Participant’s Guide

Introduction to Special Needs

This module is part of the MN Parent Aware Training 4 hours
Introduction to Children with Special Needs, Session A

Knowledge and Competency Framework (KCF) Content Area, MN Core Competency Content Area, CDA Content Areas, Parent Aware Training Indicators

The Primary Knowledge and Competency Content Areas, the MN Core Competencies Content Area, the CDA Content Areas, and (as appropriate) Parent Aware Training Indicators are listed here to help participants understand what competencies, content areas and/or indicators are addressed in the training.

KCF Content Area: Child Development and Learning,

CDA Content Area: Principles of Child Development and Learning

Learning Objectives:

This session was developed to address the following learning objectives. You can reasonably expect that, by the end of this session, actively engaged participants will be able to:

- Describe strategies for children with challenging behaviors for increasing social/ emotional competence
- Identify the red flags in development
- Explain the importance of observation in early care environments

Session Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Overview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding Behavior and its Impact on Development</td>
<td>Presentation – Understanding Behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity – Expectations in Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Flags in Development</td>
<td>Presentation – What are Red Flags and Developmental Concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity – Identifying Red Flags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation and Talking with Parents</td>
<td>Presentation – Observation and Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity – Talking with Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Discussion – Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Discussion – Assignments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Environments that are engaging, predictable, and characterized by on-going positive adult-child interactions are necessary for promoting children’s social and emotional development and preventing challenging behaviors”.

“Children are less likely to engage in problem behavior when they know what to do, how to do it, and what is expected.”

Children may display certain behaviors as a means of communication and to assist them in understanding the world around them. Behaviors can communicate a need, such as

- Protection from an overwhelming situation
- To intensify sensory input to a level they can feel
- To meet the individual’s needs or wants
- To organize or make sense of their environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation/ Cause</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensory (always consider whether the child is physically able to perform task)</td>
<td>Child is using behavior to get or avoid sensory input</td>
<td>Deep pressure input, squish games, tickle games, sensory play, swinging, jumping, lotion, soft music, dim the lights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape</td>
<td>Child is avoiding an “undesired” or difficult task</td>
<td>Visual cues (break boards, schedules), list expectations, timer, alternate with motivating activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>Child is using behavior to get attention of peer or adult</td>
<td>Social stories, role plays, provide visual cues, cartoon drawings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication (Always consider a child’s ability to process information)</td>
<td>Child is replacing behavior for words to make request and/or tell another individual something. Misunderstanding of expectations</td>
<td>Provide visual prompts and choices, social stories, cartoon drawings, verbal prompts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Participant Activity** - discuss what might be the triggers for this behavior? What might be the motivator for the child to display the behavior? What might they be trying to communicate? What are some strategies you can try to intervene? What are your expectations of this child based on their age?

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Description</th>
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<th>Expectations</th>
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</thead>
</table>

**Proactive Strategies to Guide Behavior**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Considerations</th>
<th>Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Visual schedules and Supports</td>
<td>• Allow time for processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides structure and consistency</td>
<td>• Use consistent language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organized Environment</td>
<td>• Tell child what to do rather what not to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Should be at child’s level!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lighting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide break space</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensory</th>
<th>Schedules and Routines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Minimize stimulation</td>
<td>• Posted schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide fidget toys/ sensory modifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sensory activities (sensory table, playdough, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Climbing structures</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**You will note that many strategies can cross multiple categories**
Red Flags in Development

Red flags are behaviors that should warn you to stop, look, and think and then observe and document. To complete this process,

- Know the normal patterns of growth and development.
- Observe a child in a variety of situations.
- Look for patterns or clusters of a behavior.
- Compare the child’s behavior to a “norm” of six months younger and six months older.
- Note how much the child has grown in the past 3-6 months—has he/she progressed?
- Keep in mind the factors that may be influencing the development.

Developmental Expectations

Infants up to 12 months

Infants 12-24 months

Toddlers 24-36 months

3 Year old preschoolers

4 year old preschoolers
When concerns arise, we want to look at possible reasons for the concerns. The following are some questions to ask yourself when concerns arise:

- Is the expectation we are having developmentally appropriate?
- Is the concern/behavior consistently occurring?
- Are there cultural components to be aware of that impact development?
- Is the area of concern getting in the way of
  - Learning
  - Communication
  - Social Interactions

We also want to look at the whole child and the whole family situation and factors that may impact the child’s development, these may include:

- Cultural differences
- Poverty
- Abuse/ neglect in the family
- Nutrition
- Sleep issues
- Allergies
- English Language Learners (multiple languages)
- Birth risk factors (e.g. prematurity)
1. Go to the website Help Me Grow – [www.helpmegrowmn.org](http://www.helpmegrowmn.org) and review the site. Find the area where you can make a referral for screening. Review areas where development is presented. Bring questions and comments about the site to the next session.

2. Complete the “What is the Behavior” grid at the end of this packet for either a child who is in your care now or a child you know. Be prepared to share this information at the next session.
Session B

Introduction to Children with Special Needs, Session B

Knowledge and Competency Framework (KCF) Content Area, MN Core Competency Content Area, CDA Content Areas, Parent Aware Training Indicators

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KCF Content Area: Child Development and Learning,

CDA Content Area: Principles of Child Development and Learning

Learning Objectives:

This session was developed to address the following learning objectives. You can reasonably expect that, by the end of this session, actively engaged participants will be able to:

- Recognize the most common special needs and special health needs and the impact on development
- Identify when and where to refer for screening and/or assessment
- List the resources and services for children with special needs including eligibility criteria and how to support families in accessing these services.

Session Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Overview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Activity – Review Behavior Grid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Inclusion of Children with Disabilities and Special Health Needs</td>
<td>Presentation – Inclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 50 minutes | Understanding the Diagnosis | Presentation – Autism  
Activity – Personal Sensory Impact  
Presentation – Sensory Processing  
Activity – Strategies for Sensory  
Presentation – ADHD and other Health Needs |
| 35 minutes | Referring for Screening and Assessment and early Intervention | Presentation – screening and intervention  
Activity – Discuss Assignment of web site review |
| 15 minutes | Closing | Discussion – Summary  
PLAT |
| 2 hours total | | |


Inclusion

“Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, polices, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation and supports.”

Early Childhood Inclusion: A Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 2009

Most Common Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Strategies

Resources

Autism Spectrum Disorder:

Autism affects the persons overall development in 3 primary areas:

- the way a person communicates; understands and uses language,
- how the person interacts socially with others,
- how the person understands and responds to his environment and the world around him.
### Special Health Needs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Asthma</th>
<th>Food Allergies</th>
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Referral for Screening and Assessment - Notes
Learning Log

Take a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned in the sessions of this class. Use the spaces below to capture your ideas and plans for action.

In this class I learned...

Based on what I learned,

some things I plan to do ...

This class started me thinking about...
Resources


Center for Disease Control (CDC): Learn the Signs-Act Early http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html

Center for Inclusive Child Care www.inclusivechildcare.org


Data Resource Center for Child & Adolescent Health www.childhealthdata.org


Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs (3rd Edition) by Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp (editors), 2009, NAEYC

Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: Minnesota's Early Learning Standards 2005, Minnesota Department of Human Services

Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: Minnesota's Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to 3, 2007, Minnesota Department of Human Services

First Signs http://www.firstsigns.org/


Minnesota Parents Know www.mnparentsknow.info

NICHCY http://www.nichcy.org/Disabilities/Milestones/Pages/Default.aspx
Brief handout descriptions on various special needs and disabilities www.nichcy.org (http://nichcy.org/disability)

Minnesota Administrative Rule (Part C) eligibility for early intervention services for infant and toddlers https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/?id=3525.1350

Minnesota Administrative Rules (Part B) for intervention services for children ages 3 to 6 years. https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=3525.1351

Minnesota Association of Children's Mental Health (MACMH) Brief handout descriptions on various mental health disorders www.macmh.org


Center for Disease Control (CDC): Learn the Signs-Act Early http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html

Children and Challenging Behavior Making Inclusion Work Edited by Cindy Croft and Deborah Hewitt, 2010, Center for Inclusive Child Care
Data Resource Center for Child & Adolescent Health [www.childhealthdata.org]

*Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs (3rd Edition)* by Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp (editors), 2009, NAEYC

*Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: Minnesota's Early Learning Standards*  
[http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/early/ind/](http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/early/ind/)

First Signs  

Minnesota Association of Children's Mental Health (MACMH)  
Brief handout descriptions on various mental health disorders [www.macmh.org](http://www.macmh.org)

Minnesota Parents Know  
[www.mnparentsknow.info](http://www.mnparentsknow.info)

Brief handout descriptions on various special needs and disabilities [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org) (go in to "Our Publications")

*Practical Tips for Sharing Developmental Concerns with Families*, 2011, Center for Inclusive Child Care.

*So This is Normal Too?* By Deborah Hewitt, 2012, Redleaf Press

What is the Behavior Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the behavior?</th>
<th>Why might child be doing this?</th>
<th>What can I do to prevent this behavior?</th>
<th>What new skills can we teach?</th>
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Taken from The Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children

[www.challengingbehavior.org](http://www.challengingbehavior.org)