

STANDARDS IN ACTION

CURRICULUM FIDELITY 1302.32(A)(2); 1302.35(D)(2)



THE CURRENT SITUATION

Angel, the education director for New City EHS/HS program, is thinking about curriculum fidelity. His program has been using specific center-based curricula for years. In fact, each program option—EHS/HS center-based, EHS home-based, and EHS/HS family child care—has its own curriculum and the staff who work in each option have received some amount of training on their curriculum. However, even though his staff have had training and several years' experience in implementing curricula, Angel is worried because as he observes his group care settings and home-based group socializations, he sees that some components of the curriculum are not being used on a regular basis. What might this mean for his program in terms of the standards around curriculum fidelity? Since his program offers center-based, home-based, and family child care options, the task of improving staff implementation fidelity in these three curricula feels huge!

THE SOLUTION: FIRST THINGS FIRST

Angel begins by forming a curriculum fidelity implementation team, including representatives from the teaching (including family child care)/home visiting staff, content managers who are responsible for professional development, and key program leaders. Angel wants to ensure that each program option has a clear plan for implementing the curriculum with fidelity. They begin by exploring their current level of implementation in three aspects of curriculum fidelity:

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- First, they reflect upon the extent to which they are using all the components of the curriculum that the publisher included. This is important: One of the reasons Angel and his team chose these curricula is because they liked some of the unique features, activities, content, and experiences that were included in each. The team asks questions like:
 - Are we using all the curricular components included by the publisher? Are these curricular components visible in our classrooms, family child care homes, socializations, and home visits? For example, if the curriculum requires both a science area and a dramatic play area, are both present in the learning environment?
 - Do we have all the materials, including current curriculum manuals and resources, to implement the full curriculum?
- Second, they think about how the learning experiences that are planned and occur across their program settings are in line with what the published curricula recommend. For example, the curriculum might recommend that children who are interested in water play be given opportunities to engage at the water table with items to pour and measure. The curriculum might have guiding questions that teachers can ask or possible follow up activities like “sink or float” charts. A home-based curriculum might suggest similar opportunities for learning about the properties of water during bath time. Angel and his team ask themselves about how often they use these recommended extensions of learning that are part of their chosen curriculum.
- Finally, they think about how prepared staff feel to implement the curriculum. The team reflects upon the training they have already had and the level to which they feel confident about implementing all components of the curriculum. They decide to do a staff survey to find out about how comfortable and confident staff feel about curriculum implementation. Once they have the survey results, they identify areas where training and coaching will be helpful to ensure full implementation of their chosen curricula across all their program settings.

THE SOLUTION: NEXT STEPS

Because of the team’s internal review, they determine there are two critical areas of need that might be influencing the level to which curricula are being implemented with fidelity.

- Although the program purchased curriculum kits for their center-based programs when they initially chose their curriculum, the publisher now offers an additional curriculum unit that addresses the needs of dual language learners. None of the classrooms currently have these materials, nor have they received much training on supporting dual language learners, even though many children in their program are currently from homes where English is not spoken.
 - Angel and his team decide that they will contact the publisher to purchase these materials. They also decide to explore what training is available to support the team to understand and implement this new curriculum piece. For example, does the publisher have resources available for his team to use? Are there other materials such as Planned Language Approach resources that might also be used the help them address this gap?

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- Several team members in the home-based program have joined the organization since the team was trained in the curriculum they are using.
 - Angel and his team make plans to send these new team members to training on the curriculum. Once they have that initial training, Angel will rotate their scheduled home visits so that the newer staff can shadow the home visitors with curriculum implementation experience. In addition, Angel will also set up a small community of practice for these new home visitors. The senior home visitor and one of the program's coaches will facilitate it to provide an ongoing venue for talking through implementation issues and reflecting on ongoing curriculum planning.

The full implementation team decides to meet monthly to revisit the issue of curriculum fidelity. Additionally, they want raise other curriculum-related issues to problem-solve to ensure that teachers, family child care providers, and home visitors have the resources and supports they need to implement their curriculum with confidence.

SELECTED RESOURCES:

- Early Childhood Curriculum Resources (Link TBD)
 - Supporting Staff to Effectively Implement Curricula
 - Standardized Training Procedures and Curriculum Materials to Support Implementation
- Implementation of Curriculum with Fidelity webinar
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/implementation-curriculum-fidelity>
- It's in the Details: Using Practice-Based Coaching to Support Curriculum Fidelity webinar
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/its-details-using-practice-based-coaching-support-curriculum-fidelity>



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