



Tips for Educators: Universal Design for Learning (UDL)



Tips for Educators is a series of practical guides that education staff can use in early learning settings.

Each guide is based on research evidence and professional knowledge.

UDL is a framework for increasing access to education environments and opportunities, including in infant and toddler settings. Learning environments, materials, and activities are planned ahead of time, with the aim of welcoming all learners. UDL does not take the place of individualized curriculum modifications necessary for particular children. For more information on individualized curriculum modifications, see these helpful [Curriculum Modifications](#) resources. UDL supports all children, including infants and toddlers with disabilities, to help them engage more fully in learning.

The three guiding principles of UDL include:

- Representation – providing a variety of ways to learn new skills and information
- Action – flexibility in how infants and toddlers demonstrate success and understanding
- Engagement – supporting engagement in learning by building on infant/toddler development and interests and providing choices

Tips for Educators

- View your classroom from the perspective of an infant or toddler. Do a walk-through, and consider the following questions.
 - As an infant or toddler in this setting:
 - Can I get to each area?
 - Do I know what is expected in each area?
 - Am I Able to use the materials in each area?
 - Do I know what to expect during transitions between areas?
 - Do education staff communicate with me throughout activities and transitions?
 - Do education staff respond to my communication during activities and transitions?
- Deconstruct a daily schedule, and consider the following questions:
 - Do I provide multiple opportunities for representation, expression, and engagement in each activity throughout the day?
 - How can I include more representation, expression, and engagement opportunities?
- Apply UDL concepts in your relationship with families. Ask yourself:
 - Do I provide a variety of ways for families to participate?
 - Do I use multiple methods for communicating with families?
 - In what other ways can I engage with families?
- Use a [UDL checklist](#) to design your classroom.



Resources

- [CAST – The UDL Guidelines](#)
- [FPG Child Development Institute – The Universal Design of Early Education: Moving Forward for All Children](#)
- [Center on Technology and Disability – UDL: A Checklist for Early Childhood Environments](#)
- [Head Start ECLKC – Designing Environments](#)
- [ECTA – Infant/Toddler Resource Guide: Inclusive Environments](#)