



Practice Brief: Practice 1

To help identify and align target skills for children it is useful to...

Obtain information about children's skills in activities, routines, and environments (activity-focused assessment) and use it to inform priority learning targets.

Practice description:

Activity-focused assessments are a great way to gather information about children's skills in activities, routines, and transitions. You can use the information gathered to inform the development of priority learning targets. An activity-focused assessment includes (1) an activity analysis for all children and (2) a child-focused activity analysis. In an activity analysis you consider and examine the characteristics of, expectations for, and learning opportunities available in a selected activity or activities for all children. As part of this process consider what activity design features you might alter to change or enhance the characteristics, expectations, and learning opportunities for your activities. A child-focused activity analysis involves observing an individual child while he or she is engaged in an activity. During this observation pay attention to the child's current abilities and strengths as well as what skills the child might need to support or enhance his or her engagement, independence, or interactions in the activity.

Why is it important for embedded instruction?

To promote child engagement and learning in everyday activities, routines, and transitions you need to know what children currently know and can do and how they function in the ongoing activities. The more you know about your children and their abilities and strengths in the context of the activities you are providing, the better you can plan for and implement embedded instruction.

Tips for using this practice:

- Remember that activity characteristics refer to:
 - Group structure (whole group, small group, or individual)
 - Activity structure (continuum from structured to unstructured)
 - Activity level (continuum from active to passive)
 - Activity lead in (continuum from teacher directed to child initiated)
 - Activity focus (continuum from socially oriented to materially oriented)
 - Other features such as whether the activity is novel or routine or the types of materials present.
- Activity expectations refer to what children need to know or be able to do to be meaningfully engaged in the activity.
- Use the activity-focused assessment summary form to inform priority learning targets.