# Curriculum Framework in Early Learning Settings

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# Understanding Curriculum Framework:

**A Guide for Special Education in Early Learning**

### Purpose

The purpose of this resource document is to assist school division leaders who are implementing or planning to implement an evidence-based curriculum in early childhood programs for young children, including those with developmental delays or disabilities. Early childhood educators may need assistance as they engage young children and provide access to the classroom curriculum. This document may be used as a tool for professional development and training around the curriculum. Preschool children with special needs will accomplish meaningful progress and measurable growth when the elements of a curriculum framework are considered and implemented effectively. Each of the four elements of a curriculum framework are described in this document and a list of resources are included to further facilitate professional development.

### Rationale for the Curriculum Framework Resource Guide

The Division of School Readiness and the Office of Early Childhood help prepare all children for kindergarten by focusing on key classroom practices which, include the use of high-quality curriculum and assessment. An evidence-based, high- quality curriculum provides a foundation for learning and prepares children for success, as it serves as a comprehensive guide for planning and teaching daily interactions and routines. A key role of early childhood educators is to provide access to critical knowledge across developmental and content domains. Implementing a curriculum may be challenging when considering the individual needs of each learner. Understanding the four essential elements of a curriculum framework enables educators to individualize instruction.

# Components of a Curriculum Framework

The term curriculum framework refers to a system, the idea that a curriculum is not a single resource or feature, but rather a set of concepts and structures for organizing the many ingredients and processes involved when creating learning ecologies for young children.

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**There are four elements of the curriculum framework. Together, these elements become a comprehensive framework for instruction and day-to-day interactions with young children.**

## Assessment

The assessment element is comprehensive and consists of practices that are appropriate for all children.

Assessment

-provides baseline information regarding developmental and content or subject areas

-identifies children’s interests and preferences

-captures family resources, priorities and concerns

-guides the development of activities and instruction

## Scope and Sequence

Scope is “the what” or “it” which will be taught in the classroom.

-Content areas

Sequence is the order in which the content is taught and generated from Virginia's Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), Birth-Five Learning Guidelines, agency standards and curricular sequencing.

## Activities and Instruction

* Types of activities and instructional strategies vary in frequency, intensity and intent.
* Teachers identify and plan activities throughout the daily routine to provide instruction on important learning targets. Developmentally responsive strategies and practices are used to deliver content and should be linked to assessment results.
* There are 3 types of activities to consider: child initiated, routine and planned.
* Instruction is intentional and differentiated to address the child’s strengths, interests and needs.
* Embedded instructional learning opportunities are present to meet varying needs.
* Supportive environments encourage engaged learning.
* Universal Design for Learning is utilized to allow access for all children.

## Progress Monitoring

Used to examine the need to revise activities and instruction as we strive to meet specified outcomes.

Progress Monitoring varies in frequency and intensity and can help answer these questions:

* How are we doing?
* Have we gotten where we wanted to go? Was instruction effective?
* Are there other performance monitoring strategies we can use to improve the instruction?
* Do we need to revise*?*
* How do we change the plan?

# Taking a Deeper Dive into the Components of Curriculum Framework in Early Learning

**Assessment**

| ***Look-For*** | ***Definitions/Description:*** | ***A Deeper Dive*** |
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| The curriculum includes a curriculum- based assessment that is designed for planning and guiding instruction. | *Curriculum-based assessment:*Is used to conduct program planning assessment as it helps teachers identify specific learning outcomes that can be addressed as part of curriculum planning and development. | Handout: [Curriculum-Based Assessment](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/final_assessment_rubric_fall05.pdf) [Rating Rubric](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/final_assessment_rubric_fall05.pdf)[ADA Curriculum-Based Assessment Rating Rubric (Word Doc)](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlgevBWkzArQrGdPB3DYnSQ8-)  |
| The authentic assessment items and procedures are culturally, linguistically, and individually unbiased. | *Cultural/Linguistic Biases:*Being conscious of the ways in which race, ethnicity, social class, gender, language, immigration and refugee status and disability are constructedand the impact of various intersecting identities (e.g., race and disability or gender and disability) on individual children and their families’ experiences, and providing assessment activities that connect to children’s experiences, funds of knowledge, and cultural/familial norms. | Webinar:[Identifying Learning Potential and](https://va-leads-ecse.org/Online-Training/MLbTE3FyBnEyNgMDQdOxwY0Gp-ByXlZV) [Eliminating Bias When Evaluating Young](https://va-leads-ecse.org/Online-Training/MLbTE3FyBnEyNgMDQdOxwY0Gp-ByXlZV) [Children](https://va-leads-ecse.org/Online-Training/MLbTE3FyBnEyNgMDQdOxwY0Gp-ByXlZV) |
| The assessment items are comprehensive with focus on the whole child to cover all areas of development and learning. | *Areas of development include:* Communication (Expressive & Receptive) Motor (Fine & Gross)Cognitive Personal – Social Adaptive | Website: [ECLKC Early Learning Domains](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/early-learning-domains) |
| The assessment items and procedures are flexible and allow for children to respond in multiple ways based on interests and preferences. | Alternative and multisensory means are used to allow children to display their competencies. | Webinar: [Making Dynamic Assessment](https://va-leads-ecse.org/Online-Training/MLbTE3FyBnEyNgMDQdOxwc867djwvzg6) [Part of Your Evaluation Process](https://va-leads-ecse.org/Online-Training/MLbTE3FyBnEyNgMDQdOxwc867djwvzg6) |
| The assessment is1. authentic and routines-based.
2. conducted across time, people and settings.
 | *Authentic Assessment:*Environment and materials that are familiar to the child and is play-based, performance-based and naturalistic. | Handout*:* [Learning Guide: Using](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PG_Asm_AuthenticChildAsm_prac_print_2017.pdf) [Authentic Assessment to Promote](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PG_Asm_AuthenticChildAsm_prac_print_2017.pdf) [Children's Learning](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PG_Asm_AuthenticChildAsm_prac_print_2017.pdf)[ADA Learning Guide: Using Authentic Assessment to Promote Children's Learning](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlgfiuskhbEnGRR5i2775RizG)  |
| Families and other caregivers are engaged as partners in the assessment process. | *Family Engagement:*Encompasses a partnership between home and school in which decisions are made based on a child’s strengths and desired outcomes that supports their learning and development. | Handout: [Learning Guide: Families' and](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PG_Asm_EngagingFamiliesasAssessmentPartners_prac_print_2017.pdf) [Their Child's Assessment](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PG_Asm_EngagingFamiliesasAssessmentPartners_prac_print_2017.pdf)[ADA Engaging Families as Assessment Partners](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlgd7fsQm3XLK7k5Syxuy3Drm) |
| Assessment results are used for planning instruction by providing a comprehensive description of a child’scurrent skills, abilities and needs. | Assessment allows teachers to identify each child’s developmental level and then develop curricular activities that address the children’s interests, needs and abilities. | Handout: [Identifying Child Strengths](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PGP_ASM5_identifyingstrengths_2018.pdf)[ADA Identifying Child Strengths](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlge1NoSYd7uIGleYsxBlWs1h) |

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| ***Look-For*** | ***Definitions/Description:*** | ***A Deeper Dive*** |
| **Additional Resources** | **Description** |  |
| [Authentic Assessment](https://scriptnc.fpg.unc.edu/authentic-assessment-infant-toddler-care-settings-review-recent-research) | Research Brief: Short informational write up aboutauthentic assessment, what it is, why it’s important and the outcomes produced through its use. |  |
| [Engaging families and creating trusting partnerships to improve child and family outcomes](https://ectacenter.org/~calls/2017/familyengagement.asp?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=)[Family Engagement and Ongoing Child Assessment: Guiding Questions and Ideas for Staff](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/family-engagement-ongoing-child-assessment-eng.pdf) | Webinar Series: This series addresses the knowledge building and technical assistance needs of both practitioners and families by discussing the role that data plays in strengthening family/professional partnerships.Handout: This guide offers questions and ideas for staff considering family engagement activities and sharing information. |  |
| [Authentic Child Assessment Practices](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/ASM-3_Authentic_Child_Assessment_2018.pdf) [Checklist](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/ASM-3_Authentic_Child_Assessment_2018.pdf)[ADA-Authentic Child Assessment Practices Checklist](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlgcJlxyIlt4PoW3mhWWLyoPX) | Handout: Outline key characteristics of authentic assessment practices for observing children participating in everyday activities and routines. |  |
| [Want Authentic Assessment? Try This](https://kristiepf.com/want-authentic-assessment-try-this-tip/) [Tip](https://kristiepf.com/want-authentic-assessment-try-this-tip/) | Podcast*:* Dr. Kristie Pretti-Frontczak covers 2 practical ways to create and use assessment activity plans, and how to overcome assessment challenges that educators often face. |  |
| [A Guide to Assessment in Early](https://wvde.state.wv.us/ohttps%3A/pdf4pro.com/view/a-guide-to-assessment-in-early-childhood-k12-wa-us-2482c6.html%20el/docs/Washington%20Assessment%20Guide.pdf)[Childhood](https://pdf4pro.com/view/a-guide-to-assessment-in-early-childhood-k12-wa-us-2482c6.html) | Resource: This guide is intended for primary use bythose professionals in positions of program-level |  |

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| ***Look-For*** | ***Definitions/Description:*** | ***A Deeper Dive*** |
|  | responsibility for developing comprehensive assessment plans, and selecting and administering assessment instruments. The document also can serve as a resource for designing professional development activities for program administrators and direct service staff responsible for gathering andinterpreting assessment information. |  |
| Bagnato, S. J., Neisworth, J. T., & Pretti- Frontczak, K. (2010). *Linking authentic assessment and early childhood intervention: Best measures**for best practices* (2nd ed.)*.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes. | Book: A comprehensive review of 80 widely used assessment measures for children birth-8, to help professionals ensure high-quality services for children with and without disabilities. |  |
| Grisham-Brown, J., & Pretti-Frontczak, K. (2011). *Assessing young children in inclusive settings: The blended practices approach.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes. | Book: Educators will learn how to confidently implement high-quality assessment and reap its benefits: inclusive, family-centered programming that improves outcomes for all children. |  |
| Grisham-Brown, J., Hemmeter, M.L., & Pretti-Frontczak, K. (2005) *Blended Practices for Teaching Young Children in Inclusive Settings.* Baltimore, MD:Brookes Publishing Co. | Book: This resource integrates knowledge about effective practices for teaching young children with and without disabilities into one comprehensive approach. |  |

**Scope and Sequence**

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| ***Look-For*** | ***Definitions/Description*** | ***A Deeper Dive*** |
| The curriculum framework includes a scope (what should be taught) and sequence (guidance for the order in whichto teach). | The purpose of scope and sequence is to identify who needs to learn what. It Bridges assessment and activities and instruction.-uses summaries to identify patterns and trends-represents the differentiations of children’s needs that emerge from assessments-makes meaning of data to plan instructionThe SCOPE is **the what**, the breadth of what is taught in a classroom.-the content-the developmental areas being targeted | Website: [Curriculum Scope and](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/curriculum-scope-sequence) [Sequence](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/curriculum-scope-sequence) |
| The scope is a comprehensive (complete) set of objectives which addresses1. all developmental and content areas.
2. differentiation needed for instruction.
3. responding to environmental and social influences that may include stressors and risk factors.
 |  | Resource: [Scope and Sequence from](https://teachingstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Teaching-Strategies_Scope-and-Sequence_Preschool.pdf) [Creative Curriculum](https://teachingstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Teaching-Strategies_Scope-and-Sequence_Preschool.pdf) (One Example of a Scope & Sequence.)[ADA-Teaching Strategies Scope and Sequence Preschool](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlgcP79_za38uqcg278UT9zns) |
| The scope acknowledges the interrelatedness of developmental and content areas for early care and education. | What is known about child development and learning (referring to knowledge of age-related characteristics) that permits general predictions about what experiences are likely to best promote children’s learning and development. | Website: [The Parts and Pieces of High](https://highscope.org/our-practice/preschool-curriculum/) [Scope Curriculum](https://highscope.org/our-practice/preschool-curriculum/) (One explanation from a specific curriculum.) |
| The scope can be tiered from common outcomes to targeted to individualized. | *Common Outcomes:* also known as core or universal outcomes; for ALL students*Targeted Outcomes:* for some children*Individualized Outcomes:* more specialized learning; highly individualized | [Video: Targeted Outcomes: What to](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6nfTn6t7Hw) [Teach When Children are Struggling](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6nfTn6t7Hw) |
| The sequence reflects known developmental, pedagogical, and logical principles and practices. | *Developmental Sequencing:*What is expected or typically happens in terms of growth and human development?*Pedagogical Sequencing:*Which skills should be taught from simpler to more complex? Which skills have an anticipated teaching sequence?*Logical Sequencing:*How are culture and individual needs considered? | Handout: [Three Types of Sequences](https://prekteachandplay.com/podcast26/) |
| The scope and sequence includes meaningful and functional skills and concepts. | *Functional Skills:*Skills that promote a child’s participation in daily routines and that are necessary or useful at home, in school, and in the community. | Handout:[Functional Skills and Behaviors](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/costraining/fsb-handout.pdf)[Functional Skills and Behaviors ADA](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlgcTIYcC8vUn4OD5MT7vERD_)  |
| The scope and sequence is aligned with federal/state/local standards. | This document is Virginia's new set of comprehensive early learning and development standards for young children, birth to age five. The new standards focus on five Areas of Development: Approaches to Play and Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Communication, Language, and Literacy Development; Health and Physical Development and Cognitive Development. | Resource: [Virginia's Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), Birth-Five Learning Guidelines](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/early-childhood/curriculum/va-elds-birth-5.pdf) (PDF)  |

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| ***Look-For*** | ***Definitions/Description*** | ***A Deeper Dive*** |
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| **Additional Resources** | **Description** |  |
| [Curriculum Scope and Sequence](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/curriculum-scope-sequence) | Website/Handout: Education staff can use thisresource to select and implement a curriculum that includes an organized scope and sequence. |  |
| [Division for Early Childhood](https://divisionearlychildhood.egnyte.com/dl/tgv6GUXhVo/) [Recommended Practices](https://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices) | Handout: Evidence-based practices that provide guidance to practitioners and families about the most effective ways to improve the learning outcomes and promote the development of young children birth through age 5 who have or are at-risk fordevelopmental delays or disabilities. |  |
| [Three Sequences for Designing and](https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/prekpodcast/podcast26/Podcast%2B26%2BTranscript.pdf) [Delivering Meaningful Experiences](https://prekteachandplay.com/podcast26/) (Scroll down and click on “transcript”) | Podcast: Dr. Kristie Pretti-Frontzak delivers a wealth of information and resources on the elements of a curriculum framework. |  |
| [Developmentally Appropriate Practice in](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/PSDAP.pdf) [Early Childhood Programs Serving](https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/dap/contents) [Children from Birth through Age 8](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/PSDAP.pdf) | Handout: Framework that outlines practice that promotes young children’s optimal learning and development based on research and extensive knowledge. |  |

**Activities and Instruction**

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| ***Look-For*** | ***Definitions/Description*** | ***Resources*** |
| An adopted comprehensive curriculum includes activities and instructional practices to be followed with fidelity, with adaptations for specially designed instruction. | *Activities:*Refer to the context in which important concepts and skills are addressed, guided by children’s interest during daily routines.*Fidelity: implementing a curriculum or intervention the way it was intended to be implemented by the developers.**Adaptations: on-going process that modifies the prescribed curriculum to meet the learning needs of diverse learners of all abilities.* | [Webinar/Module: Highly Individualized](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/highly-individualized-teaching-learning) [Teaching and Learning](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/article/highly-individualized-teaching-learning) |
| The activities and instructional practices are accessible to all children and incorporate assistive technology when necessary. | *Assistive Technology:**Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability. Assistive technology is individualized so the child can access, participate, and learn within and across activities and routines.* | Webinar/Module: [Connect Module 5-](https://connectmodules.dec-sped.org/connect-modules/learners/module-5/) [Assistive Technology](https://connectmodules.dec-sped.org/connect-modules/learners/module-5/) |
| The activities and instructional practices are developmentally appropriate and culturally and linguistically responsive. | Cultural responsiveness is a strengths-based approach to teaching and caregiving rooted in respect and appreciation for the role of culture in children's learning and development.Culturally/Linguistically Responsive:-instructional arrangements (e.g. individual work, group work, oral presentation)-teaching procedures (e.g. connecting to children’s experiences, pace of instruction)-reinforcement strategies e (e.g.public acknowledgement, type of reward)-performance expectations (e.g. remaining seated, oral response, voluntary response) | Video: [The Skilled Dialogue Approach (Part 1)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5x4TWLSrIk)[The Skilled Dialogue Approach (Part 2)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7Nv5wb25TY)[The Skilled Dialogue Approach (Part 3)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3sAdIsHFWU)Resource: [Supporting Cultural Diversity in Early Childhood](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWg-ZrV3wPk)  |
| The activities and instructional practices address all areas of development and learning. | The activities and instruction cover all areas of development. |  |
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| The instructional practices are tiered andsystematic. | *Tiered Instruction:*The type of activities and instructional strategies are to be individualized and vary in frequency, intensity, and intention. Teachers implement the frequency, intensity, and duration of instruction needed to address the child’s phase and pace of learning or the level of support needed by the family to achieve the child’s outcomes or goals. There are three levels of support: universal, targeted, and intensive.*Systematic Instruction:*Involves teaching a specific skill, concept, or procedure in a highly structured and carefully sequenced manner. The A-B-C behavior chain, or Three-Term Contingency, involves an antecedent (cue that sets the occasion for the child to respond), behavior (response), followed by a consequence (varies depending on correct/incorrect response). | Module: [Connect Module 7 Tiered](https://www.connectmodules.dec-sped.org/connect-modules/learners/module-7/) [Instruction](https://www.connectmodules.dec-sped.org/connect-modules/learners/module-7/)Resource: [Systematic Instruction](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PG_Ins_SystematicInstr_prac_print_2017.pdf) [Practices](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PG_Ins_SystematicInstr_prac_print_2017.pdf)[ADA Systematic Instruction Practices](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlgesaaiE_C4iSeGtmFhViWfk) |
| The activities and instructional practices are responsive to the children’s individual strengths, preferences, and needs. | Teachers provide directions for children’s action or behavior that are individualized. Graduated guidance and visual supports are used as needed. Teachers check for understanding and provide positive descriptive feedback.Teachers integrate the strengths and interests of the child while implementing a combination of child initiated, teacher facilitated, and teacher directed activities. | Video: [Following Children's Lead](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/following-childrens-lead)Video: [Incorporating Strengths and](https://vcuautismcenter.org/te/how_to/simpleVideo.cfm?video=33) [Interests VCU Autism Center](https://vcuautismcenter.org/te/how_to/simpleVideo.cfm?video=33) |
| The activities and instructional practices are intentional and include multiple and varied embedded learning opportunities, both naturalistic and systematic. | *Routines:*Teachers promote child engagement, learning, and independence in everyday activities, routines, and transitions to provide contextually relevant learningopportunities. | Website: [Embedded Instruction and Other Naturalistic Intervention- National Professional Development Center on Inclusion, Frank Porter Graham UNC](https://secure-web.cisco.com/1ohxq3947-MIQLzzpLsr7lX2iv1tiZhNGEoshbFgL0S-LHJOWsXGoG942NoGZIJWMDgJiM2oZAUWvqlc0yVTi_eRUF9wQk_5Tp_Tl93Etie86BSAfE-jEQ4XePCmlreWzRC_7Culu2BJXjVl5Xqgv0yPKB-7SaWtdrgadwsiC96uBSWYAzUf6_Z87WqIGDgc1XXVWn04G5IR3PWC3KXGMN_1UP20dil9F_9R2LFa-4LAohCGTEpWCERCyMvJ9fl9mJoSRAVYV-N5LuqPdX4dBOXpktndv5zzj5yppmg7XX5TQxasfXgwLleQSFCHvdm5IHlotKciouEdBWzAsNeVyh601yym26WqfNRXYiG-dje65FbO9nuXP-AkOajD7l5sB8kvrIf8C034yy1Z02MM38PgmlDJGlQDVu5kO6rxBveThpydo40LCa_j2W9O7Domn2nADwDXu9pp6sFi1HCku8g/https%3A//npdci.fpg.unc.edu/embedded-instruction-and-other-naturalistic-interventions.html)   |
|  | *Grouping:*Group composition is considered and includes small group, large group, and one-to-one teacher-child interactions and activities.*UDL:*Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an approach to teaching aimed at meeting the needs of every student in a classroom by providing multiple means of representation, multiple means of engagement, and multiple means of expression.*Naturalistic Practices:*Teachers incorporate or embed learning opportunities within the context of natural environments or “real world” settings where the skills would typically occur*Peer Mediated Interventions:*Teachers use peers to support the skill development of a child with disabilities and promote child engagement and learning. | Website: [Universal Design for Learning](http://ectacenter.org/topics/atech/udl.asp) [(UDL)](http://ectacenter.org/topics/atech/udl.asp)Module: [Peer-mediated Instruction and](https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/peer-mediated-instruction-and-intervention) [Intervention | AFIRM](https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/peer-mediated-instruction-and-intervention) |
| The activities include hands-on, engaging experiences | To promote engagement, when planning activities, teachers should take into consideration the following:-individual goals and objectives-children’s interests-differing attention spans-varying the types and topics of activities and the manner in which children are asked to complete tasks-involving peers for support | Website: [Promoting Engagement of](https://www.naeyc.org/resources/blog/preparing-young-children-inclusion) [Young Children with Disabilities](https://www.naeyc.org/resources/blog/preparing-young-children-inclusion) |
| The activities and interactions emphasize adult/peer relationships and a whole child approach. | The whole-child approach to teaching supports and nurtures all areas of children's development and learning–from social-emotional and cognitive skills to literacy, math, and science understanding. It encourages children’s learning and thinking by being responsive to children’s understandings, interests, and abilities, allowing them to deepen their natural curiosity and their eagerness to want to discover and learn more. | Video: [Fostering Connections | ECLKC](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/fostering-connections) |
| The activities and instructional practices link directly to children’s immediate and long-term goals. | *Goals:*Teachers teach skills using systematic instructional strategies while taking into account the child’s phase and pace of learning, or level of support needed by the family to achieve the child’s outcomes or goals. | Resource: [5 Strategies for Scaffolding in an Early Childhood Classroom](http://info.teachstone.com/blog/5-strategies-for-scaffolding-in-an-early-childhood-classroom) |
| The classroom schedule and environment is arranged to support the activities and instructional practices. | *Supportive Environment:*Teachers design a learning environment that is well organized, accessible to all children, and equipped with clearly defined learning areas.*Daily Schedule:*Teaching staff post, maintain, and follow a regular daily schedule which allows flexibility to meet interests and individual needs of the children. The schedule minimizes and plans for transitions and uses both words and pictures. | Video [Designing Environments ECLKC](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/designing-environments) [Head Start](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/designing-environments)Video [Schedules and Routines |](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/schedules-routines) [ECLKC](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/schedules-routines) |

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| ***Look-For*** | ***Definitions/Description*** | ***Resources*** |
| **Additional Resources** | **Description** |  |
| [Advancing Effective Interactions-VPI Plus](http://vpiplus.org/resources/) [Resources](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjkilkear%5CDocuments%5CVideo%20Clip%20Directory%20%28Advancing%20Effective%20Interactions%20%26%20Instruction%2C%20AEII%29) | Website: Advancing Effective Interactions and Instruction (AEII) helps Virginia's school leaders providedata-driven professional development — equipping teachers with knowledge and skills they need to prepare each child for a great start in school. |  |
| [DEC Recommended Practices](https://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices) | Resource: Developed to provide guidance to practitioners and families about the most effective ways to improve the learning outcomes and promotethe development of young children, birth through five years of age, who have or are at-riskfor developmental delays or disabilities. |  |
| [Prompting: Introduction & Practice |](https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/node/2601) [AFIRM](https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/node/2601) | Module: Prompting is used to help the learner with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) successfully use a target skill or behavior. This module targets the basic rules of least-to-most prompting and provides interactive case activities for discussing a plan for, using, and monitoring prompting. |  |
| [Child Social Communication Interaction](http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/INT-2_Child_Soc-Comm_Interaction_2017.pdf) [Checklist ECTA Center](http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/INT-2_Child_Soc-Comm_Interaction_2017.pdf)[ADA-Child Social-Communication Interaction Checklist](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlgdeemvWit1rxmj26FBaxgHV) | Resource: This checklist includes practices that can be used to encourage and promote nonverbal or verbal child communication behavior by respondingcontingently (positively) to the child’s behavior. |  |
| [Child Social Emotional Competence](http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/INT-3_Child_Soc-Emot_Competence_2017.pdf) [Checklist ECTA Center](http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/INT-3_Child_Soc-Emot_Competence_2017.pdf)[ADA-Child Social-Emotional Competence Checklist](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlgeLkW65BczeBNcnIL6bgrEK) | Resource: This checklist includes practices that can be used to encourage, support, and promote child social emotional competence during everyday activities andplay. |  |
| Physical Structure [VCU Autism Center](https://vcuautismcenter.org/te/how_to/simpleVideo.cfm?video=35) | Video: In this video, you will see examples of ways touse physical structure in the preschool environment. |  |
| [Materials to Support Learning](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/materials-support-learning) | Video: This in-service suite explores guidelines on how to select classroom materials. Learn how to choose materials that engage children and encourage peerinteraction and learning. |  |
| [Video of Tips for Assistive Technology](https://atnetwork.ttaconline.org/) | Video: How to use a Green Screen to make items float. |  |

**Performance Monitoring**

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| ***Look-For*** | ***Definitions/Description*** | ***Resources*** |
| Methods for ongoing monitoring of children’s progress toward common/targeted/individualized tier outcomes are included. | A tiered model of performance monitoring provides a framework for making revisions to instruction and matches instructional efforts to children's needs. | Webinar/Module: [Assessment](https://rpm.fpg.unc.edu/module-7-assessment) |
| Performance monitoring methods are authentic. | Authentic assessment is a powerful tool for early childhood educators to analyze information gathered during everyday classroom activities and routines in order to understand each unique child’s development. Consistent and comprehensive reflection on observation notes, photos, artistic creations, emergent writing, and dictations provides teachers with meaningful insight about each child and about thegroup as a whole. | Resource: [Teaching Strategies Gold](https://teachingstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/GOLD-Tech-Summary-8-18-2011.pdf) [Assessment System](https://teachingstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/GOLD-Tech-Summary-8-18-2011.pdf)[ADA Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment System](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlgfWj_XAaFeuCR-dW7vnUhba)  |
| Performance monitoring methods are culturally, linguistically, and individually unbiased. | *Biases:*(See Assessment) |  |
| All areas of development and learning are monitored. | *Areas of Development:*(See Scope and Sequence) |  |
| Changes in children’s strengths, needs, and emerging skills are easily detected. |  | Resource: [Identifying Child Strengths](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PGP_ASM5_identifyingstrengths_2018.pdf)[ADA Identifying Child Strengths](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlge1NoSYd7uIGleYsxBlWs1h) |
| The intensity and frequency of performance monitoring is tailored to the outcome. | *Intensity:* determined by the goal or skill*Frequency:* how often |  |
| Families and other caregivers are involved in performance monitoring. | (See Assessment) | Resource: [Engaging Families as](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PGP_ASM2_engagingfamilies_2018.pdf) [Assessment Partners](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PGP_ASM2_engagingfamilies_2018.pdf)[ADA Engaging Families as Assessment Partners](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlgd7fsQm3XLK7k5Syxuy3Drm) |
| Quantitative and qualitative data are considered useful in making data-driven instructional decisions. | *Quantitative Data:* data expressing a certain quantity, amount or range.*Qualitative Data:* descriptive or anecdotal information gathered through interviews and observations and provides the most detailed information about children’s functional abilities. | Article: [Data collection and use in early](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED555737.pdf) [childhood education programs](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED555737.pdf) |
| Performance monitoring results are purposefully used to modify and revise elements of the curriculum framework. | Performance monitoring should be data driven and serve as a recursive process that involves gathering information, documenting, summarizing, conducting analysis, and interpreting data to inform and reviseinstruction. | Resource: [Authentic Child Assessment](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PGP_ASM3_authentic_2018.pdf)[ADA-Authentic Child Assessment](https://va-leads-ecse.org/ECSEDoc/vu4rJOhKlgfiuskhbEnGRR5i2775RizG) |
| Foundational and prerequisite skills are monitored with increased frequency. | *Foundational Skills:* skills and behaviors that develop earlier in the development continuum that serves as the foundation for later developing skills and behaviors. Differentiated and/or specialized instruction can be based upon identifying these earlier developing skills/behaviors and facilitating them to help childrenmove to the next higher level of functioning.Development in the early childhood years proceeds through several levels of foundational skills and behaviors that become more complex and proficient as children get older. All skills that lead to higher levels of functioning are considered “foundational skills”.*Prerequisite Skills:* skills that are necessary as a prior condition for something. else to happen or exist.Therefore prerequisite skills describe the skills or background. knowledge a student needs (prior condition) before working on a specified concept. |  |

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| ***Look-For*** | ***Definitions/Description*** | ***Resources*** |
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| **Additional Resources** | ***Description*** |  |
| Performance Monitoring within a Tiered Instructional Model | Resource: Chapter 8 from the book [Assessing Young Children in Inclusive Settings: The Blended Practices](https://products.brookespublishing.com/Assessing-Young-Children-in-Inclusive-Settings-P578.aspx)[Approach](https://products.brookespublishing.com/Assessing-Young-Children-in-Inclusive-Settings-P578.aspx) |  |
| [The Whole Child Bridge: Linking Tenets to Developmental Domains](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=7MnyUIKzeWg)[The Whole Child Approach and Why It Matters](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGLdx948quw) | Webinar: During these sessions, we will unpack each of the whole child tenets and connect these tenets to the five developmental areas (physical, social- emotional, approaches toward learning, cognitive development, and language & literacy) that serve as the foundation for whole child development in an earlychildhood context. |  |
| [The Warmest Voice in the Room:](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ntnti1oEfo) [Modeling Empathy to Create an Inclusive,](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ntnti1oEfo) [Collaborative Classroom](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ntnti1oEfo) | Video: In this webinar, we will explore the crucial role teachers and educators play in supporting children to become empathetic and resourceful learners, and highlight what constitutes best practice for modeling an empathetic and positive approach to learning. We will also share how two former teachers used positive guidance in theirclassrooms to develop inclusive and caring learning communities, and offer insight on supportive ways to work with children to manage challenging behaviors and situations. |  |
| [The Vital Guide to Monitoring Child Progress](https://tats.ucf.edu/?s=vital+guide) (Scroll down to “Vital Guide to Monitoring Child Progress” under the heading “Teachers Conduct Ongoing Progress Monitoring”) | Resource: Using the steps and strategies outlined in this document can help ensure your efforts to effectively monitor progress are carried out both easily and regularly. Being thoughtful, intentional andfocused are the keys to success! |  |

# Curriculum Framework Q & A

As we strive to provide children, who have special needs, with a high quality learning experience it is essential to implement a quality **curriculum**. The elements of a curriculum framework (assessment, scope and sequence, activities and instruction, performance monitoring) guide our practices in blended classrooms and help organize our teaching goals. In a blended, inclusive classroom the special education teacher and the general education teacher both know and understand the curriculum which allows them to collaboratively plan specially designed instruction. A young child in a self- contained classroom also needs instruction with quality **curriculum** content in order to engage, make progress and benefit from early learning special education.

Planning instruction with curricula for a child with an IEP is most effective when a universal design plan for learning is incorporated to ensure that the child is able to access the curriculum. Plans will include multiple means of representation, multiple means of expression and multiple means of engagement.

Please see the following questions for implementing a quality curriculum, with framework elements, in a classroom for children with IEPS

1. **How is a classroom curriculum different from the IEP?**

An IEP describes how an individual child’s disability affects involvement and progress in the *classroom curriculum*. The child’s IEP includes goals specific to the child and goals related to the curriculum.

1. **How can I implement the classroom curriculum if the child has significant learning needs?**

Teachers and service providers adapt or adjust instruction according to the child’s needs and the goals in the IEP. Likewise, accommodations and adaptations are made in regard to the classroom curriculum. In general, teachers often accomplish this by adjusting the scope and sequence of the content and/or the depth of content within the curriculum.

The activities are planned with the child’s current performance level in mind.

1. **How does having the Present Levels of Performance from an IEP support access to a classroom curriculum?**

Well, you start with assessment. The purpose of the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) is to identify the child’s needs and establish a baseline of the child’s performance in appropriate activities. It is essential to have a child’s (PLAAFP) to review for planning to incorporate learning objectives from a curriculum. Successful planning for instruction and activities, based on the curriculum, depends on an understanding of the child’s present levels. The PLAAFP also informs the scope and sequence of instruction. It should be brief, understandable and accurately describe a child’s performance in all areas of education affected by their disability. The PLAAFP serves as a bridge between the evaluation process and the measurable annual outcomes/goals.

The PLAAFP spells out how a child’s delay affects his/her ability to participate in activities such as singing songs, painting and coloring pictures, working in groups, making and playing with friends, etc. By identifying how a child’s delay affects their ability to progress in appropriate activities, the team can identify and prioritize needs from which outcomes/goals can then be created. For example, if Suzie’s delay in expressive language is keeping her from making friends (Suzie is unable to verbally initiate, respond to and maintain social interactions) this need may be identified as a priority.

1. **To what extent can I plan to use accommodations and/or adaptations and support learning of young children with disabilities within the curriculum?**

The most effective way to adapt curricula is truly individualized and child specific. Before adapting a curriculum, teachers should know each child’s learning goals and needs, assess their abilities, and implement the least intrusive form of adaptation possible. By studying and implementing varying methods of adaptive instruction special educators can develop the tools and techniques essential to creating appropriate and effective learning environments. Consideration should be taken when teachers are using assistive technology in order to effectively access the curriculum.

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