



Professional Learning Module
Integrating Learning Throughout the Preschool Day

Overview of Integrating Learning

As educators, we know children grow and develop in their own unique way and at their own pace. Areas of child development, such as physical, social and emotional, language and cognitive development are interrelated and dependent on one another. Effective educators know an integrated approach to learning throughout the day supports young children in becoming successful learners. The goal of this module is to support educators in understanding how to intentionally plan and integrate all areas of learning throughout the day to improve outcomes for children.

In many preschool programs, a curriculum is considered to be the set of materials and guidebooks that are purchased and align with the *Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Kindergarten*. However, an integrated *classroom curriculum* should also include the following:

- Thoughtful consideration for the learning environment with learning opportunities for children to engage in critical and creative thinking.
- Developmentally and culturally appropriate materials that provide for a range of abilities.
- Active learning experiences that are child-initiated, as well as those planned and initiated by the teacher.
- Intentional planning for whole group, small group and learning centers for children to experience learning as a meaningful whole throughout the day.
- One-on-one interactions with children each day to scaffold children's activities and provide feedback and support.
- Monitoring children's progress through ongoing assessment and observation.

"The teacher weaves knowledge of the curriculum and the interests of children into the fabric of the classroom curriculum." Primary Program: Growing and Learning in the Heartland (joint collaboration DOE Nebraska, Iowa and Head Start 2001)

Research suggests that an integrated approach to learning is brain compatible. "The brain learns best in real-life, immersion-style multi-path learning...fragmented, piecemeal presenting can forever kill the joy and love of learning" (Jensen, 1996). The more connections made by the brain, the greater the opportunity for making high level inferences. Primary Program: Growing and Learning in the Heartland (joint collaboration DOE Nebraska, Iowa and Head Start 2001)

Effective teachers generally have learning goals in mind when doing whole group and small group instruction. However, an effective educator will develop an intentional practice that embeds learning goals as children arrive and prepare to go home, when setting up the learning environment, during meals, outside centers and transitions. Children will benefit when learning experiences are integrated across content areas that link skills and concepts during formal and informal learning opportunities throughout the day.

Integrating concepts and skills within planned activities throughout the day will support children's learning success in all areas of growth and development. In a well-planned, integrated learning environment, children can carry through with their natural desire to explore, discover, and act on the world around them. The increased exposure to concepts and skills through multiple opportunities to practice and reinforce skills will lead to better outcomes for children.