Planning for Purposeful Play and Learning - Intentional Resource Selection in Early Education

Andrew Davis
Director, Follett Early Learning

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In today’s Webinar...

- Understand the value of **intention** when researching and selecting resources for play and learning

- Learn the process of *Intentional Resource Selection* and how to apply it
POLL: Who’s in the house?
Who I am & How I got here
Andrew Davis

City: Near Chicago, IL
Astrological Sign: Cancer
Marital Status: Married
Children: 3
Education: Graduate Degree
Occupation: Director, Follett Early Learning

Relevant Experience:

12 years working with early educators as an advocate & consultant.
Materials for Play and Learning

- Comprehensive & Supplemental programs (commercially produced)
- Teacher-created materials for instruction
- Manipulatives
- Books
- Games or learning toys
- Technology for student or teacher use
Why focus on the materials?

They matter.
Each child has unique interests, styles of learning and language/cultural needs.

Supports the program’s high quality and developmentally appropriate practices.

Supports the child’s development through appropriate play, curriculum and instruction.

Supports the family by reinforcing values and cultural ideals.

Creates the construct of the child’s culture and value system.

Learning Materials in Context

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Materials should aim to support each individual child.
POLL: When acquiring materials for play and learning, which of these considerations is your first priority?
Observation: Early educators spend more money on materials than time planning for their use.
Estimated $3 Billion* spent on learning materials from birth – 3rd grade.

*Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, 2011
Wilson’s PreK Market Forecast, 2010
EMR National Survey of PreK Programs, 2010
Less than 50% of early educators surveyed have a plan for acquiring literacy-related resources.

*Source: 2013 NAEYC Annual Conference Survey*
(Another) Quick Story
Continue...I’m listening....
(Yet Another) Quick Story

Now What?
Lack of Planning leads to:

• Inefficient use of funds
• Desire to create/consume quick, easy “one-size fits all” solutions
• ‘Class’ focus vs ‘child’ focus
What would a proper plan look like?
Intentional Resource Selection

Process of selecting materials and resources for play and learning that are high quality, have a distinct purpose and support the teaching and learning of the children served.
3 Principles of Intentional Resource Selection

• Know the Goal
• Act with each child in mind
• Ongoing evaluation
Lessons from the library
What can we learn from librarians?

• Process for managing various media in cycles – constantly adding/constantly weeding
• Constantly learning how to better support their population
• Disciplined in finding value from limited funding resources
Let’s have a look at the process
Start where you are

I have no materials and no money!

I have what I need and the means to get more!
Set the Goal

• What do you want to accomplish?
• Which children will be impacted? How?
• What do we know about those children?
• Is my goal consistent with my organization’s mission?
• What would implementation look like?
• How will success be measured?
Intentional Resource Selection

- What do I own that can help me accomplish the goal? Assess the quality of existing materials.
- Where can I turn for advice or recommendations from someone pursuing a similar goal for similar children?
- What are my constraints? (Time/budget)
- Who on my team can help with this process? (Parents/Teachers/Administrators/Librarians/Consultants/Vendors)
- What should be prioritized?

* Maintain a consideration file
Intentional Resource Selection

- When would make the most sense to implement based on my existing lesson plans?
- Who can help with implementation?
- What needs to be communicated during the process? Who needs to know?
Intentional Resource Selection

Evaluate

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- Are results as expected?
- Is training/additional support is needed?
- Who needs to know about the results?
- Schedule on-going conversations with stakeholders.
- What can be learned from this experience?
- If the goal was not achieved, what role did the materials play? Is it time to reassess the goal or revisit the other steps?
Intentional Resource Selection

1. Set the Goal
2. Research & Select
3. Implement
4. Evaluate

Child Information
Quick Story
Quick Story
Do the materials I use contribute to the appropriate learning and development of the children I serve?
Final Thoughts

• Materials Matter.
• Aim for supporting each child at an individual level rather than a class level.
• Know your Goal.
• Act with Each Child in Mind.
• Constantly Evaluate.
• Quantity and Quality of materials vary across programs. Budgets vary. Value is the Key.
• More research is needed into the impact of materials.
Thank You