivers and the children as well as between caregivers and the children's families.

The goal of *PITC* is to help caregivers recognize the crucial importance of giving tender, loving care and assisting in infants' intellectual development through an attentive reading of each child's cues.

Our Work

PITC supports the work of infant care teachers with videos, trainer guides and manuals, and Trainer Institutes. *PITC* Partners for Quality supports center-based and family child care programs with on-site training and technical assistance based on the *PITC* philosophy. For more information, please contact us at (415) 289-2300 or visit us on the Web at www.pitc.org.

CONCEPT PAPER
ENVIRONMENTS FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

By Louis Torelli, M.S.Ed.

The physical environment has a powerful impact on children's learning and development. Well-designed environments support exploration, give young children a sense of control, and enable children to engage in focused, self-directed play. The physical environment also affects relationships. Well-designed spaces evoke a sense of security by offering intimate play areas within the larger environment that allow children to explore and reflect while still being connected to their caregiver and the rest of the group. This sense of security is a prerequisite in the formation of a healthy sense of self, or identity. In appropriately designed classrooms, children are given an opportunity to play independently and in small groups as they choose, and teachers are supported in their role as observers and facilitators of children's learning and development.

Developing a Vision: Creating a Master Plan

Whether one is developing a new child care facility, remodeling an existing center, or attempting a makeover of a classroom or family child care home, planning is the key to a successful design. A well thought-out plan will help to avoid wasting time and money on short-term, temporary fixes that may need to be addressed later. It is wiser to make changes in stages than to compromise quality by trying to take on too much at once. Start by identifying the improvements desired.

If major changes are planned, enlist a design professional to help optimize use of space and budget and insure that the renovation complies with all code requirements. Identify all resources, not only available funds. Parents or other family members may be able to assist in carpentry, plumbing, and landscaping. They may also be able to help in soliciting donations from businesses. Stores in the local community may be able to donate lumber and carpeting.

Key Criteria for Creating Quality Environments

While environments for care differ widely, there are certain elements that contribute to a quality experience for infants and toddlers.

Group Size

The number of children cared for in one classroom affects infants' health and well-being. With larger groups there is an increase in upper respiratory illnesses and ear infections (Bartlett, A. V.; P. Orton; and M. Turner, 1986. Bell, D. M.; D.W. Gleiber; A.A. Mercer; R. Phifer; R.H. Guinter; A.J. Cohen; E.U. Epstein; and M. Narayanan,1989.). In crowded spaces there is more conflict, aggressiveness, and unfocused play (Ruopp, R.; J. Travers; F. Glantz; and C. Coelen, 1979.). Infants should be cared for in groups of no more than six to eight children; toddlers, in groups of no more than eight to twelve children.

Room Size
The size of each classroom must be large enough to meet individual children's needs and the group's needs. Provide a *minimum* of 50 square feet of usable space per child. If, however, the current setting provides a smaller classroom with a larger group size, it is critical to view everything that is available as a potential learning environment. For example, a teacher might take three or four young toddlers into the hallway with push-and-pull toys, balls, or ride-on toys. Or, teachers can organize daily schedules in a way that allows for smaller groups to use the same space at different times during the day. For instance, one teacher might be outside with a few children while another teacher is inside with the other children.

Sinks and Toilets
The right number of appropriately placed plumbing fixtures is a necessary requirement of a well-designed classroom. Food preparation and diapering areas should be separate and allow for full supervision of the room. Child-sized hand-washing sinks should be located in every classroom at the right height for the age group served, as should appropriately sized toilets when serving older toddlers.

Sculpting the Environment
An infant and toddler environment must accommodate a variety of activity areas, such as eating, messy play, reading, manipulative play, and symbolic play, as well as diapering and napping. The classroom must also be flexible enough to support children's varying developmental abilities, including children's special needs.

Through the use of items such as platforms, lofts, recessed areas, low walls, fabric canopies, risers, wall storage, and toy shelves placed along the periphery of the classroom, the room can be sculpted to provide a variety of age-appropriate activities. Couches, chairs, and tables can be used (particularly in family child care homes) to assist in defining the play space. Placing activity areas along the walls of the room will help to create boundaries that support individual and small-group play as well as provide teachers with the ability to closely supervise the entire group.

The placement of each activity area is as important as the specific furnishings and materials in those areas. A well thought-out space plan can actually make a classroom or home feel and function as one 25 to 30 percent larger than one with a poorly laid-out plan. The importance of an optimal space plan becomes even more compelling when working in a smaller room or one with a larger group size (see Diagrams 1 and 2).

Diagram 1

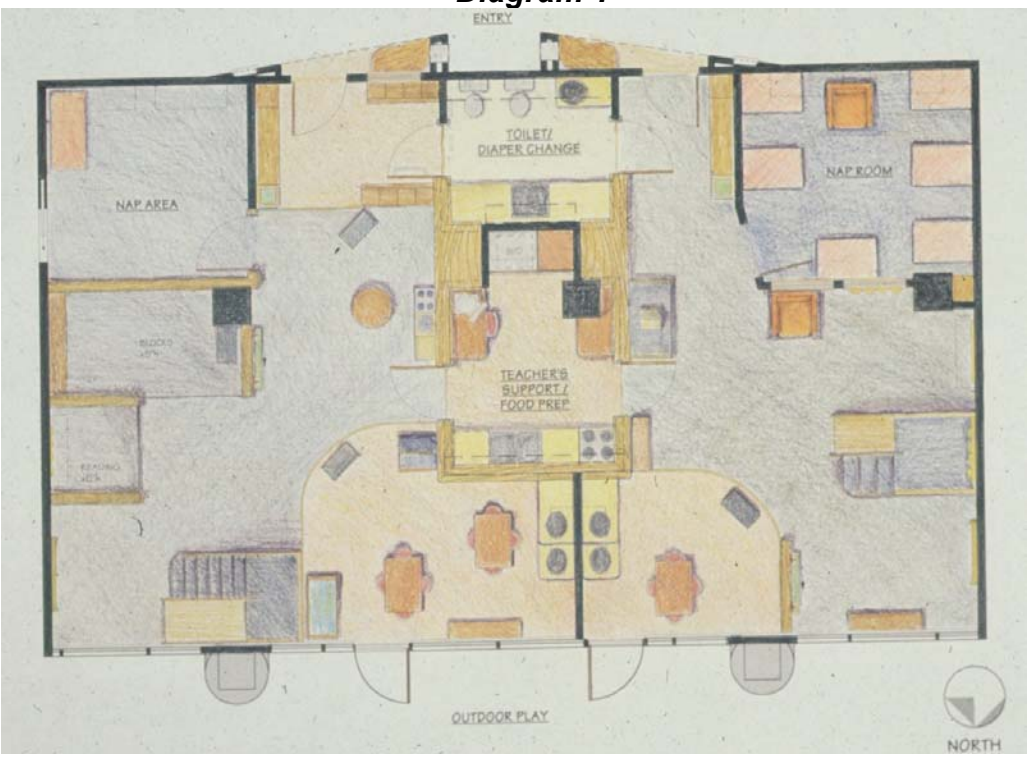
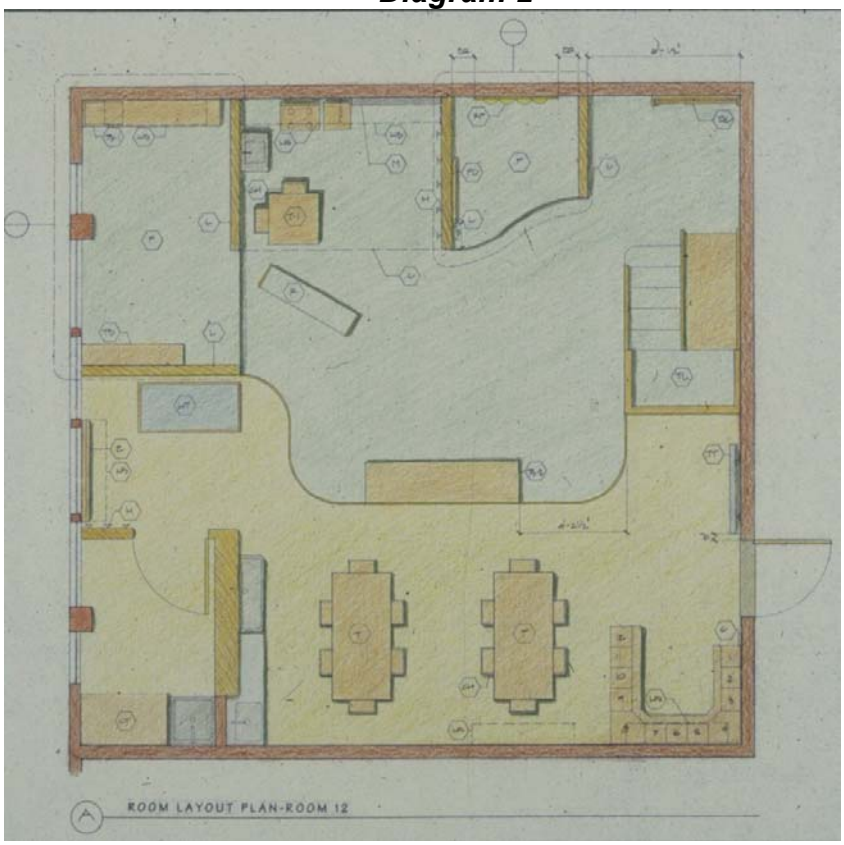


Diagram 2



Classroom Furnishings
To complement furnishings such as high-quality wooden commercial furniture, infant and toddler programs should also turn to home and import stores to "cozy up" the room. Some examples of good items to consider are washable quilts and pillow shams, upholstered chairs (with washable slipcovers), cloth hammocks, gliders, armoires for additional storage, fabric to create canopied areas, and woven baskets to display balls, dolls, and other play items. A track light or wall-mounted lamp can help to distinguish the reading area from other activity spaces. Plants and a fish tank can help bring nature indoors. Of course, children's health and safety must always be considered first when choosing materials and equipment. Keep in mind that all materials and surfaces must be washable, lighting cords must be out of children's reach, and plants must be nontoxic.

Outdoor Play Area
Whenever possible, every classroom and family child care home should provide direct access to the outside play space. The outside play area should be an extension of the classroom. An appropriately designed outdoor play area should include many natural elements, such as grass, gentle hills, sand, dirt, tree stumps, shade trees, and water sources. It should feel more like a park than a playground. Benches, trellises, planter boxes, hammocks, and wind chimes are some of the possibilities. With a thoughtful design, the natural landscape will itself provide opportunities for gross motor play. Every indoor activity has the potential of having an outdoor counterpart. Outdoor counterparts can also help to compensate for indoor environments with less than optimal square footage.

References

Bartlett, A. V.; P. Orton; and M. Turner. 1986. "Day Care Homes: The Silent Majority of Child Day Care," *Review of Infectious Disease*, 8, 663–668.

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Ruopp, R.; J. Travers; F. Glantz; and C. Coelen. 1979. Children at the Center: Final report of the National Day Care Center Study. Cambridge, Mass.: ABT Associates.

SESSION THREE: PARTICIPANT SIGN-IN SHEET

New Perspectives on Infant/Toddler Learning, Development, and Care
Session 3: The Teacher and the Environment in the Daily Curriculum

Facilitator_____ **Location**_____

Name	Work Place	# years in field
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