Weekly Reflection Week\_\_\_8\_\_\_ Dates \_2\_/\_28\_ - \_3\_ / \_6\_

InTASC Standard 2: Learner Differences

In any level of education, understanding the unique learning needs of each student in order to better differentiate your teaching is essential. In Early ACCESS these learner needs take on another level as well, family differences. Working with children and families in Early ACCESS has shown me that even when two children may be at very similar points on an evaluation or may appear to have very similar risk factors for delays, they’re needs are still very different. In some cases this is due to how the family approaches the intervention or parenting.

There are many different ways the family impacts an intervention in the Early ACCESS setting. For example, maybe the family needs more supports, the home is more or less structured, or any number of other factors. This week, I was able to see a variety of initial visits, re-evaluations, and an IEP meeting. In all of these settings, while learner differences played into every aspect, the significance of recognizing the unique needs and strengths of each child as well as family surfaced as the principle message. It becomes apparent that in some cases families will need more visits for a variety of different reasons, others may need more visuals or instruction sheets as reminders on what to work on, and still other families may pick up skills naturally. All of these factors go into planning out overall interventions as well as the individual visits. When planning this week, I found myself making a longer list of activities to do during the visit for some children than others simply because I knew we would have to keep things moving at a more rapid pace to keep them engaged. The same will likely be true in the classroom. Some parents may need more communication from me while other families may be content to be more passively involved. Some students may need more structure than others or may be able to attend to one task longer than a peer. All of these things are elements that need to be balanced in the classroom or in Early ACCESS. However, this balance can’t be obtained until you recognize the differences in each child and family and evaluate what that means for their instructional needs.