

Adaptations of Group Activities

Key Points: Adaptations of Group Activities

- All children are allowed to participate in large and small group activities
- Adults design group activities with access, participation and support in mind
- Adults use adaptive equipment or materials to increase participation
- All students are engaged in group activities the majority of the time

Best Practices

Adults work together to adapt or adjust group activities in order to encourage the participation and engagement of all children. Some examples of adaptations include: adjustments to the space, materials, and equipment used for activities; the way in which activities are structured; and the instructional supports used by adults to support children's active participation. An example: during a small-group art activity in which children are using paint brushes to paint leaves they have collected; one adult is providing hand-over hand assistance for a child with a fine motor difficulty as she finger-paints her leaves. The second part of the activity involves cutting paper to form different shapes, and the child used an adapted scissors to complete the task. The child, seeing all the shapes that had been cut out, began sorting them along with assistance from her peers (this happens to be an individualized goal for the child). These adaptations are planned for in advance and not done solely "in the moment" or "on the fly." Data collection is embedded within this goal specific work and all adults are knowledgeable about the adaptations and the "why" behind the work.

Looking For...

- The inclusion of all children in group activities
- The availability and use of various adaptive materials and equipment in order to increase the participation of all children in group activities
- Adaptations to activities and routines to support children's learning and behavior
- Lesson plans that intentionally embed and use specific strategies that increase participation and engagement
- All staff knowing how to make adaptations to group activities, on an as needed basis, to increase the participation and engagement of all children

Guiding Questions for Coaching

- How do you ensure that all of your students are engaged in group activities?
- If a child with disability is having trouble engaging in a group activity, do you know how to support them? If not, do you know who to contact for support or assistance?
- What are some examples of adaptations you have made to increase engagement and participation?
- When using adaptations, do you know how to assess them from most to least restrictive?

Self-Check for Teachers

- ✓ Do I adapt my group activities based on child engagement?
- ✓ Do I know how to make appropriate adaptations for the children in my program/classroom?
- ✓ Do I feel comfortable using an adaptation during group times?
- ✓ Once an adaptation is in place and working well, do I know how to begin fading it?
- ✓ Do I always use the least intrusive adaptations first and if needed move to a more restrictive adaptation?

Also, check out the *Checklist of Practices for Schedules and Routines* from the *Unpacking the Pyramid Model* book (pg. 59) and the *Checklist of Effective Engagement Practices* (pg. 89).

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