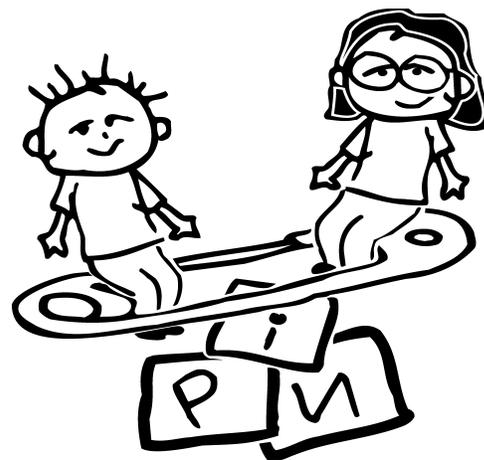


Preschool Inclusion News



Summer 02

Philadelphia Inclusion Network
Child & Family Studies Research Programs

Making Adaptations for Children

Making adaptations for children is an important part of how teachers and therapist are able to include ALL children in the daily routines and activities of child care. By making adaptations in the child care setting and other settings that the child naturally participates in, the teacher, therapist and families can access resources in their community. Some of the natural settings children and their family's take part in are: home (family, relatives and friends), recreation centers, religious organizations, restaurants, shopping malls, youth groups, YMCA/YWCA, swim clubs, as well as childcare centers.

When therapist and teachers make adaptations in the child care setting, children with developmental or learning needs can participate successfully in activities and can learn while in the child care setting. Adaptations to the environment, activities, materials, and instructions can help promote the participation of ALL children. Making these adaptations provides environmental supports so that ALL children, including those with disabilities, have maximum opportunities to learn and develop.

What is an adaptation???

Adaptations are the primary way of meeting children's individual and unique needs. The main purpose for making adaptations is to allow ALL children to be able to fully participate in their daily routines and activities. When adaptations are effective,

adults can be doing the same things that they would do with all children -- facilitate their participation in activities and routines and promote their learning. This allows children to develop relationships and friendships with other children and to learn the kinds of things that are being learned by children their age.

The CARE Pack:

One strategy for making adaptations for children in any environment (school, home, etc) is called the CARE Pack, which has been developed by the Philadelphia Inclusion Network. CARE stands for **C**reating **A**daptations for **R**ewarding **E**nvironments. Adaptations are presented in the format of "Here's the situation", "Try this adaptation" and can be used as a quick reference for caregivers to promote the inclusion of ALL children whether in the home, childcare, or the community. The CARE Pack uses a framework to guide one's thinking about how to make adaptations. This framework will be explained on the next page. of the newsletter.

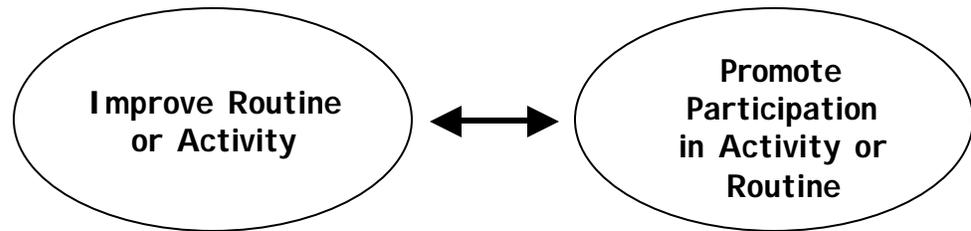
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02-2*

Adaptation Framework



Facilitating Children's Participation



Environmental Accommodations

- Adapt Room Set-up
- Adapt/Select Equipment
- Equipment/Adaptations for Positioning

Select or Adapt Activity

Adapt Materials

Adapt Requirements or Instructions

Have Another Child Help-

- Peer Assistance/Tutoring
- Cooperative Learning

Have an Individual Child do Something Different

Have an Adult Help a Child Do the Activity

Have an Individual Child Do Something Outside of the Room (with an Adult)



How to use the Adaptation Framework

There are 5 first levels of making adaptations for children, going from least intrusive to most intrusive.

- ◆ The first level is the **Environment**. This level focuses on the physical environment. Examples of adapting the environment include: rearranging furniture to allow a child in a wheelchair to move freely; putting boxes or telephone books under a child's feet to provide more support while sitting at the table if the child's feet do not touch the floor; adjusting table heights to allow children's elbows to rest comfortably on the table and to allow for enough room under the table for children's knees.
- ◆ The second level is the **Activity** where the actual activity is changed so that the child can fully participate. An example could be adding more movement to an activity so children are more interested in participating or limiting the number of children in an activity to make it less overwhelming. Modifying the time/length of an activity, can also help to keep children's attention and to help the children be more successful at completing the activity on their own.
- ◆ The third level is the **Materials**, substituting or altering the materials being used in activities or routines so that the child can use them independently. This could mean making a pencil or crayon thicker by putting a foam curler around it or wrapping playdough/silly putty around it in order to make it easier for the child to hold onto the pencil or crayon. Another example could be putting pieces of velcro in the corners of the pages of a book so that children can easily turn the pages.
- ◆ The fourth level is the **Instructions**, involving changing the requirements of an activity or routine so the child can participate. This could mean changing the way instructions are presented to the child, such as using pictures instead of words, or asking the child to do one step at a time. Demonstrating what you want the child to do is another way to adapt the instructions. The requirements of an activity can also be adapted such as completing an art project over several days, instead of having the children complete the whole project in one day.
- ◆ The fifth level is the **Assistance** which takes into consideration levels of help provided to the child. This is the most intrusive form of making adaptations because it involves another child or adult actually helping the child do the activity or routine, rather than allowing the child to do it alone. An example of providing assistance is having a buddy system, pairing children up to act as role models for each other and to complete activities or routines together. This can also help to promote increased social interaction among children.

If the adaptations you have tried are not working as well as you hoped, go back to the beginning and start the process again using different adaptations based on the framework.

"I am now more aware of why it's important to provide different instructions for different children. By doing this, children are able to do more things on their own."

—Training Participant





PIN Participant Views on Adaptations

Here is what some PIN participants had to say about their views on making adaptations after completing the training.....

"Making adaptations provides more choices for what children can do on their own during the day and I can spend more time playing with the children instead of feeling like I have to do things for them!"

"The children are more attentive, concentrating more, feel more included and comfortable in the classroom as a result of the adaptations that have been made."

"I put pieces of velcro on the pages of the books that the children use most often and now they can open the books more easily and can read the books properly."

"Understanding why adaptations are important to make for children helps me to better relate to and work with the Early Intervention providers who come into my home to help the children in my care."

"As a result of rearranging my classroom to make materials and toys more accessible for children, they now have more options as to where to go and what to play with. There is not as much fighting now because the children have more choices."

"I found this program to be very helpful for my staff. They learned how to adapt their classrooms for children with special needs and they are now able to include all of the children in daily routines and activities."

Director of a Child Care program



Here are some suggestions of adaptations for children....

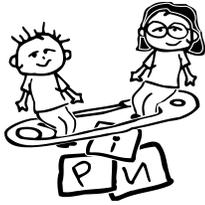
Adopted from the National Lekotek Center

- ◆ Use Velcro-on boards or objects to develop a transition board or schedule. Have children participate in moving objects or velcroing pictures on the board as reminders of the next activity.
- ◆ For communication during snack or meal time, mount symbols or pictures on placemats and cover with clear contact paper. Children can communicate non-verbally as well as through speaking.
- ◆ Non-skid rug material or felt can be used for keeping toys steady on a flat surface.
- ◆ Punch a crayon or paintbrush through a styrofoam ball to make it easier to hold.
- ◆ Glue spools or blocks to puzzles or toys that are hard to pick up.
- ◆ Velcro can be used to make sticky blocks which are easier to handle than conventional blocks. Also attach Velcro to the palm or a glove or a mitten for easier grasping.
- ◆ Small toys can be nailed to blocks of wood to give them a larger base.
- ◆ Tape drawing paper to the table/wall for more stability.

"I found the PIN consultant to be very helpful. She gave me more insight, strategies, and ideas in working with children with special needs."

Training Participant





BOOK NOOK

Making Adaptations for Children

Bailey, P., Cryer, D., Harms, T., Osborne, S., & Kniest, B.A. (1996). *Active Learning for Children with Disabilities: A Manual for Use with the Active Learning Series.*

Gould, P. & Sullivan, J. (1999). *The Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom: Easy Ways to Adapt Learning Centers for All Children.*

When you come across a book that you think would be of interest to teachers, parents or children, please send book titles, author, and brief description of material to Preschool Inclusion News.

PLEASE UPDATE OR ADD YOUR INFORMATION TO THE MAIL LIST

FAX to 215-503-1640 or mail to Child & Family Studies, Thomas Jefferson University, 130 South 9th Street, 5th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107-5233.

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Here's the Situation...

Try this Adaptation...

Art Center Adaptations

Here's the situation: The crayons, markers, or paint brushes are difficult for the children to hold on to during art activities.

Try this adaptation: Build up the crayons, markers, or paint brushes using a piece of foam, tape, playdough, etc. This will make them bigger and easier to hold.

Art Center Adaptations

Here's the situation: The crayons, markers, or paint brushes are difficult for the children to hold on to during art activities.

Try this adaptation: Use materials that are easier to hold such as raw potatoes, sponges, squeeze paints, etc., instead of crayons, markers, or paint brushes.

"I learned how to make things easier for the child that has a disability or even for the child that has a hard time doing things the other children can do."

Training Participant





Sneak Preview

The next issue of the
Preschool Inclusion News
will feature

Creating Meaningful Learning Experiences
Using daily activities and
routines as ways for children to learn

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Inside This Issue

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