



Setting the Stage: What Part Do You Play?

Module V Lessons 1, 5, 6, 7, 8

“A person who is severely impaired never knows his hidden sources of strength until he is treated like a normal human being and encouraged to shape his own life.” -Helen Keller

*“The best feeling of all is knowing that people like us exactly for who we are, no matter what we can or cannot do.”
-Mr. Rogers*

*“The biggest barrier for inclusion of children with special needs into child care settings is fear – not so much fear of the children, but fear for the children. Participants will see the link between their skills for all children and the applicability to children with disabilities. One of the biggest benefits for children with special needs in inclusive settings is the opportunity to belong. By empowering children and creating a caring community, all children will benefit.”
-PITC *Beginning Together* Manual*

Activity: Inclusion, Integration, and Mainstreaming: What are the Benefits?

Close, Caring Relationships

- ✓ Development of resilience
- ✓ High quality care
- ✓ Emotional investment

Partnerships

- ✓ Complement one another’s efforts
- ✓ Concentrate on what they do best
- ✓ Combine their expertise

Inclusion

- ✓ Those who enjoy enduring relationships develop emotional security, giving them the foundation for becoming socially competent and resilient.
- ✓ Makes the preventative benefits of high quality care available to all children.

Partnership/Continuity

- ✓ Identity development is critically important during infancy.
- ✓ Continuity for the child stems from partnerships with the family.
- ✓ Including all who contribute to the child’s well-being completes the circle of care.

Questions to Ask

- ✓ Does the child have an opportunity to be in control of the learning experience?
- ✓ Is there a balance between adult-initiated and child-initiated learning?
- ✓ Can the child make choices while learning the skill?
- ✓ Is the child gaining self-confidence and showing the joy of accomplishment?
- ✓ Is there room in the activity for the child to make discoveries?

Facilitation

- ✓ Assume all children are competent.
- ✓ Adapt the environment so that it is both developmentally appropriate and challenging for each child.
- ✓ Keep the whole child in mind.

*“There is no greater insult than exclusion.”
-Jane D.B. Marsh*

Activity: Vulnerability

Activity: Ensuring Confidentiality

Supporting Children, Families, and Caregivers When Concerns Arise

The initial identification of developmental concerns generally has an emotional effect on families and providers. Disability is perceived differently by different people and perceptions can be influenced by experience, culture, and access to information. How a family reacts may be different from how a provider reacts. Different family members may have different reactions.

How a Disability Affects a Family Depends on:

- A family's or an individual's personal beliefs about disability and cultural values.
- The nature of the disability.
- The degree of severity of the condition and the level of difficulty experienced in caring for the child.
- The age of the child when diagnosed and the age of the parents.
- The coping abilities of individual family members and the family unit.
- Additional family stress.
- The degree to which family supports are in place and are helpful.
- The sex and birth order of the child.
- The number, ages, and sex of siblings.
- The additional stresses faced by families that have immigrated to this country.

What is Denial?

- Denial is an effective human coping response to a crisis, bad news, or sudden change.
- Denial allows us to compartmentalize the emotional reaction, function in the moment, and survive.
- Denial is where you wish that whatever just happened would all go away.

Who is "In Denial"?

- The term is often used as a negative description.
- When someone is not reacting to information in the way we would like; if they don't follow our advice; if they have different ideas about cause or treatment or about the timing of their action.
- It is quite likely that, in fact, WE are "in denial" since it is our belief that "If only the family would..." OUR problem and discomfort would disappear.

Activity: Your First Reactions

Activity: Family's Response

Cognitive Coping

How we think about a situation has a great deal to do with how we feel about it. Changing the way we think may help us to feel better and may give us strength to cope more successfully with and/or improve the situation.

Respectful Observation

Differences in development may be due to differences in the opportunities to learn, differences in cultural expectations, or differences within the child. When concerned about a child in care, it is important to explore your own feelings, carefully observe the child, and communicate sensitively with families. In order to address concerns in a child, providers and parents have different roles in accessing systems.

√ Observe the child

√ Document your observations over time

√ Modify

√ Evaluate

√ Share your concerns

√ Listen to the family

√ Support the family

Activity: Checking out Perceptions with the Family

Setting the Stage

Is my facility subject to the provisions of the Americans With Disabilities Act?

Yes - whether the program enrolls a child or not. The ADA, signed into law July 26, 1990, guarantees equal opportunity in public accommodations to individuals with disabilities. These individuals are defined as persons with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities. Child care centers and family child care homes are both considered to be public accommodations under Title III of the ADA. Child care programs operated by public entities

such as school districts are covered by Title II. Programs operated by religious organizations are exempted from ADA's requirements. Programs covered by the ADA may not deny individuals with disabilities (children or parents) the opportunity to participate in the services offered. The goal of the ADA is to make reasonable accommodations in order to integrate them into the program to the extent feasible, given each individual's limitations and needs, and the resources of each program.

What are the basic requirements of Title III?

The ADA requires that child care providers not discriminate against person with disabilities on the basis of disability. They must provide children and parents with disabilities with an equal opportunity to participate in the programs and services. Specifically:

Children with disabilities cannot be excluded unless their presence would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others or require a fundamental alteration of the program.

Programs must make reasonable modifications to policies and practices to integrate children, parents, and guardians with disabilities unless

doing so would constitute a fundamental alteration.

Programs must provide proper auxiliary aids and services needed for effective communication when doing so would not constitute an undue burden.

Programs must generally make their families accessible to persons with disabilities. Existing facilities are subject to the readily achievable standards for barrier removal, while newly constructed facilities and any altered portions of existing facilities must be fully accessible.

"Readily achievable" means easily accomplishable and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense.

"Undue burden" means significant difficulty or expense.

"Auxiliary aids and services" include a wide range of services and devices for ensuring effective communication for children. These include

qualified interpreters, readers, and other effective methods, equipment, devices, and services needed for communication. Programs are not required to provide individually prescribed personal devices such as hearing aids, prescription eyeglasses, or other services of a personal nature.

How might I be liable if I accept a child with special needs?

"Can I get sued if someone gets hurt?" The best advice regarding liability is: Prevent injury by complying with applicable laws and regulations; maintain a safe program by obtaining adequate training and providing continuous supervision; buy appropriate liability insurance. A child care program may owe a "higher duty" of care and supervision to a child who has a disability or is otherwise vulnerable than to other children. It is essential that information is obtained from all

parents in writing identifying any special caregiving needs their child may have. To avoid discrimination, be sure you are asking this of all parents. Requesting information to enable you to properly care for the child is acceptable. Using the information about the disability to automatically screen out children with disabilities, without completing an analysis of whether the accommodations are reasonable to provide, is unacceptable.

Can I get sued if I don't accept a child with special needs?

Maybe. ADA states that child care programs may not discriminate against persons with disabilities, but must consider if accommodations can be made and outlines a process for doing so. A suit could arise if you

either failed to engage in the required analysis and simply refused the child or refused to make certain accommodations that ADA analysis concludes are reasonable. Document everything.

Can the costs incurred be passed on to the families of children with disabilities? No.

What financial help is available?

What resources are available to help programs accommodate children with disabilities?

Do not overlook the expertise available from families, therapists and specialists who already provide services, community agencies, voluntary organizations and professionals who advocate for or work with children and families with disabilities, other program who serve children and families with special needs, government agencies, and the partial listing below.

www.access-board.gov

www.thearc.org

www.rrnetwork.org

www.childcareaware.org/index.html

www.easter-seals.org

www.pacdbtac.org

www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

www.pacer.org

www.inclusivechildcare.org

www.pitc.org

www.nectac.org

www.childcarelaw.org

Dept. of Justice: 1-800-514-0301

www.dredf.org

www.ada.gov

This information is intended to provide general information only. This document is not intended to render legal, tax, or financial advice. If you need this advice, seek the services of a competent professional. ~ (Materials from PITC/ITTI)