**Lesson 1: Introduction**

**Interest-Based Child Learning Activities Lessons – Script**

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*Narrator:* Welcome to Lesson 1 of the ECPC Interest-Based Child Learning E-Learning series. In this lesson, we introduce you to the characteristics and consequences of using child interests as the basis for promoting child learning and development.

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*Narrator:* You might be surprised to learn that child interests are an important foundation of children’s learning and development, but considerable evidence indicates that child learning and development occur more rapidly when children’s interests are used as the basis for involving them in interactions with people and objects.

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*Narrator:* Let’s begin by looking at how child interests influence child learning and development. When child interests are used as the basis for involving a child in activities, the child is likely to be engaged in the activities. Once engaged, the child has opportunities to use different behavior to express interests, practice things he or she is able to do, and learn to do new things. The child comes to recognize his or her own abilities to make things happen.

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*Narrator:* It’s useful to examine what we mean by child interests. The term “child interests” often is used to refer to either of two types of interests that influence a child’s participation and learning: situational interests and personal interests.

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*Narrator:* Situational interests are interests that are generated by features of a setting or activity in which a child participates that attract the child’s attention, curiosity, and engagement. Situational interests are relatively transient, in that they are evoked by characteristics of a particular situation.

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*Narrator:* A child’s personal interests include the objects, people, activities, and actions that match the child’s individual likes, preferences, and favorite things to do. Personal interests, sometimes called individual interests, are relatively enduring characteristics of a person.

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*Narrator:* Let’s look at some examples. In this example, notice how the discovery of pill bugs captures Simon’s attention and invites his engagement, watching and examining the bugs for a while. While gardening with his grandmother, Simon picks up a rock and is surprised to find four pill bugs under it. He watches them and gently touches them so they curl into little balls. He counts them, comments on their hard shells, and notices their many legs. After a short while, he replaces the rock and begins to dig again.

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*Narrator:* In this example, notice how Nell pursues her personal interest by engaging in many different kinds of activities that provide lots of bug-playing opportunities. Nell loves bugs; She spends time watching bugs, searching for and finding bugs, picking out and looking at books about bugs, pretending to be a bug, playing with bug puppets, and talking to others about different kinds of bugs. She has four bug jars and collects bugs she finds in the yard.

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*Narrator:* Situational interests can have a role in the development of children’s personal interests. When children become attracted to different situations, they may be exposed to and get involved with new situations, people, and objects. Their curiosity and exploration may lead them to develop a deeper interest in the people or objects.

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*Narrator:* These are the key characteristics of interest-based child learning. Let’s look more closely at each characteristic.

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*Narrator:* Adults observe a child in different activities, talk with those who know the child well, and use checklists and other interest tools to identify a child’s personal interests, and the objects, events, and actions that are or could be situationally interesting to the child.

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*Narrator:* Adults identify a range of everyday family and community activities that match a child’s personal interests, or that would capture the child’s attention.

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*Narrator:* Adults encourage child participation in activities by increasing the frequency, number, and variety of activities that match the child’s personal interests, and are situationally interesting to the child.

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*Narrator:* Adults use responsive strategies that help a child maintain engagement in activities, practice existing abilities, and try out and learn new abilities.

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*Narrator:* There are many outcomes of interest-based child learning. Children are likely to be more engaged in activities that match their interests. They interact with people and materials in the activities, and use behaviors that they are able to do. As they practice doing things they like to do, they perfect existing skills, try out new behavior, and show increased competence in their ability to participate in the activity. Their new learning leads to higher rates of developmental progress.

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*Narrator:* Check out the video, “Interests Lead to Learning, “to get more insights into situational and personal interests, and their contribution to children’s learning and development.

Video embedded in lesson (“Interests Lead to Learning”): \*Music in background\* Narrator: Children learn best when they’re doing something they’re interested in, so knowing what a child likes to do and enjoys doing will help you facilitate a child’s learning. Child interests are the foundation of the CELL approach to early literacy learning. Join us as we explore children’s interests in Interests Lead to Learning. There are two different types of children’s interest. Personal interests- things that a child especially likes doing. For a child who especially enjoys playing in the water, water is an example of a personal interest. And, situational interests- that are triggered by features or the interestingness of the situation. A loud noisy parade coming down the street is often an event that will capture a child’s interest. Children, with or without disabilities, express their interests in many different ways. They show delight, enjoyment, enthusiasm, laughter, and most often will stick with an activity for a long time. Let’s start by exploring what personal interests look like. All children have personal interests, things that they enjoy doing and especially like doing. These include such things as stuffed animals, pictures, balls, books, and talking. Let’s watch as we see children express their personal interests. By playing with the music box, talking on the phone, and a number of other ways.

\*Baby plays with music box\* \*Another baby plays with a ball\* \*Another baby reads with her mother—Mother: (In Spanish) Ay look, fish! Baby: Babbles. Mother: Mhm. Baby: Babbles\* \*Another baby sits on her mother’s lap—Baby: Babbles. Hey. Mother: Hey Christy, somebody is talking to you. Do you want to talk to her for just a second? Baby: Yeah! Mother: Okay. (Gives phone to baby) There it is, you have to hold it! Talk to Aunt Christy. Say hello! Baby: Hello! Mother: Say, how are you? Baby: How are you? Mother: Say, talk to you later. Baby: Talk to you later\* \*Another baby sits at table with her mother—Baby: This is one two feet. Mother: Uh huh, one two feet. Baby: One, two, feets. Mother: Uh huh. (In Spanish) Now let’s see… what’s this? Baby: Telephone. Mother: Telephone. Baby: Telephone! Mother: (In Spanish) And this? Baby: Tela. Mother: TV. Baby: TV. It’s TV, (In Spanish) this one. Mother: TV. (In Spanish) And this one? Baby: (In Spanish) I don’t know. Mother: Book. Baby: Book. It’s book! (Babbles)\* \*Child with her mother in kitchen—Child: What is this? Mother: Those are measuring cups. Child: Measuring cups! Mother: Yeah! You measure the amount that you put in the, the ingredients that you put in the cake. You know, like if I put some oil in a cake or put some water in the cake, and you mix it all up with the cake mixer. Child: Yeah! Mother: And I put eggs in the cake. Child: Yeah! And beat them up. Mother: Yeah, and beat them up, beat the eggs up. Child: It’s a little bit cup of water. Mother: Mhm. Child: It’s a little bit cup of water now. It’s a little bit cup of water. Mother: You can’t drink that water. Child: It’s a little bit cup of water now\* \*Children playing with chalk—Child: Babbles\* Now let’s take a look at situational interests. These kinds of interests arise based on how interesting the child finds a given situation, person, object, or activity. For example, a street fair, a table with art supplies, and a new classroom play area. Let’s watch as we see how children show us that something is situationally interesting.

\*Child playing on piano—Child: (Babbles) Adult: Can you play the piano? Want to play? (Lifts child up on piano bench) Let’s play the piano, make music. Make music. Child: (Plays piano) Adult: Make music!\* \*Child walking in park—Adult: Yes, go quietly. Careful. Oh it flew away. Child: (Babbles). Adult: Yeah they’re back over there by the swing. Child: (Babbles). Adult: There’s one over there still. One bird left. There are a lot of ducks over here. Child: (Babbles). Adult: It’s okay. Sit with Mommy. Child: Mommy. Adult: Yeah, sit with Mommy. Child: Duck. (Babbles)\* \*Child in arcade car with adult—Child: (Babbles and laughs)\* \*Baby and sister at table—Adult: Sissy is doing homework with her lizard. Child: Hey look, what is that? Baby: (Holds lizard container). Adult: What is that? Come here! What is that? Baby: Hee! Adult: What is that? No, let’s not open it. What is that?\* \*Children outside—Child: Moss! Look everybody, it’s moss! Adult: Moss! Isn’t it neat? What does moss feel like? Wow, it’s so beautiful, it’s so soft! It’s so soft isn’t it?

Interest-based child learning is important because it keeps involved in whatever he or she is doing. If children are interested in an object, person, or activity, they will stick with it longer. The more they interact and do lots of different things, their skills grow. As children’s confidence grows, they will continue to try new and different ways and engaging, developing new skills and confidence. Let’s watch as 10 month old Raina explores playing with balls. Notice that while she handles the balls and puts them in her mouth, she expresses her pleasure by babbling, smiling, and continuing the activity. \*Child with her mother, playing with ball toy—Mother: Drop it. Drop it in there! Yeah, that ball has a fish in it. Child: (Babbles). Mother: You want to eat it? Child: (Babbles) Mother: Do you want to eat it? Yeah does it taste good? (Laughs) Child: (Babbles) Mother: Did you hear that? The fish wants you to put it in. Put it in. Child: (Puts ball in toy container) Mother: Oh, see. What happened?\* Now let’s watch Raina 4 months later. Notice how her interest in balls has progressed from simply touching them and putting them in her mouth to mastering the skills of playing with them in different ways. Because she was interested in them, she stayed engaged in the activity. As a result, she learned new skills. She can toss them, drop them, and roll them. Notice her pleasure and enjoyment while doing this activity. Her ability blossomed in ways that have helped her to develop new skills and confidence. \*Child playing same game 4 months later—Child: (Babbles) Mother: Yay! Child: (Babbles) Mother: You missed it. Child (Babbles) Mother: Good job! Child: (Babbles) Mother: It jumped. The fish jumped right out of the bowl. Child: (Babbles) Mother: Yay! Uh oh, you missed it. Child: (Babbles)\* This is just one example of how children can learn by doing something they’re interested in. Interests can be personal or situational. It’s important for parents or caregivers to recognize children’s interests because interests are the foundation for building children’s skills and abilities, leading to a lifetime love of learning.

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*Narrator:* Interest-based child learning is a foundation of children’s learning and development. Using knowledge of both situational and personal interests to involve children in activities is one way parents and practitioners can provide children experiences that promote their learning. In Lesson 2, we’ll find examples of the particular strategies to implement this practice.

**Lesson 2: Practice Illustrations**

**Strategies for Promoting Young Children’s Interest-Based Learning**

*Slide 1*

*Narrator:* Welcome to Lesson 2 of the ECPC E-Learning Lessons on Interest-Based Child Learning: Strategies for Promoting Young Children’s Interest-Based Learning. Review these key characteristics of interest-based learning that were introduced in Lesson 1. In this lesson, we’ll explore these characteristics more deeply using a performance checklist and illustrations of the practice. We’ll look at strategies for identifying both child interests and interest-based activities, promoting child participation in interest-based activities, and using children’s interests to promote their learning.

*Slide 2*

*Narrator:* The interest-based child learning checklist includes the type of practices that can be used to promote children’s interest-based learning. Review these checklist indicators and download the checklist here to use in this lesson and in Lesson 3. Let’s look at these practices more closely.

*Slide 3*

*Narrator:* The first three checklist practices focus on identifying situational and personal interests that you learned about in Lesson 1. Observing a child in different activities, interviewing people who know the child well, and completing an interest assessment tool, are a few ways to identify children’s interests. These different interest indicators are useful for identifying child interests.

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*Narrator:* This checklist indicator refers to situational interests. Recall that situational interests are interests that are evoked by features or characteristics of a setting or activity. Watch this video of a child and her mother at a duck pond. Notice how seeing a duck fly away attracts the child’s attention and leads to further observation and conversation about the ducks.

Video embedded in text: Child: The duck! Mom: Yeah! The duck over there! Child: \*pointing\* and duck. Mom: There’s one over there still. One bird left. There are a lot of birds over here. Child: \*walking towards ducks\* And duck! And duck! Mom: Okay, sit with mommy! Child: Mommy. Mom: Yeah, sit with mommy. Child: duck, duccko. Mom: I see that. who is that? Is that the duck? The duck is chasing the flies. He’s a lucky duck.

*Slide 5*

*Narrator:* This checklist indicator refers to a child’s personal interests. Recall that a child’s personal interests are the child’s individual likes, preferences, favorites, strengths, and so forth that encourage child participation with people and objects. In this video, notice how this boy shows his excitement with the music he can make play with this toy.

Video embedded in text: Child playing with toy that makes music after he touches it, no verbal audio.

*Slide 6*

*Narrator:* This checklist indicator also refers to a child’s personal interests. In this video, pay attention to how these children are engrossed and working hard in the activities they chose.

Video embedded in slide: (Baby sitting with mother, reading) Mother: (In Spanish) Ay mira, fish! Baby: Babbles. Mother: Mhm. Baby: Babbling (in spanish) Scene changes- kids coloring on the sidewalk with chalk; no audio

*Slide 7*

*Narrator:* You also want to identify everyday activities that provide a child opportunities to do things that match his or her interests. You need to answer the question, “What everyday activities provide the child opportunities to do the things he or she is interested in doing?” Watch this video, and notice how the different activities provide the children opportunities for interest expression.

Video embedded in slide: Mother: Uh huh. (In Spanish) Mmm, como se llamo este? Now let’s see… what’s this? Baby: Telephone. Mother: Telephone. Baby: Telephone! Mother: (In Spanish) (y este?) And this? Baby: Tela. Mother: TV. Baby: TV. It’s TV, este (In Spanish) this one. Mother: TV. (In Spanish) y este? And this one? Baby: (In Spanish) I don’t know. Mother: Book. Baby: Book. Child, looking at salamander in container; walking Mom: what is that? Come here, what is that? Child: eee! Mom: (laughs) what is that? Girl: (in park with family) Moss! Look everybody! It’s Moss! Adult woman: Moss, isn’t it neat? Adult man: What does moss feel like? Boy and Girl: WOAH Boy: Its so beauty, it’s so soft Mom: it’s so soft, isn’t it?

*Slide 8*

*Narrator:* The child in this video loves helping her mom with everyday chores and other activities. When you watch this video, consider how the activity of washing dishes can happen often. For example, after helping Mom make the cake, after evening mealtime, and so forth.

Video within lesson: Child: It’s a little bit cup of water. Mother: Mhm. Child: It’s a little bit cup of water now. It’s a little bit cup of water. Mother: You can’t drink that water. Child: It’s a little bit cup of water now.

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*Narrator:* This video shows the same child helping her mother in different activities. Notice the number and variety of activities that afford the child opportunities to express this interest.

Video embedded in slide: Mom: (in kitchen with daughter) See you got ta turn it this way, When you get the icing, you see how mommy does it? you get a big hunk like that . And put it on there, and then you spread it all around. Get a big hunk! now turn it over and put it on like that. And then you spread it- see you got ta get alot. / Mom: (outside in garden with daughter) What color? Do you want to put some purple ones? Child: Yes Mom: hand me some purple ones Child: Aww alright. / Mom: (in front yard with watering can) Do you need mommy’s help? Child: yes Mom: Okay Child: I put it over there Mom: Hmm? You want to water this big flower? Child: Uh I get it / Mom (in grocery store with daughter): Now what kind do you want? Child: Uhm, umm the lunchable. Mom Which lunchable? Do you want the hot dog lunchable? Child: (pointing) Uhh that one. Mom: Which one? (Grabs lunchable) This one? Child: Yeah! Yeah yeah yeah yeah.

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*Narrator:* Watch this video and observe how the mother pays attention to when the child approaches the piano, and follows the child’s lead by helping her onto the piano bench.

Video within lesson: Child crawls to piano. Child: (Babbles) Adult: Can you play the piano? Want to play? (Lifts child up on piano bench) Let’s play the piano, make music. Child: (Plays piano)

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*Narrator:* In this video, pay attention to the different ways the parent responds positively to the child’s behavior.

Video within lesson: Child with her mother, playing with ball toy—Mother: Yeah, that ball has a fish in it. Child: (Babbles). Mother: You want to eat it? Child: (Babbles) Mother: Do you want to eat it? Yeah does it taste good? (Laughs) Child: (Babbles) Mother: Did you hear that? The fish wants you to put it in. Put it in. Child: (Puts ball in toy container) Mother: Oh, see. What happened? It’s singing a song for you!

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*Narrator:* Watch this video of the parent and child playing with the same ball toy. Notice how the parent encourages the child to use more complex behavior by encouraging her to put the ball in the toy and by taking turns with her.

Video within lesson: Child with her mother, playing with ball toy—Child: (Babbles) Mother: Ball. Okay. You put it in there. Child: (Babbles and puts ball in toy container) Mother: Good job! Child: (Babbles) Mother: (Laughs) Child: (Gives ball to Mother) Mother: One for me? Yay! (Mother and child clap hands. Laughter) Mother: (Gives ball to child) You do it. Child: (Throws ball) Mother: Here (gives another ball to child). Child: (Puts ball in toy container) Mother: Yay! (Claps hands)

*Slide 13*

*Narrator:* The interest-based child learning checklist is useful as a guide for planning and reflecting on the use of interest-based practices. Refer to the interest-based child learning practice guide to find suggestions for other ways you can get experience observing the interest-based child learning practices. Next, complete Lesson 3, Mastering the Use of Interest-Based Child Learning Practices, to deepen your understanding of these practices.

**Lesson 3: Implementation Activities**

**Mastering the Use of Interest-Based Child Learning Practices**

*Slide 1*

*Narrator:* Welcome to Lesson 3 of the ECPC E-Learning lessons on interest-based child learning, Mastering Interest-Based Child Learning Practices. In this E-Learning lesson, you will complete several exercises that will show the importance of using interest-based child learning. Let’s get started.

*Slide 2*

*Narrator:* Suppose you are an early intervention home visitor, and you have just begun working with Justin, a 13-month old toddler, and his mother Cindi. Cindi is eager to learn about how she can help Justin learn new things. You want to help Cindi understand and use Justin’s interests to promote his learning.

*Slide 3*

*Narrator:* Before you begin your work with Justin and his mother, review these practice indicators from the Interest-Based Child Learning Checklist. These are the practice characteristics that will guide your work in this lesson.

*Slide 4*

*Narrator:* To become better prepared to introduce the practice of interest-based child learning to Cindi, you begin by gathering information and developing an explanation of the rationale and benefits of interest-based child learning. First, examine these resources for information to increase your understanding of the importance and benefits of interest-based child learning.

*Slide 5*

*Narrator:* Next, identify a person who is skilled at using child interests to promote child participation and learning in everyday activities. Talk with and observe that individual to learn about the rationale and benefits of interest-based child learning.

*Slide 6*

*Narrator:* Use the information you’ve gathered to develop your explanation and practice it with a peer. Have the peer take the role of Justin’s mother, Cindi. Explain why Cindi might use Justin’s interests to encourage his participation in everyday activities, how doing so could lead to child learning, and how Justin could benefit from the learning opportunities. Obtain feedback from your peer and revise your explanation. Finally, reflect on how this explanation to Cindi might be similar to or different from an explanation you might provide a colleague.

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*Narrator:* You will begin your work with Justin and Cindi by identifying Justin’s interests. Download the child interest and preference indicators tool, and use it as you watch this video of Justin and Cindi in several different activities. What interests did you identify? What else could you learn if you had the opportunity to talk with Cindi about Justin’s interests?

Video within lesson: Justin opens door. Cindi: Hey! \*Knocks\* Justin opens door again. Cindi: Did you, did you knock on that... \*inaudible) \*Knocks\* Hello? Justin opens door again. Cindi: Hi! / Changes scene to Justin playing with toy. Cindi: Good boy. Okay, where you gonna go? This floor is too slick \*Laughs\* Let’s go back on the carpet, I think you have more control. You’re better with shoes on the kitchen floor/ Changes scene to mom changing Justin: Now it’s \*(inaudible)\* Where’s Justin? Justin? Boo! Where’s Justin? Justin? Boo! Justin? Boo! Where is he? Boo! There you are \*babbling from Justin\* Justin \*babbling from Justin\*/Change scene to living room: (Justin, playing) on fireplace: Up! Mom: Up! Justin: Up! Up! Mom: up! You got up! Now what? / Change scene to bathtub- mom: uh! Good boy! You got one! Mom: The frog? \*inaudible\*going in your mouth, those teeth must really be bothering you today. A couple more big splashes and then we’re out..\*inaudible\* Go get them get them get them! Get the yellow one! Get the yellow one! Bam! / Changes scene to living room. Mom: Look at the book. There- there you go. Feel those. See strawberries. Ah! The oranges! Ah He turned into a butterfly. Do you want to get to the page that you like best? Do you want to get to the page that you like best? Feel those holes Ah! There’s the page. There's the page. Take your fingers. Feel all those holes the caterpillar ate he ate through cake and ice cream, pickles, cheese, lollipop/ Scene changes to living room playing with musical cups (Justin, banging cups together): Mom- are you making music? / Scene changes to Justin crawling around a hallway Mom: Go get em! Justin: Babbling Mom: Go get em! Justin: babbling, laughing. Mom: Where’d he go? / Scene changes to a playroom, playing with a toy making music; Justin sitting up and bouncing/dancing

*Slide 8*

*Narrator:* Look over this list of some of Justin’s interests that were observed. Which ones are similar to the interests you identified? What other interests did you identify?

*Slide 9*

*Narrator:* Once you have helped Cindi identify Justin’s interests, you want to identify activities that are of interest or would be interesting to Justin. One way to identify interest-based activities is to use an interest activity list. Use the link to download a list of some of Justin’s everyday activities. Keeping Justin’s interests in mind, mark the activities that match his interests and list additional activities that would be interesting to him. For other resources you can use in your everyday practice, check out these additional interest activity tools.

*Slide 10*

*Narrator:* Another way to help Cindi select interest-based activities is to use an interest idea page that provides suggestions of interest-based activities a child could do at home or in the community. Use the link on this page provided here to check out one example of an interest idea page. Then develop an idea page for Cindi on an interest you identified for Justin. Use the idea page template that you can download here, or create a page with colors, images, and a layout of your choice.

*Slide 11*

*Narrator:* Now that Cindi has identified interest-based activities for Justin, you want to help her increase Justin’s participation in the activities. A reminder list, weekly calendar, or other activity schedule can be used to provide Justin many opportunities to participate in the activities. Download the activity schedule tools provided here, and use the tool that makes the most sense to Cindi to increase Justin’s participation in the activities. For more information, check out the additional resource on increasing child participation in interest-based activities.

*Slide 12*

*Narrator:* Next, watch this video of Cindi and Justin playing with plastic containers. Pay attention to how Justin expresses his interest during this activity. What does Cindi do to respond to Justin’s interest expression? What does Cindi do that is not in response to Justin’s behavior? How else could Cindi acknowledge and respond to Justin’s ongoing behavior? What could she do to encourage Justin to elaborate on his behavior?

Video within lesson: Justin playing with plastic containers. Cindi: (Inaudible) Justin: (Babbles) Cindi: (Inaudible) Stack them. He’s not sure which one he wants. Stack them. Justin: (Plays with containers) Cindi: Okay, give me your (inaudible). Justin (Babbles) Cindi: Stack them. Justin: (Shakes containers) Cindi: Shake, shake, shake, shake.

*Slide 13*

*Narrator:* Once you have completed all the exercises, use the interest-based child learning checklist to examine your practices, determine the extent to which your practices were consistent or inconsistent with each of the checklist indicators, and why. Consider whether you could have done anything differently to make your practices better match an indicator.

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*Narrator:* Spend some time studying these and other resources provided throughout this lesson to learn more about using child interests as a foundation for child learning and development.

*Slide 15*

*Narrator:* The more you use interest-based child learning practices, the more knowledgeable and skilled you will become at identifying and using child interests to promote children’s learning and development. Try these additional exercises to increase your ability to promote interest-based child learning. Continue to use interest-based child learning practices in your work with children and families.