

21st Century ECC Pocket Guide No. 1

Putting the Learner at the Center

A Practical Guide to High-Impact ECC Instruction

About This Guide

This Pocket Guide distills the key ideas of the 21st Century Expanded Core Curriculum into practical guidance you can use right away. Each guide focuses on one essential principle.

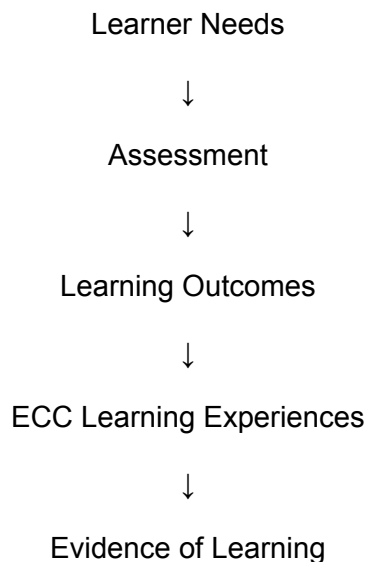
Purpose

Introduce the 21st Century Expanded Core Curriculum and the philosophical shift that moves us from activity-centered instruction to learner-centered design.

Guiding Principle

The Expanded Core Curriculum is both a framework for understanding the educational impact of vision loss and a curriculum for designing individualized ECC Learning Experiences that increase access, participation, independence, and readiness for school, work, and life.

The 21st Century ECC Instructional Model



Why It Matters

The Expanded Core Curriculum transformed opportunities for students with visual impairments. However, instruction can become activity-centered when we begin with planned content instead of learner need.

Assessment should precede instruction.

Learning experiences should be intentional.

The focus shifts from "What ECC area?" to "What does this learner need because of vision loss?"

The Goal

- The goal is not to teach the ECC.
- The goal is to design ECC Learning Experiences that help students overcome barriers created by vision loss.

What This Looks Like	
Rather Than...	Consider...
Beginning with planned ECC content	Beginning with the learner's assessed needs
Planning activities first	Designing intentional ECC Learning Experiences
Teaching isolated skills	Designing ECC Learning Experiences that promote the transfer of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and experiences across contexts
Measuring task completion	Looking for evidence that learning transfers beyond instruction
Delivering the same instruction to every learner	Individualizing instruction based on assessment and learner need

Think It Through

Pause before planning. Ask yourself:

- What is the learner's greatest barrier to access?
- What data and evidence are guiding my thinking?
- What do they tell me about learner strengths, needs, and barriers?
- Why is this the right ECC Learning Experience for this learner, at this time?
- How does this learning experience increase meaningful access, participation, independence, or readiness?

Plan Your Next Move

Turn reflection into action.

- What knowledge, skills, behaviors, and experiences should develop?
- Write clear, observable, action-oriented learning objectives.
- What authentic context makes learning meaningful?
- What collaborators are needed?
- How will evidence be collected?

Contextualizing the Principle

The principle remains consistent across instructional settings.

Itinerant Practice	School for the Blind Practice
Build learning within classroom instruction and authentic opportunities.	Coordinate learning across classrooms, residential life, related services, and extracurricular experiences.

Implementation Pathways

Choose the pathway that matches your current context.

Start Here

- Begin with learner needs.
- Look at existing learning opportunities.
- Ask one more assessment question.
- Look for evidence of learning.

Take It Further

- Redesign one lesson or learning opportunity.
- Review assessment data.
- Write stronger learning objectives.

Expand the Impact

- Collaborate across educators.
- Use during PLCs.
- Clarify team roles.

Considerations for Students with Complex Learning Needs

The same principle applies: Learner first. Needs drive design. Support must be individualized and meaningful.

- Provide multiple means of access, representation, and action.
- Use embedded and standalone instruction strategically.
- Build participation through authentic routines.
- Collaborate intentionally across team members.
- Celebrate growth in independence and self-determination.

Remember

- Keep this at the center of every decision: Why is this the right ECC Learning Experience for this learner, at this time?

Collect the Series

Each Pocket Guide builds on a key idea from the 21st Century Expanded Core Curriculum.

Collect them all and use them to guide your practice.

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