

Individualizing Curriculum Overview

WHO?

Individualizing curriculum is best practice and benefits all children at all Star levels. 4 & 5 Star centers are required to individualize lesson plans for each child's needs, including age, ability, developmental stage, social-emotional development, special needs, and interests.

WHY?

Individualized curriculum meets an individual child's needs, fosters development and learning, and helps each child achieve their greatest potential.

WHAT?

- Ongoing educator child observations, the results of any formal and informal assessments, and family input are used to plan and implement learning experiences.
- Educators adapt learning experiences to be responsive to each child, assisting the child to reach the goals outlined in the curriculum.
- Educators support each child's progress in all learning domains.
- Educators have developmentally appropriate expectations and believe in the potential of each child.
- Educators regularly share child progress and achievements with children's families.
- Educators design learning opportunities to meet children where they are and build on their strengths and interests.

HOW?

Child Assessment:

- Assessment of young children includes results of educator observations, samples of the child's work, and the child's performance in authentic activities.
- Results are used to enhance the child's learning.
- Developmental milestones inform assessments, including the use of state learning standards. In Oklahoma, these include Oklahoma Department of Human Services' *Early Learning Guidelines for Infants, Toddlers and Twos*, *Early Learning Guidelines for Children Ages Three through Five*, and Oklahoma State Department of Education's *Oklahoma Academic Standards*.
- When a child speaks a language other than the educator's primary language, educators may need to recruit family or community members fluent in the child's language to assist with a standardized assessment.
- If standardized assessments are used, they must be developmentally, culturally, and linguistically sensitive to the child's characteristics. The use of standardized assessments is minimized with young children to reduce child stress and interference with learning time. Assessors must be well-trained in the use of the assessment.

Individualizing Curriculum:

- Opportunities are planned for each child to be successful and to engage in joyful learning.
- Educators ensure each child's overall experience is stimulating and engaging. It is also developmentally, linguistically, and culturally responsive.
- Materials to support and extend learning are based on careful observation of a child's development and interests.
- Children who need additional support receive extended and enriched learning experiences.
- Based on their ongoing interactions and knowledge of each child, educators provide enough support to enable the child to perform at a skill level beyond what the child can do on their own. Support is gradually reduced as the child begins to master the skill, setting the stage for the next challenge.
- Educators use the learning format (such as self-directed, large group, small group, interest areas, invitations to play, active, or seatwork) best for helping each child achieve a desired goal. Goals are based on the child's age, abilities, experiences, temperament, and other characteristics. Educators change formats when children lose interest.

Resources:

Oklahoma Academic Standards, Oklahoma State Department of Education. Can be downloaded at <https://sde.ok.gov/oklahoma-academic-standards> .

Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines for Children Ages Three through Five. DHS Pub. No. 10-54, Revised 5-2019. Can be obtained by calling 1-877-283-4113 or by downloading at www.okdhs.org/library.

Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines for Infants, Toddlers And Twos, Ages 0 through 36 months. DHS Pub. No. 10-23, Revised 7-2018. Can be obtained by calling 1-877-283-4113 or by downloading at www.okdhs.org/library.

References:

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National Association for the Education of Young Children. (n.d.). DAP: Planning and implementing and engaging curriculum to achieve meaningful goals. Retrieved 12-30-21 from <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/dap/planning-curriculum>

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