

## **Frequently Asked Questions about the Innovations Curricula Series**

### **What are the characteristics of the Innovations curricula?**

The Innovations materials were designed and written to provide a platform for implementing developmentally appropriate curriculum for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers while supporting teachers in a growing understanding of early childhood education theory and best practices.

### **Are the Innovations curricula evidence- or research-based?**

Yes. Research has consistently supported the idea that implementation of a curriculum that is sensitive to the developmental capabilities and backgrounds of individual children, that addresses the multiple domains of children's development, and that supports the view that children are active participants in the learning process will promote positive, long-term achievement in academic settings (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2000; Lee & Burkam, 2000); Marcon, 2002; Peisner-Feinberg, et al., 2001; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1997; Stipek et al, 1995).

The Innovations curricula:

- Addresses all domains of children's development
- Focuses on building relationships between children and their teachers and between teachers and families
- Views children as active participants in the learning process,
- Is sensitive to the developmental capabilities and backgrounds of individual children
- Views play as the foundation of concurrent and future learning
- Views the teacher as an active participant in building relationships, setting up the environment, using a variety of teaching roles and strategies,

Research has also consistently demonstrated the importance, centrality, and implications of play as a foundation for concurrent and future learning across all domains of development (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2000; Zigler, Singer, & Bishop-Josef, 2004; Elias & Berk, 2002; DeVries, et al, 2002; Howes & Smith, 1995; Roskos & Christie, 2004).

The Innovations curricula

- Views children's self-selected and self-directed play as an essential component of curriculum
- Conceptualizes the learning environment to facilitate self-selected and self-directed play in a variety of activity areas supported by teachers as play partners and play facilitators
- Supports teachers in assuming a variety of roles to support children's play and learning.

Curriculum integration, which numerous studies have found to be effective in fostering children's transfer of knowledge and skills, means that learning happens most effectively when children are able to transfer knowledge from one experience to another, both within and across academic disciplines (NBPTS, 2001, [http://www.nbpts.org/the\\_standards/standards\\_by\\_cert?ID=17&x=61&y=7](http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards/standards_by_cert?ID=17&x=61&y=7)).

Sue Bredekamp puts it this way: "curriculum is integrated so that learning occurs primarily through projects, learning centers, and playful activities that reflect the current interests of children (Core Knowledge for PK-3 Teaching: Ten Components of Effective Instruction, [http://www.fcd-us.org/usr\\_doc/Core\\_Knowledge.pdf](http://www.fcd-us.org/usr_doc/Core_Knowledge.pdf)).

The Innovations curricula:

- Addresses content, process, and pre-academic concepts within the context of interesting, child-focused, content.
- Teachers use children's interest in particular content to make learning concepts relevant and engaging.

- Uses projects, emergent curriculum interests, and prior knowledge assessment in each curriculum topic.

Research also has shown that accomplished teachers “use their knowledge of child development and their relationships with children and families to understand children as individuals and to plan in response to their unique needs and potentials” (NBPTS, 2001).

The Innovations curricula:

- Introduces and refreshes child development knowledge in each of the six chapters about developmental tasks.
- describes best practices and how to implement them
- Embeds family partnerships and communication into each developmental task and curriculum plan.

“Formative assessment, which is ongoing and take place during as part of the learning process, should be dominant (Core Knowledge for PK-3 Teaching: Ten Components of Effective Instruction, October, 2006). The Innovations curricula are built on authentic observation and assessment strategies that are embedded in the classroom context and do not require significant additional resources. Assessment focuses on both children’s development and children’s learning.

**What type of programs use the Innovations series?**

The Innovations curricula are in use in non-profit and for profit early childhood programs throughout the country. In addition, federally funded programs, such as Early Head Start and Head Start and pre-kindergarten programs also use Innovations.

**Are the curricula widely accepted in the early childhood field?**

Yes. Innovations materials have been available for some time and have found wide approval for being comprehensive as well as easy to access and use.

Several states have included the curricula in quality enhancement efforts (Ohio, Illinois, Georgia, Oklahoma, Arizona, Texas, Alaska, Florida, and the District of Columbia, for example).

**Do the Innovations curricula meet Naeyc’s Academy for Program Accreditation guidelines for curriculum?**

Yes.

**Do the Innovations curricula align with state departments of education content standards?**

Yes. Innovations materials have been aligned with content standards in several states. If you complete an alignment for your state’s standards, please send a copy to [kay@innovationsinece.com](mailto:kay@innovationsinece.com).

**What is next for Innovations?**

Innovations author Kay Albrecht has just published, with Michelle M. Forrester, a new book entitled Social Emotional Tools for Life—An Early Childhood Teacher’s Guide to Supporting Strong Emotional Foundations and Successful Social Relationships.

Social Emotional Tools for Life—An Early Childhood Teacher’s Guide is available from Kaplan School Supply, New Horizons Books, Exchange Press, and Redleaf Press.