



Practice Brief: Practice 1

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

Break down larger goals to identify the behavior or skill the child needs to achieve in the next few weeks and ensure alignment with general preschool curricular content.

Practice description:

Breaking down larger goals (from IEPs or curriculum) to identify the immediate focus of instruction requires information about how the skill develops and the child's current level of performance. Knowing how the skill develops provides information about how you might break it down (e.g., smaller amounts, step-by-step order). Knowing the child's current level of performance provides information about what to target and how to break down the steps in order for the child to be successful. To break down goals you can do a task analysis or logical analysis. First, specify the goal. Next, determine the child's current level of performance. Then determine the steps to achieve the goal. Determining the steps can be done by doing or watching the skill and writing down all the steps (task analysis) or reviewing or thinking through the developmental or instructional sequences (logical analysis). It is important to remove unnecessary steps as well as consider adapted or modified steps if needed for the child. Finally, sequence the steps for instruction. The sequence will depend on the nature of skill and how the skill is typically broken down.

Why is it important for embedded instruction?

Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and the general preschool curriculum provide direction about what children should be learning and achieving during the year. These, however, may not give teachers the information needed to inform embedded instruction, which focuses on proximal goals for child learning. Breaking down goals and aligning them with the general preschool curriculum are two important components to ensuring development of high quality priority learning targets for children.

Tips for using this practice:

- Skills can be broken down in different ways. Think about whether the skill is best learned by
 - Doing it in smaller amounts
 - Providing additional help first
 - Doing it step-by-step
 - Following a logical order
- Adaptations or modifications to the steps of a goal may need to be considered if the individual child uses adaptive or modified equipment in his/her everyday routines and activities. Try to focus on achieving the same or similar function (purpose or intent) of the skill even if the form (the way the child does the skill) is different.