Package Five: Creating Early Learning and Care Environments where Everyone Belongs

Package Duration 10 hours

Objectives

- To acquire a knowledge of the possible different and diverse abilities of children in early learning and care settings.
- To acquire a knowledge of a range of learning and teaching strategies and approaches to promote the participation of children with diverse abilities in early learning and care settings.
- To introduce a range of specific interventions and resources that are available. To provide guidance on supporting children's independent toileting.
- To acquire a knowledge and understanding of a Universal Design Approach To acquire a knowledge and understanding of a range of strategies associated with a Universal Design Approach to support children's belongingness, engagement and learning.

Summary of Content

Participants will be introduced to a range of specific interventions such as Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped CHildren (TEACCH) (Schopler 2001; Mesibov and Shea 2010) and the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) (Bondy and Frost 2011); Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) (Alberto and Troutman 2013; HANEN; and Social Stories (Sheehan 2014; Gra 2015; Timmons 2016; Webster 2018) will be provided. Harnessing the role of the environment as the third teacher in terms of the physical, temporal and relational aspects of the environment linked to the Reggio-Emilia approach will be presented (Ring 2018).

Early years educators will be encouraged to tap into the power of story in supporting children with diverse abilities in early years settings, for example, the books below:
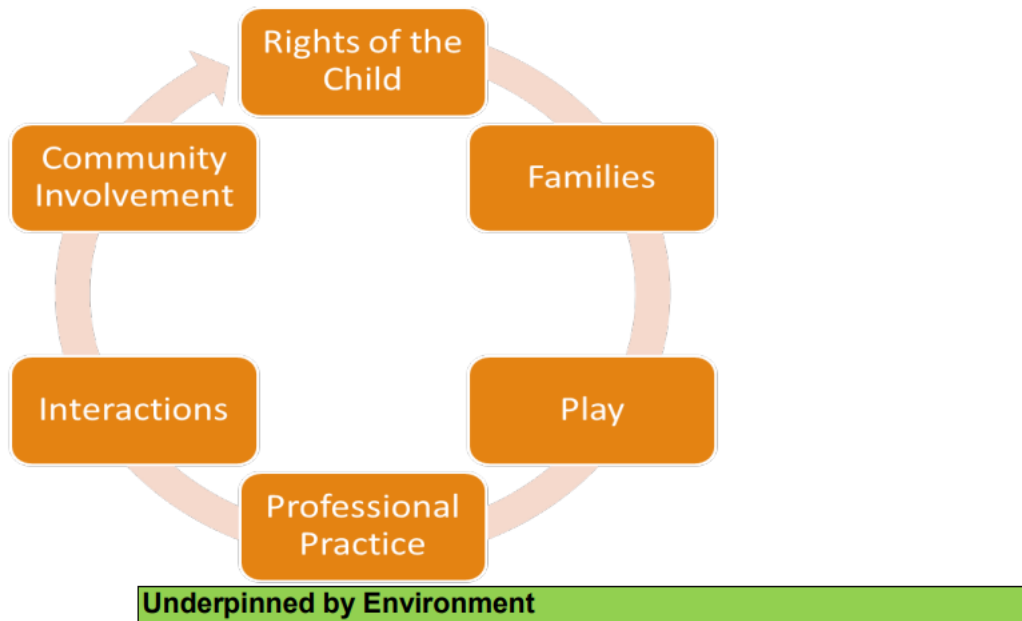
Supporting children's independent toileting will discussed with reference to physical/medical elements; language/communication; dressing; anxiety; awareness of bodily cues; adherence to routine and using different toilets. A range of strategies will be suggested and a focus on being supportive; positive and consistent highlighted. Suggestions for creating a toileting plan will be provided and the importance of communicating with, and consulting with the child in devising the plan will be stressed. Early years educators will be directed to resources and tips such as http://www.do2learn.com/picturecards/printcards/selfhelp_toileting.htm http://www.brighttots.com/Toilet_training_and_autism.html

The role of visual schedules in supporting children will be discussed.
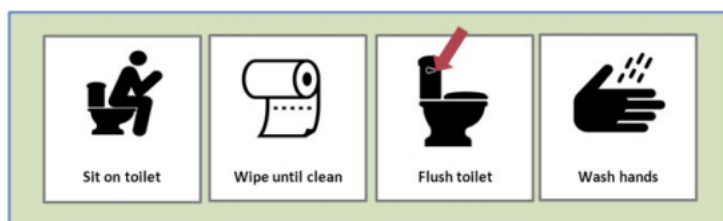
Autism Speaks (2018:9)

This module will be based on research and evidence regarding best practice in early childhood provision and Universal Design as identified in the 'Guidelines for Early Years Settings from a Universal Design Approach (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2018). The importance of providing inclusive environments that cater to a diversity of children with varying abilities will be discussed. The potential for the environment to support staff wellbeing and family members who use the building daily will also be discussed. The module will be presented with reference to the six Síolta standards below and a range of associated strategies for ensuring access and inclusion for all children suggested. Underpinned by Environment Guidelines for Early Years Settings from a Universal Design Approach (DCYA 2006).

Rights of the Child

Families

Play

Professional Practice

Interactions

Community Involvement

Underpinned by Environment

 The module will be supported by evidence/exemplars from settings in Ireland that participated in the compilation of the guidelines. This evidence/exemplars will be used to demonstrate the possibilities inherent in the early educator adopting the role of planner, participant and evaluator (Greenman 2007).

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