

Network News

e-Newsletter of the VA Infant & Toddler Specialist Network

VIRGINIA
INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST
NETWORK
"Achieving Excellence in Early Care"

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Issue #11



Individualized Care

In This Issue

[Individualized Care](#)

[Resource Spotlight](#)

[Upcoming Professional
Development Opportunity](#)

[Did you know?](#)

Quick Links

[Our website](#)

[Our Email](#)

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Children are individuals and require care specific to their needs. This is called individualized care. It begins by using information from observations and discussions with parents to adjust interactions, experiences, and environments to support each child's interests, skills, and needs. Providing individualized care is not difficult, it just may be different from the way care has been previously provided. When providers understand children's individual differences, they can build relationships with infants and toddlers, interact in ways that meet each child's needs, and respond more appropriately to individual caregiving routines.

How can providers offer individualized care for each of their children?

- Read each child's cues and consider their individual personalities when responding.
- Follow each child's lead in regards to caregiving routines such as arrival and departure, feeding, diapering, and napping. Each infant's and toddler's routine care is based on his/her own readiness and timetable. (Example: A child takes her time coming into the room each morning. She and her father complete their goodbye ritual and then the provider gently takes the child to the table and gets her settled with a quiet activity.

Just a few minutes later, another child comes into the room excited that he saw a fire truck on the way in. The provider responds just as excited when responding to his story.)

- Provide a consistent and predictable schedule for each child. This may mean that there are as many schedules as there are infants and planning is key.

Toddler schedules may be more group oriented. (Example: A family child care provider follows a consistent schedule for her children that includes breakfast, indoor play, snack, outdoor play, nap, snack, indoor play, outdoor play, and departure. However, she accommodates each child's routine within that schedule. She saves one child's lunch until



later since she naps earlier in the day. One child naps several times a day and feeds on demand.)

- Adapt indoor and outdoor environments to reflect children's interests and needs. (Example: A provider notices a child playing with leaves during outdoor time several days in a row, painting pictures of leaves, and hears from the grandfather that the child has been bringing leaves home. Based on the observations and discussion with the grandfather, the provider follows the child's lead and gives the child a basket to collect leaves in during outdoor time, creates a space for the leaves to be displayed in the classroom, and reads a book about leaves to the child.)
- Strive to have the same provider consistently care for the infant or toddler so there can be extended time and closeness to form a close relationship.



Individualizing care leads to positive outcomes for infants, toddlers, and their families. It can make a difference in each child's well being and success. Additionally, challenging behaviors are seen less frequently when individualized care is used by child care providers.

Adapted from: Individualizing Care for Infants and Toddlers-Part 1, Early Head Start National Resource Center, June 2014.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT ON:

[Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Early Care and Education](#) is a resource that includes health and safety standards for infants and toddlers in early care settings.

[Click here for quick access to the document.](#)

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities:

VA ITSN Webinar:
*Infant Interactions through
Caregiving Routines*

Monday, September 15, 2014
7:00-8:00 pm

[Click here for more information about this FREE training and to download the registration flyer.](#)



VA Alliance of Family Child Care
Associations Conference

Saturday, October 18, 2014
Weinstein Jewish Community Center
5403 Monument Avenue
Richmond, VA

[Click here for more information.](#)

DID YOU KNOW . . .

There is an online calendar which lists trainings across the state available for both home-based and center-based child care providers on various topics.

[Click here to check the TIPS Calender for trainings in your area.](#)

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