

What you will learn in this module

How to create environments that are accessible to all children

Creating accessible environments means adjusting activities to meet children's needs. The right accommodations help children with disabilities participate in early childhood activities and routines. They can play with peers and explore their environment.

How to adapt environments for children with disabilities

Meeting the needs of children with disabilities means adjusting expectations. It means using everyday activities to achieve new goals. Sometimes children need special equipment. If so, this is provided by parents or special education staff who will demonstrate its proper use.

How to collaborate to address the specific goals of children with disabilities

The families of children with disabilities often ask teachers to collaborate with others outside the program. The team finds ways to address children's goals within the early childhood program. Team members work together to help children reach their potential.

You already know a lot about creating environments to meet children's needs

You know how to make activities accessible to children.

Meeting the needs of children who have different interests and abilities is part of an early childhood teacher's job. Choice making allows children to explore topics of interest. Open-ended activities let children with different levels of ability play together. The schedule and everyday routines are adjusted to meet children's needs.

Including children with disabilities uses these same strategies to address a broader range of ability. Choice making and open-ended activities give all children opportunities to be part of what is going on. Accommodations help them participate as independently as possible.

You know how to adapt activities and routines.

Adapting the environment to meet the needs of individual children is expected in early childhood environments. Most adaptations involve changing expectations. Or using activities to achieve different goals and objectives. Sometimes it is necessary to adapt the schedule. Or change how equipment and materials are arranged.

Families help teachers adapt to the needs of their children with disabilities. They share information about what their child can and cannot do. Often the adaptations needed are similar to those teachers make for typical children.

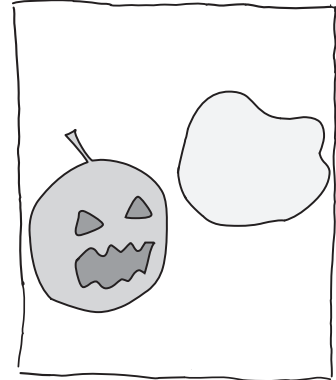
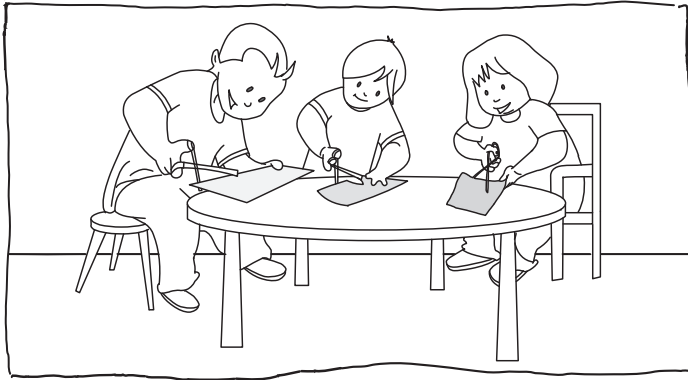
You know how to collaborate with others.

Collaborating with families to address their child's needs is an important part of early childhood programs. Close collaboration allows parents and teachers to set the same goals. They coordinate efforts to help children meet them.

Caring for children with disabilities means using these collaboration skills in a new way. Specialists work with teachers to address specific goals within the early childhood environment. Sometimes services are provided outside the program. Parents may still want teachers involved in addressing goals and implementing accommodations.

Hannah Makes Her Jack O'Lantern

As you read this story notice the goals Hannah is working on when she plays in the Art Center with other children.

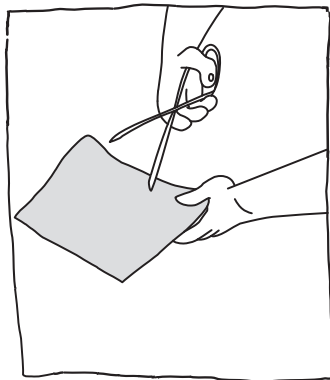


Student Teacher:
"Hannah's adaptive
scissors aren't helping
her cut any better."

Student Teacher: "Her
cutting doesn't have the
control and detail of the
other children's."



Ms. Alvarez: "But that's
not her goal."



Ms. Alvarez: "She's doing a
great job holding her scissors
and learning to cut."



Student Teacher: "I forgot to notice Hannah's success."