Differentiated Instruction in early childhood settings

Early Childhood Curriculum & Assessment Network (ECCAN)
For more information on other elements of RtI in early childhood settings or to share an ec RtI success story, please contact Gaye Tylka, Early Childhood Response to Intervention (RtI) Statewide Coordinator 608.786.4844 gtylka@cesa4.k12.wi.us
Definition ... “instruction”

- the process or act of imparting knowledge; teaching; educating  dictionary.com

- the action, practice, or profession of teaching  merriam-webster.com
In early childhood, “interactions” between children and adults - parents, teachers, and care givers – are acts of imparting knowledge, teaching, and educating -- “instruction”
A definition of Differentiated Instruction (DI) ...

... a form of instruction [interaction] that seeks to "maximize each student's [child’s] growth by recognizing that students [children] have different ways of learning, different interests, and different ways of responding to instruction [interaction]."

Diane Ravitch
http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/differentiated-instruction-resources.aspx
Differentiated Instruction ...

- View through a broad general education lens

- Not as “one more thing to do” but as “a different way of doing”

- Considered a best practice within Tier I universal curriculum; what you do for all children

Susan Bashinski

http://www.pbs.org/teachers/earlychildhood/articles/adapting.html
Differentiated Instruction ...

Click to see Teaching Every Child, featuring Carol Ann Tomlinson
Before you differentiate ... 

Developmentally Appropriate Practice 

What is it??
“... a research-supported set of beliefs about children - how they grow, develop and learn - that provides the framework for making decisions about how to guide and support their development and learning.”
Developmentally Appropriate Practice

“age appropriateness” -
Characteristics common to a particular age group with consideration of the wide range of normal development

“individual appropriateness”
Characteristics of each child within the group

“cultural appropriateness”
Characteristics of the community the child lives in
Before you differentiate …

KNOW YOUR LEARNERS!

GOOD ASSESSMENT = MULTIPLE MEASURES & MULTIPLE SOURCES

*How do you currently collect information about each child in your class?*
DAP - Individual Characteristics ...

- Temperament
- Activity level / attention span / distractibility
- Mood / adaptability / intensity
- Approaches to Learning
- Learning Styles/auditory, visual, kinesthetic -- “Listeners, Lookers, Movers”
- Abilities / Disabilities
- Current skills & knowledge in developmental areas
- Sensory Processing
- Special Interests / Fears?
- Developmental History
Cultural considerations...

- Family composition
- Birth order
- Home emotional climate
- Ethnic background / cultural practices / home language
- Religious upbringing/traditions/values
- Parent’s education
- Socio-economic status
USE YOUR DATA TO PLAN FOR DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION
4 Ways to Differentiate Instruction

- Use different teaching strategies
- Vary teaching materials
- Change content/what you teach
- Vary how you assess; how children show you what they have learned
Differentiated teaching strategies

- Adjust grouping strategy – large group, small group, 1-on-1
- Add visuals to verbal instruction
- Incorporate “manipulatives” for concrete exploration
- Model or Demonstrate desired response
- Role play appropriate response/behavior
- Peer buddies / cooperative learning options
- Embed learning opportunities into daily routines
share examples of *teaching strategies* you currently use to *differentiate instruction*

do you use small group instruction? If so, discuss how, when, why
Varied teaching materials

- Change sensory input – color/size/textures/sound
- Add movement (“take 3 steps”; “clap 3 times”; “Jump to the letter B”)
- Use concrete objects vs. symbols/representations
- Incorporate high motivation/interest objects
- Substitute adaptive tools (short crayons, looped scissors, etc.)
Change content or modify expectation

- Teach a foundational skill first (make a ‘mark’ or first letter instead of printing name)
- Break task into steps (Follow a 1-step direction instead of 2)
- Temporal changes - Engage in large group activity for shorter period of time
- Expect only partial independent completion of task
Table Talk ...

=> share examples of ways you select or modify materials to differentiate instruction

=> describe ways you change the content or modify your expectations for an individual child
Vary how you assess; how children show you what they have learned

- MULTIPLE MEASURES
- Authentic assessment – observing children in every day situations; routines
- Work samples
- Photo/video samples
Resources

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)  
  http://www.cast.org/index.html


- High Scope. **Small-Group Times to Scaffold Early Learning**. High Scope Press, Ypsilanti, MI, 2009

- Milbourne, S.A. & Campbell, P.H. **CARA’s Kit: Creating Adaptations for Routines & Activities**, Division for Early Childhood,  
  www.dec-sped.org