



**Promoting the inclusion of  
infants and young children  
with disabilities in child care**

**Instructor Guidelines**

**Family Day Care Homes:  
Natural Environments as a  
Teaching Tool**



Philadelphia Inclusion Network a program of  
Child and Family Studies Research Programs at  
Thomas Jefferson University  
130 S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
[cfsrp@jefferson.edu](mailto:cfsrp@jefferson.edu)  
<http://jeffline.tju.edu/cfsrp>

April 2005

## **PIN ~ Philadelphia Inclusion Network**

Campbell, P.H., Milbourne, S.A., & Silverman, C. (2002). Philadelphia Inclusion Network, Participant Materials.

Campbell, P.H., Milbourne, S. (2002). Philadelphia Inclusion Network, Instructor Guidelines.

Both are available from Child and Family Studies Research Programs, TJU, OT, 130 S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, 215-503-1608.  
<http://jeffline.tju.edu/cfsrp>

Many people have provided ideas for training activities, content, and materials and we appreciate their input, especially from Elyse Rosen, Lalita Boykin, Kathi Nash, Francine Warton, Patricia Benvenuto, and Robin Miller, teachers who support inclusive child care for families and their young children with disabilities. Mary Mikus, Jean Ann Vogelmann, and other families who work for their children to be part of inclusive communities. Susan Kershman and Terry Waslow, early intervention specialists and advocates for inclusion. A special thanks to Natalie Feller and Lillian McCuen and also to the many of you who diligently and tirelessly edited the content of the materials.



**April 2005**

**PIN, a program of:**

**Child & Family Studies Research Programs**

**Thomas Jefferson University,**

**Jefferson College of Health Professions,**

**Department of Occupational Therapy**

**130 S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor**

**Philadelphia, PA 19107**

**215-503-1608 fax 1640**

**<http://jeffline.tju.edu/cfsrp>**

# Session Outline

Topic	Activity	Time	Cum Time
<b>I Welcome the Group</b> Introduce yourself and talk briefly about the Philadelphia Inclusion Network (PIN). Promoting the inclusion of young children with disabilities in child care settings is a primary purpose of PIN. List successful activities from participants on chartboard.		10 min.	:10
<b>II Settings &amp; Environments</b> How settings impact “climate” How settings influence behavior Organizing settings to maximize opportunities for learning	#1	15 min.	:25
<b>III Scheduling</b> Scheduling as a Framework Routines & Activities	#2	20 min.	:45
<b>IV Identifying Children’s Learning Needs</b> Preferences/Likes Interests Abilities Needs for Practice Needs for Learning	#3	20 min	1:05
<b>Break</b>		10 min	1:15
<b>V Multipurpose Activities</b> Designing & Building Activities on Natural Situations Meeting All Ages Addressing Individual Learning Needs Adaptations	#4	45 min	2:00
<b>V Summing Up: Making Routines Go Well</b> Successful Transitions Tips for Those Hectic Times		30 min.	2:30

**Notes:**

**What you will need:**

- Participant sign-in sheet
- Extra copies of the make-up assignment
- Extra copies of previous modules
- Chart board
- Markers

# Natural Environments as a Teaching Tool

## OVERVIEW

### What this workshop should accomplish:

Home-based caregivers provide care for infants and children of different ages in group sizes that may increase or decrease at different times during the day -- or on different days. While center-based child care is organized around specific activities and classroom routines for children of the same approximate age, home-based care promotes children's learning through natural routines and activities.

In this session, participants will learn to identify routines and activities in their home-based settings. Some of these routines/activities will be going well and some may not be occurring as smoothly as caregivers would like. Participants will learn strategies for improving those routines or activities that are not going well and for using those that are successful as contexts for children's learning. Participants will learn, also, how to develop successful learning activities for children of all ages and how to fit those activities into their typical daily routines.

### From this session, participants should gain understanding about:

- i Identifying and scheduling daily routines and activities;
- i Describe ways to use adaptations and other strategies to improve routines that are difficult or not going well; and
- i Identify ways to turn naturally-occurring routines and activities into learning opportunities.

# Background

Family care providers have many opportunities for children to learn naturally. Many families choose home-based child care because the type of care provided for children is more like what children might experience in their own homes and is not as structured as the type of care provided in centers. In center-based care, children, generally of the same age, spend time together in activities that are designed to be interesting to the children and to teach them to learn specific information and skills. In home-based care, children are seldom the same age so that designing activities that are interesting to a same-aged group of children is not possible. Rather, home-based providers can use naturally occurring activities, as well as those that are specifically created, to provide a context in which children of different ages can learn and participate as is appropriate for each child's chronological age.

There are many places in home-based child care where children can learn. Different activities naturally occur in different rooms of the house such as the kitchen, playroom, bathroom. The outside provides other opportunities through activities such as doing errands, walking in the neighborhood, playing outside in the yard or at a playground, or visiting a museum or a local library. Each of these places where children spend time provide opportunities for teaching and learning. Most caregivers establish routines when caring for groups of children. A primary way of creating routines is to design a schedule of what will happen during the day. In center-based care, schedules are likely to be the same each day, including activities such as snack, storytime, or arts and crafts. In home-based care, routines may be different each day depending on what is happening. For example, at 11:30 each morning, a caregiver may walk with other children to a local school to meet the children who are enrolled in half-day kindergarten, a routine that is different when schools have holidays. Or, all children may go to the local library once a week where the

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## Session: Natural Environments

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toddlers may participate in story hour while the preschoolers spend time in the Children's Section with the caregiver.

Mattie has been caring for children in her home for five years. Most the kids come from the local neighborhood so Mattie knows their families. Most of the children arrive at Mattie's house each day between 7 and 9 am. But, some days Shafik does not get there until noon because his mother works different shifts and she likes for him to stay at home with her when he can. By 9 am, Mattie needs to leave the house to take Keira, Tomas, and Jonathan to school. All three attend the elementary school which is two blocks away from the house. On their fall morning walks to school, Mattie has the children stop and collect leaves, acorns from an old oak tree, and flowers.

Shafik, at four years old is really interested in the outside so Mattie figures she can turn this activity into a "science center." While walking home, she and the children try to find as many different leaves as they can -- right in their own neighborhood. When the children get home, the baby will be ready for her nap, leaving Mattie to read a story about trees and another one about the fall season for Shafik, Alan, and Samelya. The fall story is a story about Mr. Tree and will allow the children to "act out" being trees while listening to the story. After story, she is thinking that the children can help make their lunchtime sandwiches, cutting bread into the shapes of leaves and acorns using some cookie cutters. She has cream cheese and peanut butter so that they can "decorate" their sandwiches like the fall leaves they have seen on their walk to school.

Mattie has learned how to use the typical routines of home-based care to teach children about their environment and about science – their first "botany lesson." Her primary goals are for the children to learn information about the fall season and about trees. However, she knows that Alan will get lots of practice using his hands and improving his coordination and that Samelya will have the opportunity to sit and listen during the story. Both

Notes:

Samelya and Shafik are four-year old talkers and will have lots of opportunities to express themselves in discussing the walk, story, and art/lunch activity.

### Curriculum for Home-Based

#### (Family) Child Care

There are few published curricula guides for providers of in-home child care although, in recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on providing more than “child care” for children who are cared for in this type of child care setting (e.g., Kontos, 1992; 1994; Kontos, Howes, Shinn, & Galinsky, 1994). To a certain extent, this emphasis on the quality of family home-based care has been translated by home care providers and others to mean that opportunities for learning need to be more structured and organized than what would occur if children were being cared for in their own homes. In-home care providers are encouraged to plan and organize specific activities for children and to set up play areas in their homes that resemble those found in child care centers (Dodge, Koralek, & Foulks, 1994).

The *Creative Curriculum for Family Child Care* (Dodge & Colker, 1991; 1992) is the most widely used curriculum for in-home care. This curriculum is based on helping care providers define a philosophy of care and develop a plan for managing both time (scheduling) and place (physical environment). Time is divided between care activities (e.g., eating breakfast; napping) and more structured play and learning activities. Care providers are encouraged to divide time into blocks such as early morning or late afternoon with structured play and learning activities taking place in mid-morning (i.e., morning activities) and mid-afternoon (afternoon activities). The second part of the curriculum provides examples of many activities within a variety of categories (e.g., dramatic play) that can be

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drawn upon and used as by in-home providers during morning and afternoon activities.

This session emphasizes ways that in-home care providers can use naturally-occurring routines and activities as contexts for teaching and learning. Too often, the routines of family care are represented as having only a caregiving function and as “separate” from recommended planned and organized activity sessions. Maximizing opportunities for teaching and learning during routines allows child care providers to capitalize on children’s interests and to integrate structured opportunities for play and learning with what children are learning through participation in day-to-day routines and activities.

### **Routines As A Context for Teaching & Learning**

Routines and natural activities occur within physical settings. For example, eating is most likely to occur within a home setting, outside in the yard, in a variety of types of restaurants, in a relative or neighbor’s house, at church, etc. Playing on a jungle gym is most likely to occur at a playground, in the backyard, in a fast-food playground (such as McDonald’s or Burger King), or at a structured recreation program. Settings provide the context for different types of routines and activities. Center-based child care is a setting that may include an outside playground and several internal settings (such as an indoor gym area) and from which children may take field trips to other settings such as museums, zoos, community facilities such as firehouses or police stations, or farms. Family child-care includes not only a house (and all its internal settings) but the yard and all the different settings that make up the neighborhood in which the home-based program is located. It is these settings, both inside and outside the home-based facility that offer

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numerous opportunities for teaching and learning. It is within these settings that a variety of routines and natural activities occur.

A first step in optimizing children's opportunities to learn within routines and natural activities is to understand the individual differences among children. Children are likely to have different interests and learning needs due to their different chronological ages. What may be of interest to a two year old is unlikely to be of interest in the same way to a four year old. Children also have different interests for reasons other than their ages. These differences may be based on experiences, talents, preferences, or inclinations. Some children lean toward interests in creative expression, for example, while others may be more interested in sports and physical activity. Children may have different learning needs, also, not just based on chronological age but on their abilities. While children of different ages have different abilities, children develop at different rates in different developmental areas and may need particular experiences to help them develop maximally. Some children may be very able to sit and listen to a story while others, of the same age, may have difficulty remaining in one place or may listen for shorter periods of time than other children of the same age. Children with delays in development or with particular types of disabilities may need more opportunities to develop abilities in particular areas. A child with a physical disability, for example, may need more practice at learning to hold a crayon and drawing or writing than may other children of the same age.

Once a child care provider understands the differences among children in terms of their interests, likes, abilities, needs, dislikes, gifts and talents, etc., each child's strengths and interests can become the basis on which learning opportunities are built. The many settings in which children in family care participate and the routines and natural activities that occur in those settings become the context into which specific learning opportunities are embedded.

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Mattie used her neighborhood and a typical routine of walking children to the local elementary school to provide opportunities for children to learn about their environment and about science. She integrated the experiences that the children had on their walk with structured activities during her morning activities when everyone got back home again. In this way, she capitalized on the interests of the children while offering opportunities for the children to practice individual abilities such as expressing themselves, using creative expression, and listening.

### Summary

Home-based caregivers provide care for infants and children of different ages in group sizes that may increase or decrease at different times during the day -- or on different days. While center-based child care is organized around specific activities and classroom routines for children of the same approximate age, home-based care promotes children's learning through natural routines and activities.

In this session, participants will learn to identify routines and activities in their home-based settings. Some of these routines/activities will be going well and some may not be occurring as smoothly as caregivers would like. Participants will learn strategies for improving those routines or activities that are not going well and for using those that are successful as contexts for children's learning. Participants will learn, also, how to develop successful learning activities for children of all ages and how to fit those activities into their typical daily routines.

**Notes:**

# Activity #1

## Settings

### Purpose:

For family care providers to think about and identify the different settings where they spend time with children including the different rooms of their home (e.g., kitchen, playroom, bathroom, bedrooms), neighborhood places, and places visited regularly and/or for special field trips.

### Activity Sequence:

1. Start the activity by linking with what participants have said in their introductions about routines/activities that go well with children in their programs by highlighting routines/activities that go well and asking them to talk about the locations where those routines/activities take place.
2. Refer them to the handout, Settings, and ask them to take a few minutes to write down all the places where they spend time with children including different rooms of their home, neighborhood places, and places visited regularly and/or for special field trips.
3. After most people seem done (have listed as many places as they can think of), ask one person to read the list of settings. Intersperse questions such as “what do children learn there?”, “how do the children participate when in the kitchen?”, “what do you expect children to do when they are outside playing?” Write the list on the blackboard or chart board.
4. Ask other participants to add to the list (add places where they spend time with children that are not already up on the list). The outcome should be a list that represents the places of the whole group.
5. End and summarize by pointing out how many different places children spend time and encouraging discussion about what children learn in those places and how they participate (or are expected to participate or not). Emphasize the number of opportunities that are present for children to learn and (1) how these might be “guided” or “facilitated” by the home care provider and (2) linked to more structured activities.

### Notes:

Length: 15 minutes

### What you will need:

#### Handout:

- Settings, Participant pp. 11
- Chart paper or blackboard



# Activity #2

## Scheduling

### Purpose:

To identify key routines and activities that occur at four different time periods throughout the day and to identify differences that may occur on different days of the week. (This chart will be used later for Activity #4).

### Activity Sequence:

1. Participants may work in groups if more than one person is from the same family home-based care program and/or two to three participants may be grouped together so that they may discuss what happens during an average day and average week.
2. Introduce the activity by suggesting that participants talk together about what happens during an average day and average week. Some providers may have schedules for their programs while others may not. "So, it is Monday morning and your week is starting. What happens first?" Tell participants to complete a written schedule for each program using the handout Routines and Activities Plan. If more than one person from the same program are working together, one schedule may be completed.
3. Ask the group(s) how they are doing after about 10-15 minutes and tell them that they have 5 more minutes to finish the schedule.
4. Discuss the schedules of the group by asking someone to read out a typical day. Emphasize that some of the same things happen each day (e.g., breakfast, lunch, naptime) while other things may differ. Ask if people do anything special during a week (such as go to the library with all the children on Wednesdays), have field trips, etc.
5. Shift into the next activity where participants will identify children's learning preferences and needs.

### Notes:

Length: 20 minutes

What you will need:

Handout:

- ' Routines and Activities Plan, Participant pp. 12

# Routines and Activities Plan

	Morning	Late Morning/Lunch	Early Afternoon	Late Afternoon
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				

# Activity #3

## Children's Learning Needs

### Purpose:

To identify individual children's learning needs within a context of children's interests, preferences, talents, and abilities so that participants will not focus only on what they see children as needing to learn to do (e.g., attend longer; sit longer; share; get along with other children better; learn their letters, etc.)

### Activity Sequence:

1. Introduce the activity by talking about how all children develop differently, at different rates, with different interests and different learning needs. Emphasize that some aspects of learning may relate to a child's chronological age (i.e., learning needs may be similar within chronological age periods) but that most are unique to particular children. Give examples either drawn from their discussions and/or ask them to provide examples from children for whom they provide care. Emphasize the similarities between children who may be delayed in one or more areas of development and typically-developing children.
2. Ask each participant to identify a child for whom they provide care and complete the handout, Learning Styles & Needs for that child. If they are caring for a child with a disability or significant delays, encourage them to select that child.
3. After about 10 minutes (or so), call on individual people discuss the strengths, preferences, etc. of the child for whom they have completed the worksheet. Ask them to give the child's chronological age so that you can emphasize differences among the children described by the group. Or, you can ask if anyone described a child who is X years of age (i.e., who is a two year old) or a child with special needs.

Break

### Notes:

Length: 20 minutes

### What you will need:

#### Handout:

' Learning Styles and Needs, Participant pp. 13

Length: 10 min.

# Learning Styles & Needs

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Likes</b>	<b>Special Interests</b>
<b>Abilities</b>	<b>Need to Practice</b>
<b>Need to Learn</b>	<b>Special Gifts &amp; Talents</b>
<b>Friends at Childcare</b>	<b>Dislikes?</b>

# Activity #4 Multipurpose Routines & Activities

## Purpose:

Provide opportunities for participants to work together to develop a plan that builds learning opportunities into typically occurring routines and activities.

## Activity Sequence:

1. Introduce the activity with a short demonstration of what participants will be doing. Ask one person to talk about what they typically do in the morning (or another time span). Ask another person to talk about the learning styles and needs of one child (or tie this together with what a participant has described in the previous activity).
2. Refer participants to the handout, *Facilitating Children's Participation* and briefly review the strategies that can be used to help children fully participate in routines and activities. (The chart should have been introduced in earlier sessions such as *Welcoming All Children* so that participants should be familiar with the framework.)
3. Using chart paper (or a blackboard), write some of the key routines and activities that occur during the selected time frame. Write these on one side of the paper. On the other side, write out ways in which the selected child's interests, talents, etc. can be built upon during each of the routines or activities that occur in the time frame. Elicit these suggestions from the group.

**Example:** Late morning routine includes an activity session where children play, clean up, get ready for lunch, and eat lunch. During this time, the caregiver is overseeing children's play time, getting a baby up from her morning nap, preparing lunch for the children, and getting everything ready for the children to sit down and eat. The children are playing with toys with each other, cleaning up, washing their hands, and getting ready for lunch. Emilio is a 3 year old who is really into cars and trucks. He has been playing with a toy garage and trying to keep one of the 2 year olds from taking his cars away from him. He is very good at using the garage, making the cars go into and out of the

## Notes:

**Length:** 45 minutes

## What you will need:

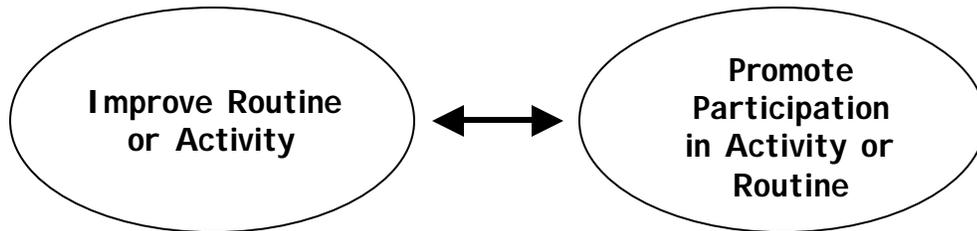
- ' Markers
  - ' Chart paper for each group
- Handout:
- ' *Facilitating Children's Participation*, Participant pp. 14

garage. He loves peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and juice but does not like to sit down and eat – or give up his trucks and cars. In this example, the group would think about ways in which Emilio's interests and likes could be incorporated into the routines and what types of adaptations might assist with transition, etc. For example, suggestions could be made for how the caregiver might facilitate Emilio's play with the 2 year old, transition into lunch, etc. Reinforce participants for creativity, imagination, use of adaptations, etc. and emphasize how even the simplest caregiving routines provide opportunities for children to learn.

4. After the demonstration of what participants will be doing, place them in groups of 5-8 and tell them to have one person describe their routine for a particular time period and another person talk about a child's learning style and needs. Tell them they will be making their own chart. Give them about 10 minutes to do the activity.
5. Select two or three groups (depending on time) to describe what they have written on their charts.
6. Summarize by emphasizing creativity shown by group members and discussing how important creativity is when using typical routines and activities as opportunities for learning. Talk about how creating opportunities for learning is easier with planning (as opposed to "capitalizing on the moment" which is also a strategy that can be used but sometimes not as successfully as when pre-planning has taken place).

**Notes:**

## Facilitating Children's Participation



### **Environmental Accommodations**

- Adapt Room Set-up
- Adapt/Select Equipment
- Equipment/Adaptations for Positioning

### **Select or Adapt Activity**

### **Adapt Materials**

### **Adapt Requirements or Instructions**

### **Have Another Child Help-**

- Peer Assistance/Tutoring
- Cooperative Learning

### **Have an Individual Child do Something Different**

### **Have an Adult Help a Child Do the Activity**

### **Have an Individual Child Do Something Outside of the Room (with an Adult)**

# Summing Up

## Making Routines Go Well

This discussion will assist participants to reflect on what they learned today and will also briefly preview the next session. Be sure that all materials are collected and replaced into proper containers.

### Routines That Don't Go Well:

Throughout the session, participants may have given examples of routines that do not go well – i.e., transition, mealtimes, naptimes, etc. Suggest that the strategies that they have learned in this session are ones they can use to make routines and activities go better. By (1) capitalizing on children's interests, likes, etc., the physical and social environments can be structured so that children are more active participants; (2) using adaptations, children can be helped to be more active participants in routines and activities; and (3) planning ahead of time, routines and activities may be designed so that children will enjoy participation.

Use an example of a routine that is not going well that somebody has talked about during the class or ask one person to describe an event, etc. from their own program that typically is a problem (e.g., getting a particular child to nap, toileting, getting everyone ready to go outside and play, involving a child with a disability or delay in a particular routine or activity). Illustrate how this situation could be improved through optimizing learning opportunities, using adaptations, or planning.

Participants are likely to mention similar routines – e.g., transition. Ask the group to provide “tips” for how they have made a particular routine work better in their program.

### Review:

Ask participants what they have learned in this session using an imaginary situation such as what they plan to do differently in the next week, what information they would share with a friend, etc.

### Date and time of the next session:

### Highlights of next session:

### Evaluation:

Have participants complete the evaluation form “What Did You Learn Today?”.

### Notes:

**Length:** 30 minutes

### Announcement:

T Date of next session

### What you will need:

- Evaluation Forms

## REFERENCES & RESOURCES

Dodge, D. T. & Colker, L. J. (1991). The creative curriculum for family child care. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies.

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Kontos, S., Howes, C., & Galinsky, E. (1996). Does training make a difference to quality in family child care? Early childhood research quarterly, 11, 427-445.

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## What Did You Learn Today?

1. Did you make any changes in your child space since the last session? Explain
2. List 2- 3 main points you learned from this session.
3. I am leaving this session with a better idea about how to:
4. What is one thing you plan to do differently in your child space before the next session?