



HEAD START DISABILITIES SERVICES

NEWSLETTER



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Read About It



In the Zone

Debbie and Christy teach 3-year-olds. Their daily schedule includes circle time, art projects, music, and reading. They each feel like they can rarely complete their daily tasks because of minor interruptions like helping a child with toileting, or answering the phone. Debbie and Christy have also noticed that the children often have nothing to do, or behavior problems occur, because the children are waiting for a teacher to resume an activity.

A zone defense schedule (ZDS) is a system that can help teachers increase children's engagement in classroom activities and make transitions easier. Staff members are assigned to specific roles during the day's activities and transitions, so that each adult knows where to be and what to focus on. The ZDS is appropriate for all children from birth to age 5, and is especially helpful in classrooms that include children with disabilities.

How did the ZDS help Debbie and Christy in their classroom? Find out in the article [Where is Everybody? Organizing Adults to Promote Child Engagement](#). You'll learn how to make a ZDS from your existing classroom schedule and find tips for making it work for your classroom. Division of Early Childhood (DEC) and Sage Publications have allowed free access to this article through July 31, 2015.

Take a Look

Let's Talk!

The teachers in a preschool classroom know the importance of good communication. This video, [Teacher-to-Teacher Talk](#), highlights effective and supportive talk between staff members. Here are some ideas to brainstorm after watching the video.

How could you and your teaching team:

- Share your observations about a child's interest or progress on a learning goal?
- Explain a new teaching practice, or comment on a child's engagement?
- Ask how an adaptation or modification worked for a child?
- Share ways to add more practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive?

Your team may want to practice asking questions or making comments until your communications are clear and help the classroom run smoothly. This video and the accompanying in-service suite are on the [National Center for Quality Teaching and Learning](#) (NCQTL) portal on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC).

Try It Out!

Three Great Ideas

This month we talked to Barb Matlock, an early childhood education and assistance program (ECEAP) coach from the University of Washington. We asked for her three favorite tips to establish active supervision and practice zoning in the classroom. Here's what she said:

1. **Stand.** We know the importance of getting down on a child's level during play. However, be sure to stand up once in a while to see all the children in your zone or play area.
2. **Scan.** As you look around your zone, notice what's happening with specific children. Is a child showing frustration or needing help? Do children need support solving a problem? Do you see an opportunity to engage a child in a conversation?
3. **Teach.** Find ways to increase the number of teaching interactions in your zone. Join in children's play, ask "what" and "how" questions, and scaffold social interactions.

Improve Your Practice



Check out a 15-minute In-service Suite from the NCQTL: Zoning to Maximize Learning

Zoning is a practice used to organize classroom staff by providing them with specific roles and duties throughout the day. During every classroom activity—and the transitions between activities—each adult is assigned to an area of the classroom and has a set of responsibilities. Zoning can be used with all the adults in the classroom, including parent volunteers. This suite includes a [Discussion Questions](#) learning activity. These questions can help your classroom team think about the benefits of zoning:

- What times of the day do children seem to be the most engaged? What times are more challenging?
- Describe what "setting up for circle" means in your classroom. How do you break down the tasks involved?
- How do you and your staff assign roles and responsibilities? Is this plan working? What challenges do you face?

The [Tools for Supervisors](#) handout can help supervisors provide feedback to staff on their strengths, as well as areas for improvement. This and other suites on managing the classroom are on the [NCQTL portal](#) on the ECLKC.

Families Too!

Resources at Your Fingertips

The [Head Start Parent Directory and Resource Guide](#), created by the Office of Head Start, lists a directory of links to more than 250 organizations that offer resources for families. Select "Child Development and Rearing" for

information on autism, birth to 3 services, and social emotional development. Many are available in Spanish—just look for the round "ES" icon next to the name of the resource.

Special Events

The next "Disabilities Dialogue" is Friday, May 15, 1–2 p.m. EDT. This monthly webinar series for Head Start disabilities coordinators is hosted by staff from NCQTL. The webinars feature expert guest speakers who support the work of providing services to children with disabilities and their families. Email ncqtl@uw.edu for information.

May is "Better Hearing & Speech Month." Check out the [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#) website for information on how to help raise awareness about communication disorders and early interventions.

The [2015 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute](#) takes place in Chapel Hill, NC, at the Friday Center, May 12–14.

The [NAEYC 2015 National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development](#) takes place in New Orleans, LA, June 7–10.

We Want to Hear from You!

The Head Start Disabilities Services Newsletter is produced monthly by NCQTL. Email Kristin Ainslie at ncqtl@uw.edu to submit questions or suggestions for future newsletter topics.

Select this link to view previous [Head Start Disabilities Services Newsletters](#) on the ECLKC.

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