

WORKSHOP TOPICS

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PREPARE • ENGAGE • KNOW • REFLECT

Preschool Learning Environments: Creating Spaces That Support Learning

What is it?

The learning environment is more than how a classroom looks. The arrangement of learning areas, materials, furnishings, and pathways influences how children play, interact, explore, and learn.

Why does it matter?

Well-planned environments can support children's independence, engagement, supervision, and meaningful play while helping educators reduce unnecessary disruptions.

How will this workshop help?

Participants will examine their own learning environments and explore practical strategies for arranging learning areas, reducing blind spots, selecting materials, and creating spaces that support children's development and learning.

Understanding Biting in Toddlers: Looking Beyond the Behavior

What is it?

Biting is a behavior that can occur during toddler development for many reasons, including communication, frustration, sensory needs, limited self-regulation, and social interactions.

Why does it matter?

Responding only to the bite may overlook what the child is communicating through the behavior.

How will this workshop help?

Participants will explore possible reasons behind biting, identify patterns and triggers, and develop developmentally appropriate strategies for prevention, response, documentation, and communication with families.

Observing Young Children: From Watching to Understanding

What is it?

Observation is the intentional process of watching, listening to, and documenting children's behaviors, interactions, interests, and learning.

Why does it matter?

Meaningful observation helps educators understand children's development and use what they learn to make informed decisions about curriculum, experiences, and individualized support.

How will this workshop help?

Participants will practice writing objective observations, examine different documentation methods, and learn how to move from observe → document → reflect → plan.

Intentional Lesson Planning, Screening & Assessment

What is it?

Lesson planning, developmental screening, and assessment serve different purposes, but together they can help educators understand children's development and intentionally plan for learning.

Why does it matter?

When educators understand the purpose of each process, planning becomes more than completing paperwork—it becomes a tool for responding to children's strengths, interests, and developmental needs.

How will this workshop help?

Participants will explore the differences among screening, assessment, observation, and lesson planning and practice using information about children to develop meaningful learning experiences.

Supporting Social & Emotional Development Through Everyday Practice

What is it?

Social-emotional development includes children's growing ability to build relationships, express and manage emotions, develop self-regulation, and participate successfully in a group.

Why does it matter?

These skills develop through children's everyday experiences and relationships—not through isolated activities alone.

How will this workshop help?

Participants will explore ways to intentionally support emotional development through routines, play, relationships, language, problem-solving, and responsive interactions.

Supporting Cognitive Development Through Play

What is it?

Cognitive development involves how children think, explore, remember, solve problems, make connections, and develop new understandings.

Why does it matter?

Young children develop these abilities through active exploration and meaningful experiences, particularly when educators know how to recognize and extend the learning occurring during play.

How will this workshop help?

Participants will learn to identify cognitive learning during everyday play and use intentional questions, materials, and interactions to extend children's thinking without taking over their play.

Supporting Physical Development: Fine & Gross Motor Learning

What is it?

Physical development includes the fine- and gross-motor abilities children use to move their bodies, manipulate objects, participate in routines, and explore their environments.

Why does it matter?

Children need frequent opportunities to move, practice emerging skills, and develop coordination, strength, and control.

How will this workshop help?

Participants will identify developmentally appropriate ways to embed fine- and gross-motor experiences into play, routines, learning centers, and everyday classroom experiences.

Don't see the topic your program needs?

CAN-HOPE workshops can be customized to address the professional learning needs of your educators, program, or organization.

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