

# Embedded Instruction for Early Learning *Tools for Teachers*

## Module 2: What to Teach





# Tools for Teachers Workshops

---

Module 1: Overview Webinar

Module 2: What to Teach

Module 3: When to Teach & How to Teach

Module 4: How to Evaluate



# Getting to Know You.....






# Ground Rules

- Settle in and be comfortable
- Participate, ask questions, and reflect
- Post questions in the parking lot
- Talk or text in the hallway
- Silence phones
- Get to know each other and enjoy...





# Embedded Instruction for Early Learning *Tools for Teachers*

Thoughts about  
Embedded  
Instruction





# Moving Matthew Forward





# Initial Questions

---

- What approach is the IEP team, including Cheryl, currently using with Matthew?
- Why might this approach not be working well for keeping Matthew on track?
- The occupational therapist suggests a “new” approach. What are several key features of this approach?
- What are your initial thoughts about this approach for helping move Matthew forward?
- What would Cheryl (and the team) need to do if they wanted to use this approach?




# Module 2 Objectives

---

- Identify reasons for using embedded instruction
- Identify priority learning targets for embedded instruction by
  - Aligning IEP goals with the California Infant/Toddler and Preschool Learning Foundations and breaking down IEP goals into proximal skills for embedded instruction
  - Conducting activity-focused assessments in ongoing classroom activities, routines, and transitions
- Write high-quality priority learning targets





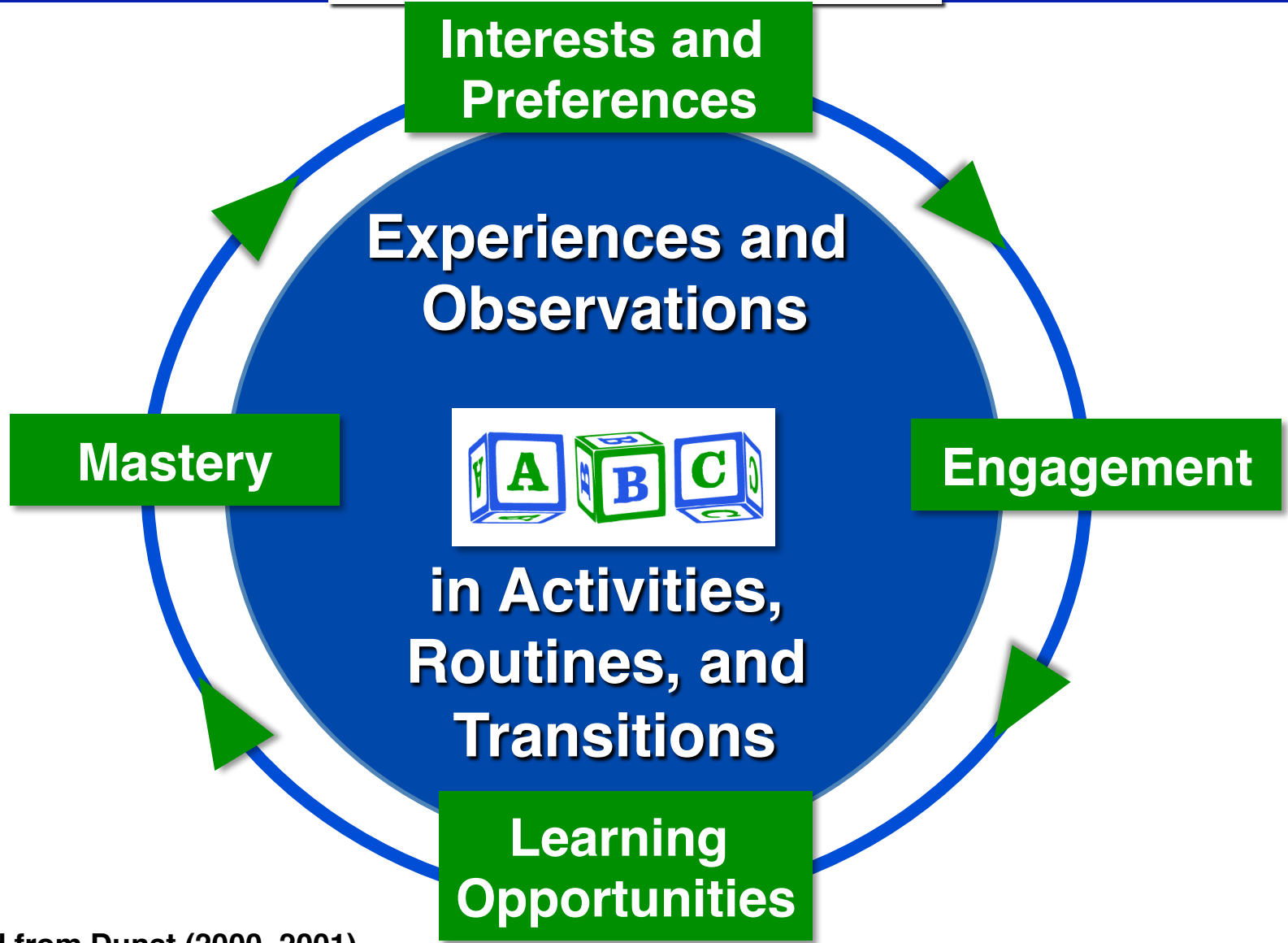
# Embedded Instruction for Early Learning *Tools for Teachers*

Embedded  
Instruction in Early  
Learning Settings

Helping Children Learn



# Foundation for Embedded Instruction: How Children Learn



Adapted from Dunst (2000, 2001)

Child-Initiated  
Experience

+

Peer-Mediated  
Experience

+

Adult-Guided  
Experience

=

Optimal Learning





# What is Embedded Instruction?

---

*Multi-component approach* to provide intentional and systematic instruction on priority learning targets during typically occurring activities, routines, and transitions to support child engagement and learning



# Emphasis on *Instruction*

---

- ▶ Emphasizes *intentional, sufficient, and systematic learning opportunities* during everyday activities, routines, and transitions
- ▶ Identifies *instructional procedures* to be used within or across activities, routines, and transitions

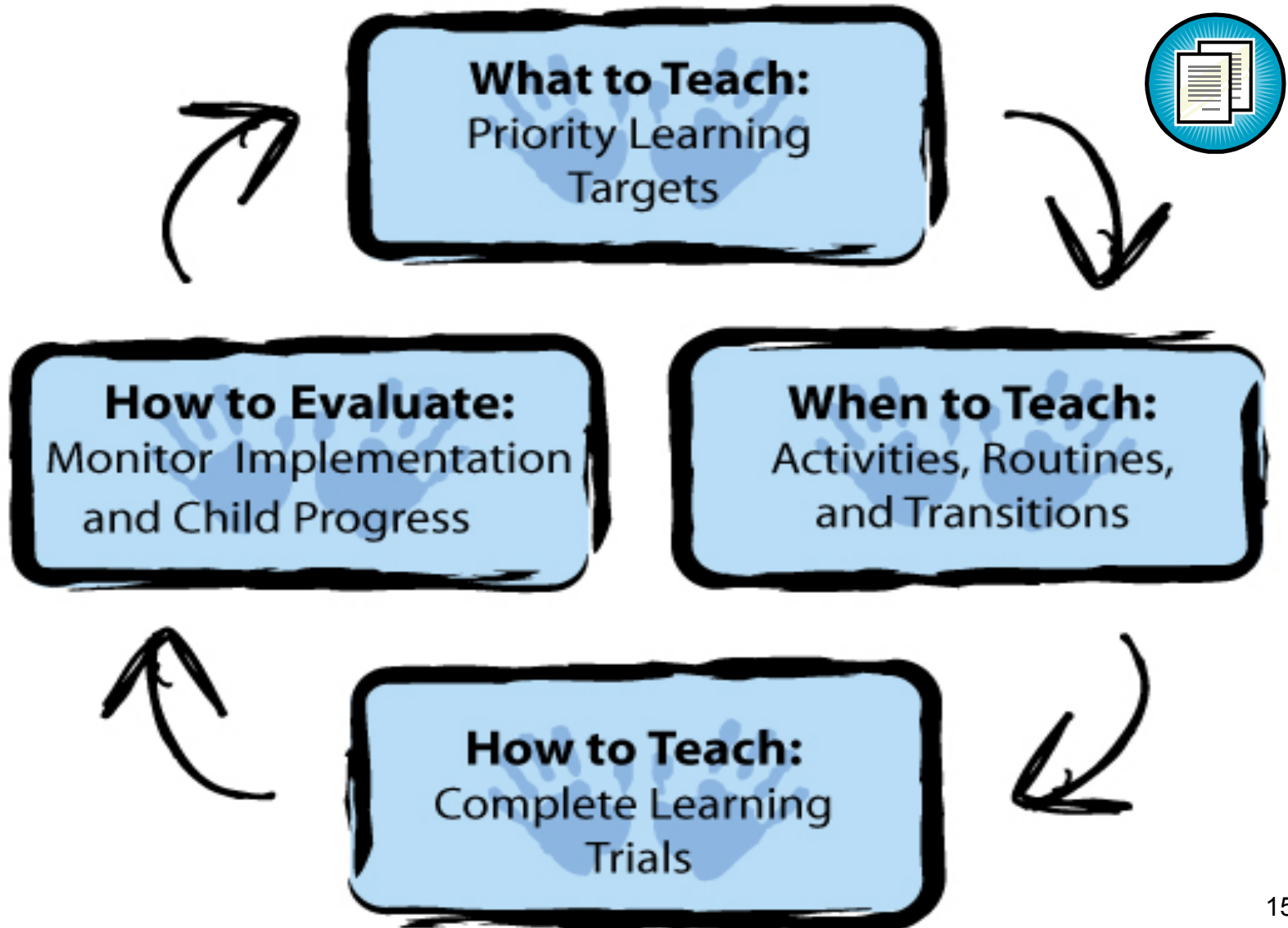


# Think About It...






# Key Components of Embedded Instruction



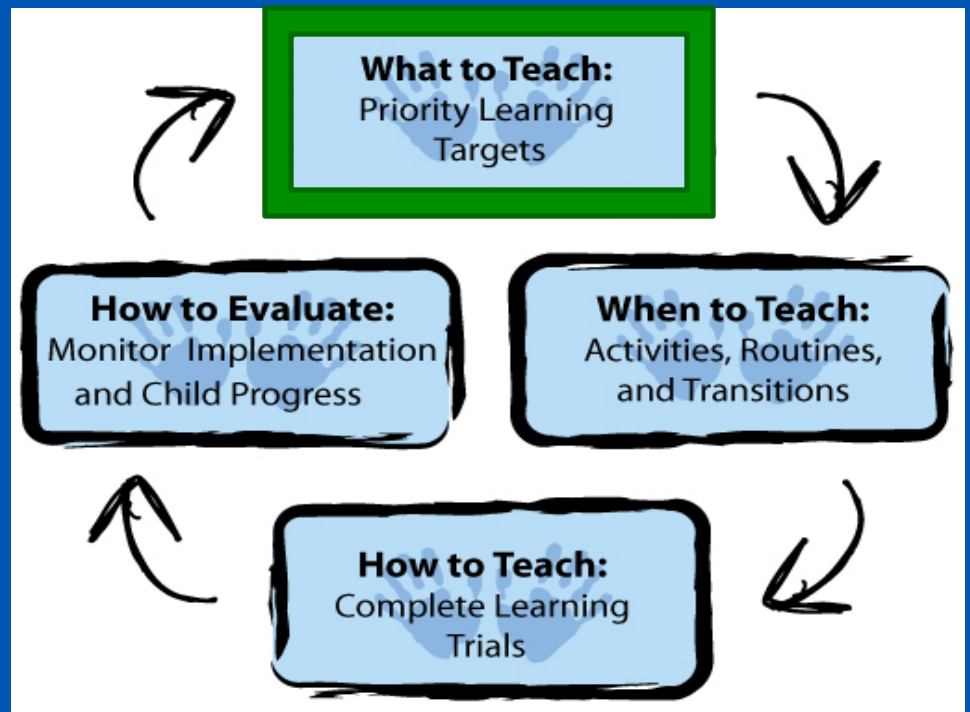
4 Components	14 Practices	6 Priority Practices
What to Teach	Obtain information about children’s strength and needs in activities, routines, and environments (activity-focused assessment) and use it to inform learning priorities.	Identify and align learning priorities for target children.
	Break down larger goals to identify the behavior or skill one or two steps ahead of what the child can currently do.	
	Identify learning priorities I would like the child to achieve in the next few weeks and align with IEP goals and general preschool curriculum.	Write high-quality learning targets.
	Write developmentally appropriate, functional and aligned, generative, observable and measurable (i.e., conditions and criteria specified) <b>priority learning targets</b> .	
When to Teach	Develop and implement activities, routines, and transitions that are designed to support the engagement and learning of all children.	Use high-quality activities to provide multiple and meaningful embedded learning opportunities.
	Select which activities, routines, and transitions are logical and appropriate to embed meaningful opportunities to practice a specified priority learning target behavior.	
	Use massed, spaced, or distributed instructional learning trials to embed multiple opportunities to practice the priority learning target behavior within and across activities, routines, and transitions, considering frequency, intensity, and duration of instruction needed.	Develop an activity matrix to plan when and how many learning opportunities to embed within and across activities.
	Develop an <b>activity matrix</b> to record when and how many instructional trials I plan to embed to optimize child learning on priority learning targets.	
How to Teach	Use and fade systematic prompting strategies to teach the priority learning target behavior and promote child engagement and learning.	Plan and implement embedded learning opportunities as complete learning trials.
	Implement <b>complete learning trials</b> that include (a) an environmental arrangement and/or prompt to elicit the priority learning target behavior (antecedent), (b) additional help to elicit the priority learning target behavior if the behavior does not occur, and (c) an appropriate response following the child behavior (consequence).	
	Individualize an <b>instructional plan</b> based on the characteristics of the child (e.g., preferences, interests, phase and pace of learning) and the target behavior (e.g., type of skill and level of support needed).	
How to Evaluate	Collect and analyze data to determine whether I am implementing instructional learning trials with fidelity (i.e., Am I doing it?).	Collect and analyze data on embedded instruction implementation and child progress to inform instructional decisions.
	Collect and analyze data to determine if children are making progress on their priority learning targets (i.e., Is it working?).	
	<b>Make data-informed decisions</b> about whether changes are needed to my instruction by considering (a) Am I doing it? and (b) Is it working?	





# Embedded Instruction for Early Learning *Tools for Teachers*


## What to Teach





# Key Practices: What to Teach

1. Obtain information about children's strength and needs in activities, routines, and environments (activity-focused assessment) and use it to inform learning priorities.
2. Break down larger goals to identify the behavior or skills one or two steps ahead of what the child can currently do.
3. Identify learning priorities I would like the child to achieve in the next few weeks and align with IEP goals and the general preschool curriculum.
4. Write developmentally appropriate, functional and aligned, generative, observable and measurable (i.e., conditions and criteria specified) **priority learning targets**.



# Embedded Instruction for Early Learning *Tools for Teachers*

Identify & Align  
Priority Learning  
Targets





# Defining Terms

---

## Learning Priority

- A behavior or skill that is *important* for the child to learn
- A behavior or skill that is “proximal” to what the child can do now


## Learning Target

- A written statement of the behavior or skill the child will learn to do
- Includes information that will help you design your embedded instruction plan



# Identify and align learning priorities for target children

- Identify learning priorities by:
  - Activity or routine analysis
  - Authentic Assessments (e.g., DRDP 2015, TS Gold)
  - Breaking down IEP goals
  
- Align learning priorities with:
  - DRDP 2015 and CA Infant/Toddler & Preschool Learning Foundations
  - Child's readiness to learn a skill



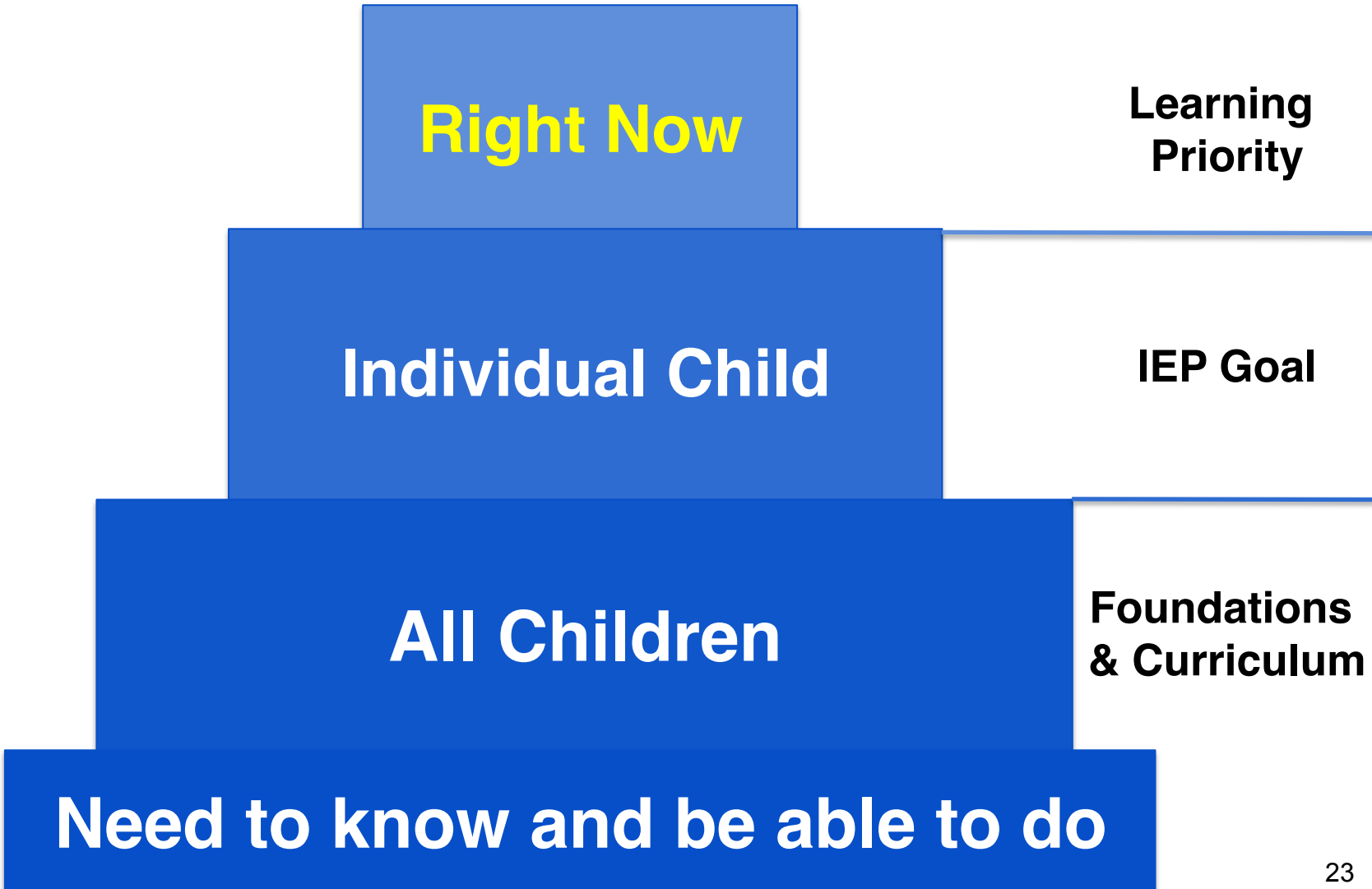
# Embedded Instruction for Early Learning *Tools for Teachers*

Breaking  
Down IEP  
Goals

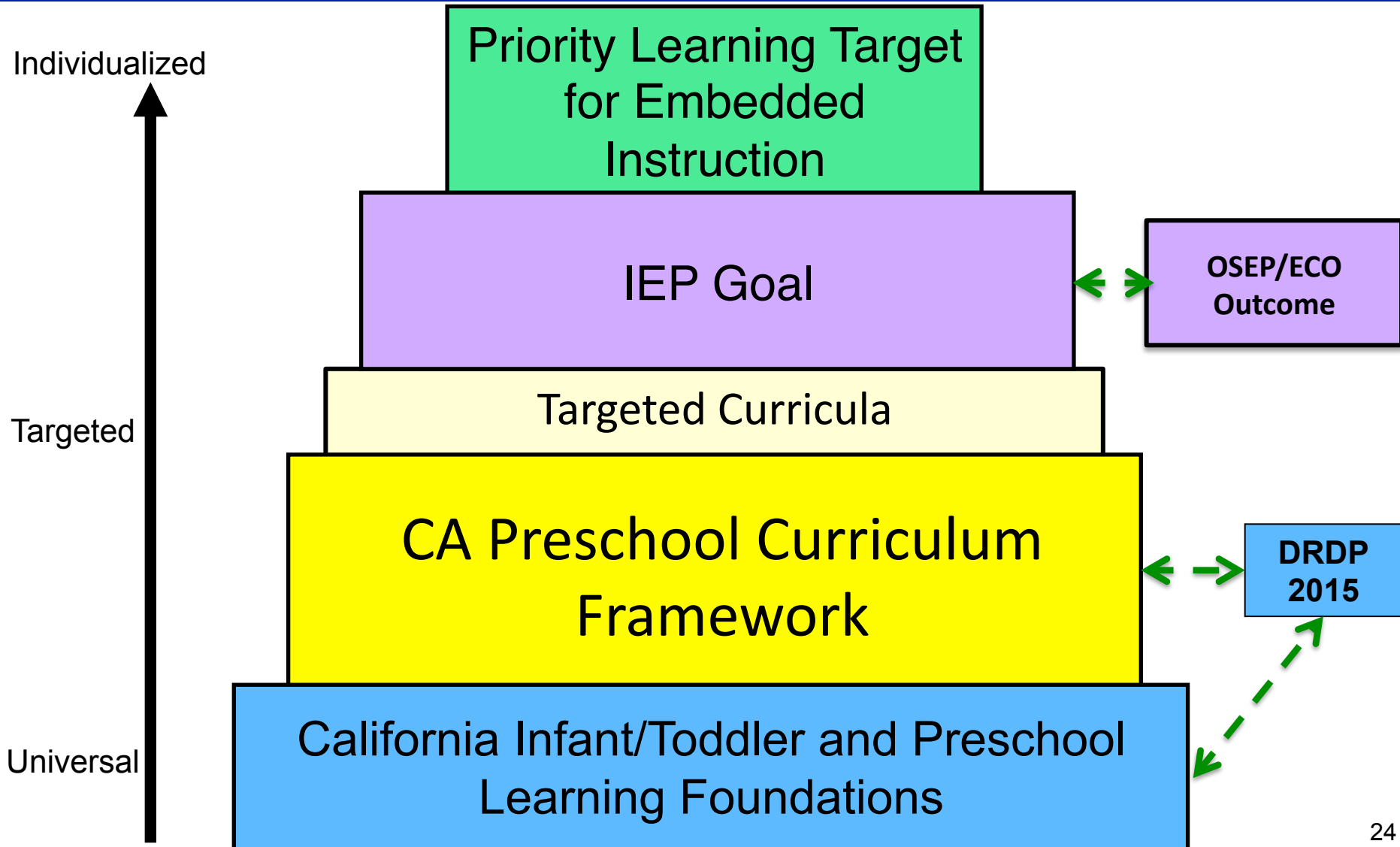




# Identify and align learning priorities



# An Example: Alignment Universal to Individualized





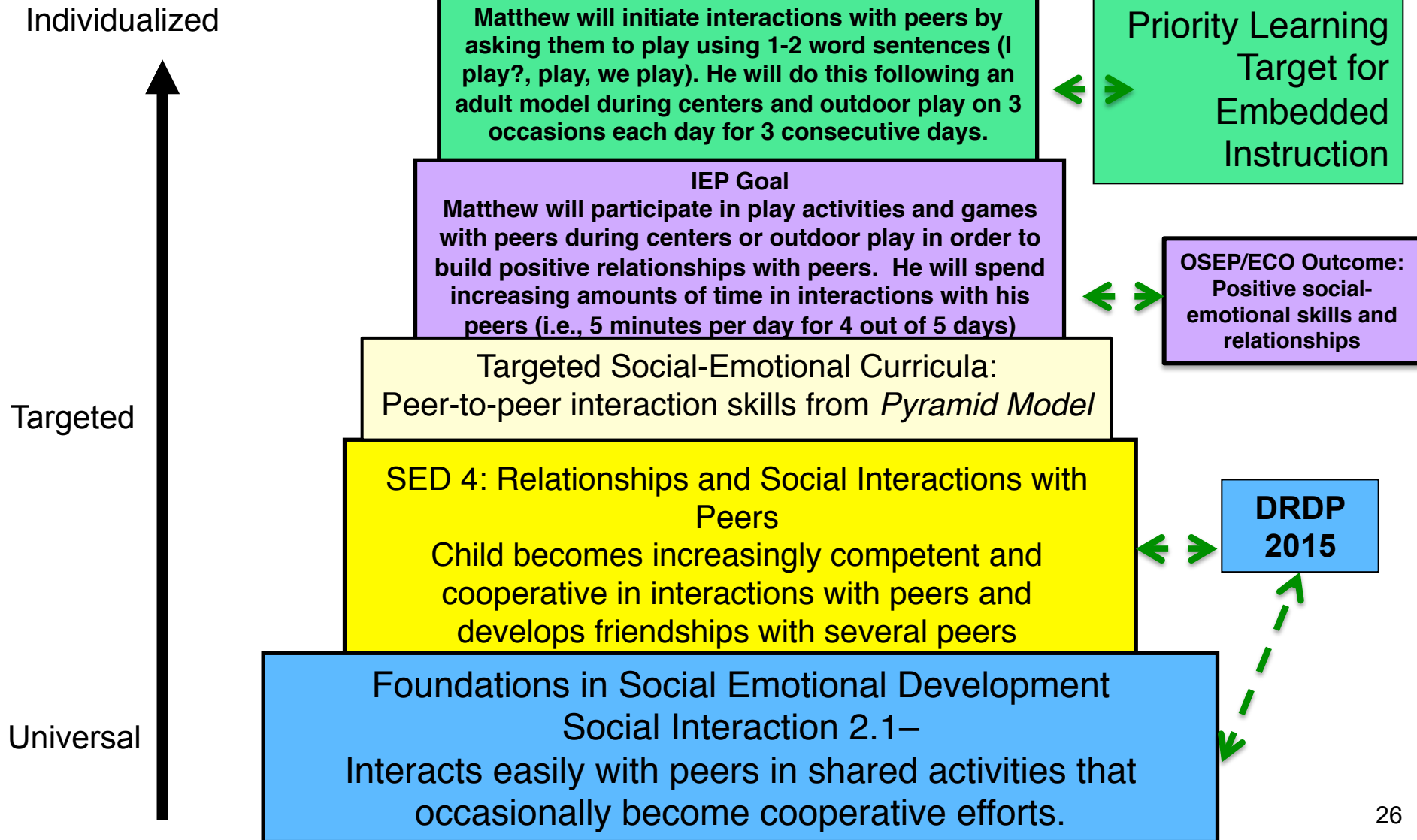


# Meet Matthew



- Matthew is a 4 year old child with developmental delays.
- He attends an inclusive preschool 5 days a week.
- Some of the goals on Matthew's IEP focus on:
  - demonstrating receptive communication skills by following instructions
  - using 3 word expressive communication for a variety of functions (recurrence, agent, object, action)
  - developing eye-hand coordination and object manipulation skills
  - increasing social interactions with peers

# An Example: Alignment Universal to Individualized





# Let's Look Further at Alignment: Another of Matthew's IEP Goals



■ Matthew will manipulate a variety of objects and write using different instruments with decreasing adult assistance for hand positioning in order to develop eye-hand coordination and object manipulation skills. We will know Matthew has met this goal when he is able to grasp objects of different sizes (diameter 1-4 cm; for example, crayon, jug handle, spoon handle) and maintain his grasp without adult support to complete tasks for at least 7 of 10 planned observations for 5 days.

**Let's align this IEP goal to the:**

- **California Infant/Toddler and Preschool Learning Foundations**
- **DRDP 2015**



# Identifying Priority Learning Targets

## PLT Behavior

Holds a marker or paintbrush and makes markings on a piece of paper



## IEP Goal

Manipulates a variety of instruments to develop eye-hand coordination

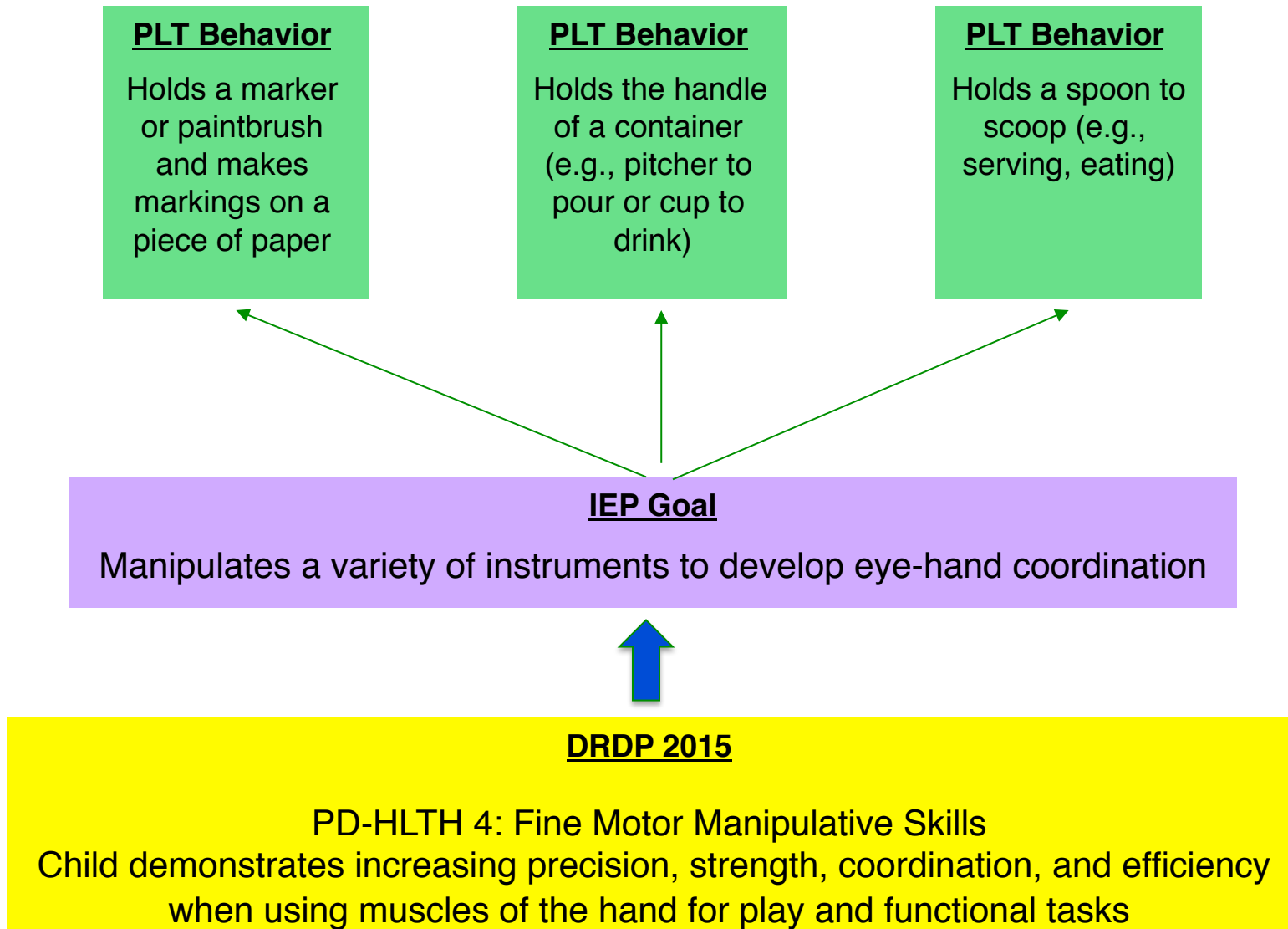


## DRDP 2015

PD-HLTH 4: Fine Motor Manipulative Skills  
Child demonstrates increasing precision, strength, coordination, and efficiency when using muscles of the hand for play and functional tasks

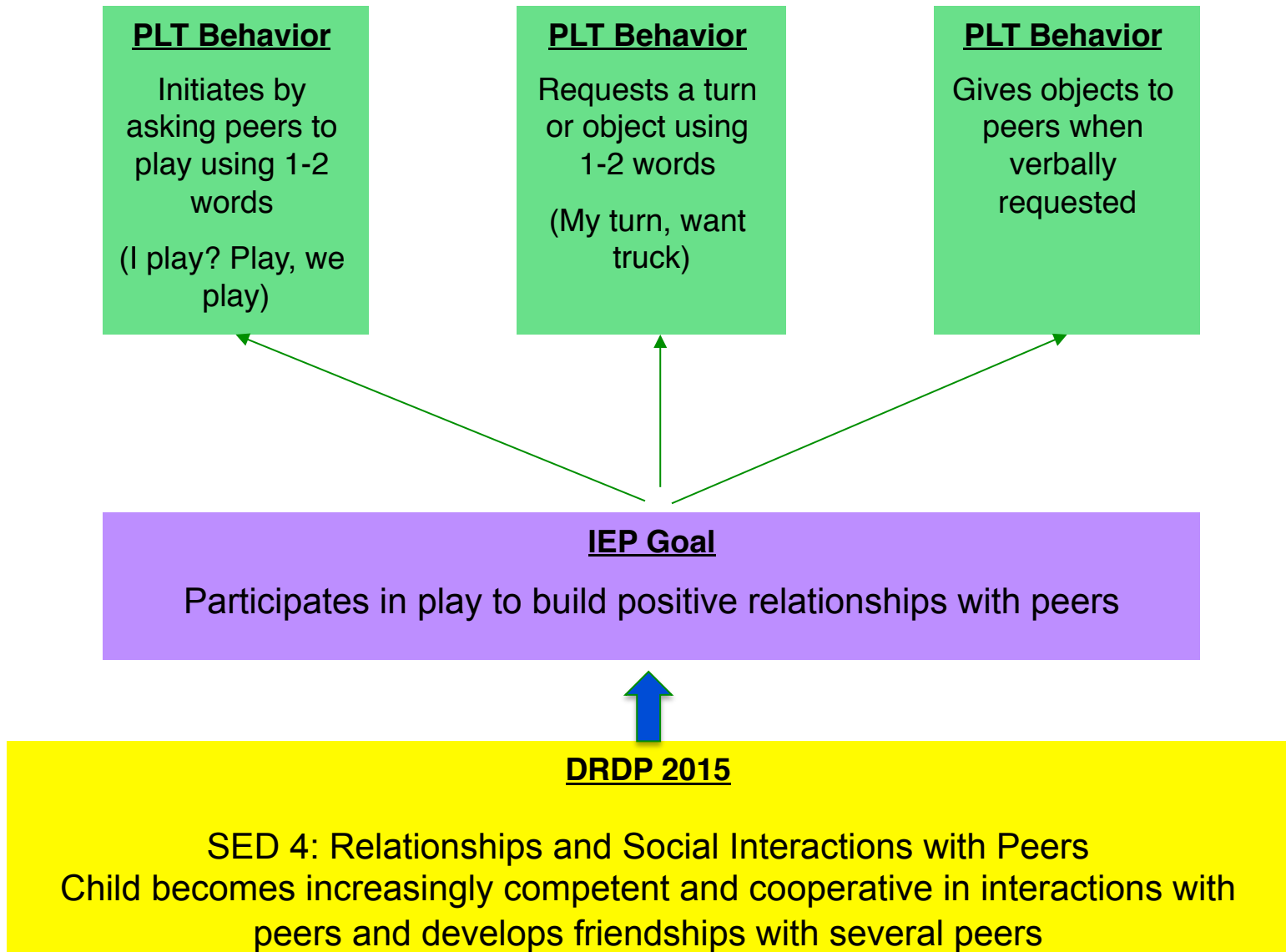


# Breaking Down IEP Goals: Identifying PLTs





# Breaking Down IEP Goals: Identifying PLTs





# Your turn: Break it Down



During routine classroom activities, **Matthew will spontaneously produce 3-word utterances** to express a variety of communicative intentions including recurrence (more juice please), description (big blue ball), and agent-action-object relations (you push truck) when requesting or labeling with adults or peers. Matthew will demonstrate at least 3 examples from each category (recurrence, description, agent-action-object) during a language sample collected over 2 data collection days.

# Embedded Instruction for Early Learning *Tools for Teachers*

Activity  
Focused  
Assessment







# Why Activity-Focused Assessment?

---

**Obtain information about children's skills in activities, routines, and transitions (and other environments) and use it to inform priority learning targets for embedded instruction.**



# Activity-Focused Assessment: Two Levels

---

## *Activity Analysis*

- Examine classroom activities to identify characteristics, expectations, and **learning opportunities for all children**

## *Child-Focused Activity Analysis*

- Observe a child while he/she is engaged in an activity to help identify **priority skills**



# Activity Analysis

- Activity Characteristics
  - Whole group, small group, or individual
  - Structured → Unstructured
  - Teacher-directed → Child-initiated
  - Active → Passive
  - Novel → Routine
  - Social → Materials-oriented
  
- Activity “Expectations”
  - What do children need to know or be able to do to be engaged meaningfully in the activity?



# Child-Focused Activity Analysis

---

- Provide authentic information about the child's skills in ongoing activities, routines, and transitions
- Observe the child's strengths and needs within activities
- Use to determine priority learning targets



# Conducting an Activity-Focused Assessment



Activity Analysis			Child-Focused Activity Analysis	
Activity	Activity Characteristics	Activity Expectations	Child Strengths in Activity	Skills/Behaviors To Target for Instruction
Clean-Up				
Free Play				
Large Group				
Etc.				

**Assessment**  **Priority Learning Target**



# Clean Up





# Large Group






# Free Play







# Embedded Instruction for Early Learning *Tools for Teachers*

Writing Quality  
Priority Learning  
Targets





# Domains of Quality Priority Learning Targets

- **Behavior Statement**

Priority learning target specifies a specific action the child will do, including exemplars

- **Observable and Measurable**

Skill is observable so that it can be counted, timed, or described; the conditions and the criteria for child performance are described

- **Developmentally Appropriate**

Priority learning target skill and materials are age-appropriate, individually appropriate, and culturally relevant



# Domains of Quality Priority Learning Targets (continued)



- **Functional and Aligned**

Child performance of the skill is needed for engagement in important aspects of daily activities, routines, and transitions (i.e., access, participation, and membership)

- **Generative**

Child performance of the skill is useful, adaptable, and portable across settings, people, materials, and events



# Writing Priority Learning Targets

- (1) Learner      Matthew will
- (2) Behavior      initiate interactions with peers using  
1-2 words (e.g., I play?, play, we play)
- (3) Conditions    following an adult model
- (4) Activities      during centers and outdoor play
- (5) Criterion      on 3 occasions each day for 3  
consecutive days.



# Behavior

(1) Learner

**(2) Behavior**

Focus on skill or behavior that is one or two steps ahead of what the child can currently do

(3) Conditions

(4) Activities

(5) Criterion

## Stages of Learning

- *Acquisition*
- *Fluency*
- *Generalization*
- *Maintenance*
- *Adaptation*



# Conditions

(1) Learner

(2) Behavior

**(3) Conditions**

Focus on supports that will help the child do the skill or behavior without “over-helping”

(4) Activities

Type of Assistance

- *People*
- *Materials*
- *Level of support*

(5) Criterion



# Activities

(1) Learner

(2) Behavior

(3) Conditions

**(4) Activities**

(5) Criterion

## Activity “Fit”

- *Is this a time when all children are using the skill?*
- *Could the skill enhance the child’s engagement and participation in the activity?*

Focus on activities in which the child might be expected to use the skill or behavior (i.e., natural or logical activities)



# Criterion

(1) Learner

(2) Behavior

(3) Conditions

(4) Activities

**(5) Criterion**

I know he/she can do this when...

- *Level of performance*
- *How much, how often, how long*
- *Other*

Focus on information that indicates the child can do the skill or behavior as specified in the priority learning target



# Priority Learning Target Quality Checklist



## Priority Learning Target (PLT) Quality Checklist

**Instructions:** Rate the quality of your four priority learning targets (PLT) by using the checklist below. Rate one target at a time by reading each indicator and then circle “yes” (if your PLT meets the indicator) or “no” (if your PLT does not meet the indicator) in the box provided. There is space to rate four priority learning targets. Refer to the *Module 2 Workbook and Practice Guide* for examples of priority learning targets that meet these indicators.

	Indicator	PLT 1	PLT 2	PLT 3	PLT 4	
Behavior	1. Does the priority learning target include a <b>specific action</b> the child will do (i.e., behavior)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
	2. Can the priority learning target behavior be <b>counted or measured</b> (i.e., observable and measurable)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
	<b>Self-Check:</b> If you answered “no” to #1 or #2, revise the learning target behavior to include a <b>specific action</b> you can hear or see the child do and that can be counted.					
	3. Is the priority learning target <b>appropriate for same-aged peers who do not have disabilities</b> (i.e., developmentally appropriate)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
	4. Is the skill <b>aligned</b> with early learning foundations, curriculum objectives, and the child’s IEP goals?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
	5. Is the skill <b>useful, adaptable, and portable across settings, people, materials, or events</b> (i.e., generative)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
Conditions	6. Does the priority learning target specify <b>what level of support</b> the child will need to demonstrate the behavior (i.e., conditions)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
Activities	7. Does the priority learning target specify <b>the activities during which</b> the skill will be taught (i.e., activities)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
Criterion	8. Does the priority learning target <b>include a statement indicating when or how you will know the child has achieved it</b> (i.e., how much? how often, or how long?)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
<b>Final Self-Check:</b> After answering “yes” to #1 and #2 for each of the four priority learning targets, if you still have any “no’s” for a PLT, consider revising that target.						



- **Learner**
- **Behavior**
  - *Observable (specific action) and Measurable*
  - *Developmentally-appropriate*
  - *Functional and aligned*
  - *Generative*
- **Conditions**
- **Activities**
- **Criterion**

Matthew will initiate interactions with peers using 1-2 words (e.g., I play?, play, we play) following an adult model during centers and outdoor play on 3 occasions each day for 3 consecutive days.



- **Learner**
- **Behavior**
  - *Observable (specific action) and Measurable*
  - *Developmentally-appropriate*
  - *Functional and aligned*
  - *Generative*
- **Conditions**
- **Activities**
- **Criterion**

Matthew will independently **move objects or himself in relation to another object or location** (e.g., can you put the pencil on top of the paper?) when asked during circle, transitions, and meals for 10 times each day for three consecutive days.



- **Learner**
- **Behavior**
  - *Observable (specific action) and Measurable*
  - *Developmentally-appropriate*
  - *Functional and aligned*
  - *Generative*
- **Conditions**
- **Activities**
- **Criterion**

Matthew will **independently** move objects or himself in relation to another object or location (e.g., can you put the pencil on top of the paper?) **when asked** during circle, transitions, and meals for 10 times each day for three consecutive days.



- **Learner**
- **Behavior**
  - *Observable (specific action) and Measurable*
  - *Developmentally-appropriate*
  - *Functional and aligned*
  - *Generative*
- **Conditions**
- **Activities**
- **Criterion**

Matthew will **independently** move objects or himself in relation to another object or location (e.g., can you put the pencil on top of the paper?) **when asked during circle, transitions, and meals** for 10 times each day for three consecutive days.



- **Learner**
- **Behavior**
  - *Observable (specific action) and Measurable*
  - *Developmentally-appropriate*
  - *Functional and aligned*
  - *Generative*
- **Conditions**
- **Activities**
- **Criterion**

Matthew will **independently** move objects or himself in relation to another object or location (e.g., can you put the pencil on top of the paper?) **when asked during circle, transitions, and meals** for **10 times each day** for three consecutive days.



# Rate and Revise



- Use the checklist to rate the quality of the priority learning target
- Revise the target so that it meets all of the quality indicators

**Embedded Instruction**  
for Early Learning

### Priority Learning Target (PLT) Quality Checklist

**Instructions:** Rate the quality of your four priority learning targets (PLT) by using the checklist below. Rate one target at a time by reading each indicator and then circle "yes" (if your PLT meets the indicator) or "no" (if your PLT does not meet the indicator) in the box provided. There is space to rate four priority learning targets. Refer to the Module 2 *Workbook and Practice Guide* for examples of priority learning targets that meet these indicators.

	Indicator	PLT 1	PLT 2	PLT 3	PLT 4	
Behavior	1. Does the priority learning target include a <b>specific action</b> the child will do (i.e., behavior)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
	2. Can the priority learning target behavior be <b>counted or measured</b> (i.e., observable and measurable)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
	<b>Self-Check:</b> If you answered "no" to #1 or #2, revise the learning target behavior to include a <b>specific action</b> you can hear or see the child do and that can be counted.					
	3. Is the priority learning target <b>appropriate for same-aged peers who do not have disabilities</b> (i.e., developmentally appropriate)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
	4. Is the skill <b>aligned</b> with early learning foundations, curriculum objectives, and the child's IEP goals?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
Conditions	5. Is the skill <b>useful, adaptable, and portable across settings, people, materials, or events</b> (i.e., generative)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
	6. Does the priority learning target specify <b>what level of support</b> the child will need to demonstrate the behavior (i.e., conditions)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
Activities	7. Does the priority learning target specify <b>the activities during which</b> the skill will be taught (i.e., activities)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
Criterion	8. Does the priority learning target include a <b>statement indicating when or how you will know the child has achieved it</b> (i.e., how much? how often, or how long)?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	
<b>Final Self-Check:</b> After answering "yes" to #1 and #2 for each of the four priority learning targets, if you still have any "no's" for a PLT, consider revising that target.						

Embedded Instruction for Early Learning (September, 2016)  
Development of this form was supported, in part, by work completed for Impact of Professional Development on Preschool Teachers' Use of Embedded Instruction Practices. Project funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (R324A150076). The opinions expressed are those of the authors, not the funding agency, and no official endorsement should be inferred.



# Different Categories of Behaviors

## ■ Discrete behaviors

- Name a color
- Count objects
- Name objects

## ■ Response class behaviors

- Make a request
- Follow directions
- Imitate peers

## ■ Chains of behavior

- Wash hands
- Complete steps in morning arrival routine

## ■ Dispositions

- Being curious
- Being flexible

**Try discrete  
and response  
class behaviors  
first.**





# Priority Target Pitfalls



- Behaviors that happen too often throughout the day to be systematic and intentional embedded instruction trials
  - “Wh” questions – what kind and how many
  - Following directions – when, where, and with whom, and what is the behavior
  
- Describing what the child should not do
  - Transition without hitting
  - Not calling out
  
- General expectations
  - Be safe
  - Be a good friend
  - Take turns

**Does not describe  
a specific action  
the child will do**



# Strengthening the PLT Behavior Statement

Behavior	PLT Behavior Statement
Child will answer “WH” questions	Child will answer “what” questions by labeling objects and pictures
	Child will answer “where” questions when provided with a choice of two locations
	Child will answer “when” questions by pointing or saying the name of an activity when shown a visual schedule and asked “When do we _____?”



# Strengthening the PLT Behavior Statement

Behavior	PLT Behavior Statement
Follow 1-step directions	Child will follow 1-step directions (e.g., hang up backpack, put folder in basket) following a peer model during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal.
	Child will follow a 1-step direction to clean-up objects (e.g., put cup in trash, put toy on shelf) during meals and centers.

# More Priority Target Pitfalls



- Participation, Engagement, and Attention
  - Engage with peers for 5 minutes
  - Participate in small group
  - Pay attention at the carpet
  - Remain in a center for 4 minutes

**Not observable and measureable**



# Strengthening the PLT Behavior Statement

Behavior	PLT Behavior Statement
Engage with peers by taking turns	Child will make 2-word requests to peers for classroom objects (e.g., want car, blue ball)
	Child will give objects to peers when requested
	Child will share by exchanging or trading 2 objects with a peer during group games and centers



# Revising Priority Learning Targets



- Select a PLT you brought to the workshop
- See if the PLT needs to be broken down to create smaller targets
- Revise or write one PLT using the *PLT Planning Form* or *PLT Quality Checklist*





# Summary – Key What to Teach Practices!

1. Obtain information about children's strength and needs in activities, routines, and environments (activity-focused assessment) to inform learning priorities.
2. Break down larger goals to identify the behavior or skills one or two steps ahead of what the child can currently do.
3. Identify learning priorities I would like the child to achieve in the next few weeks and align with IEP goals and the general preschool curriculum.
4. Write developmentally appropriate, functional and aligned, generative, observable and measurable (i.e., conditions and criteria specified) **priority learning targets**.



# Review and Wrap up

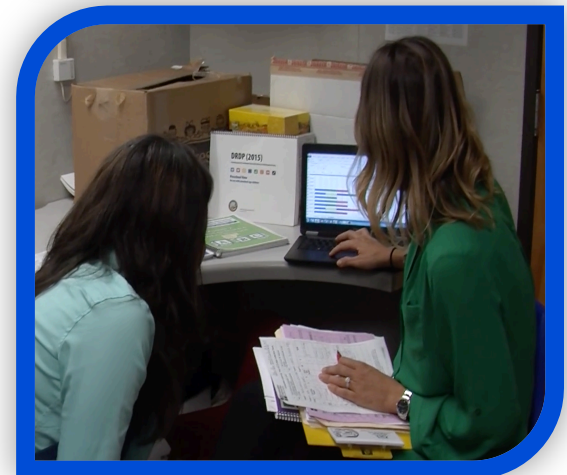
---

- Identify and align PLTs with the curriculum, IEP goals, and DRDP 2015
- Conduct activity-focused assessment
- Write high-quality PLTs
- Begin to think about times and activities that are a good “fit” for embedded instruction
- Try to provide a few embedded learning opportunities for the behaviors or skills you identified in your priority learning target



# Working with Your Coach

- ✓ Practice implementing 1 PLT with each child
- ✓ Work with your coach in Session 1 to refine and develop additional PLTs
- ✓ Explore the Embedded Instruction Website



# Embedded Instruction for Early Learning

## *Tools for Teachers*



Up next  
When to Teach  
and  
How to Teach

