

Supporting Children with Special Needs Modifications and Accommodations in Lesson Plans

Lesson plans are not “one size fits all.” Planning and individualizing lesson plans help all children succeed.

Children have different abilities and challenges and may need additional support to participate in learning in an early care and education classroom. Even in the same age group, children differ in their skills and challenges. Children may have challenges in participating in activities or in completing routines in the classroom. A child may be particularly shy and withdrawn, have difficulty with transitions, or have a disability that makes using their hands difficult. Because of this, teachers must adapt and modify activities and routines every day. For maximum success it is important to think about individual children’s needs when planning. Consider the following factors when planning:

- Carefully observe how things are going during the routine times each day or during specific activities. Are particular children having difficulty being successful in activities? Could changes be made to support the child? Use this information to review your lesson plans and make note of individual needs.
- What are individual children interested in? Particular toys, books, themes? Use children’s interests to ensure a pleasant and successful activity.
- What new skills are different children working on? Choose items that will allow children to practice particular skills that are emerging. Make note of these skills in your lesson plans.
- Are there ways to modify a toy, present an activity, or provide additional support that would help the child be successful?
- Know what support individual children need and make a note of this support in your lesson plan. Does Johnny need a two-minute warning before transitions? Does Suzy respond better to brightly colored toys? Does Karen need a fidget toy during large group? It is important to plan for these needs as you plan your lessons.
- If a child has a particular disability, work with parents, therapists, and other professionals serving the child to determine challenges the child may face in participating and to create ways to modify your lesson plans to increase the child’s success.
- Remember that children with the same diagnosis may face different challenges, so there is no cookie cutter list of support from which all children would benefit.