

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Playing and Exploring engagement

Active Learning motivation

Creating and Thinking Critically thinking

A Unique Child:

Observing how a child is learning

Finding out and exploring

- Showing curiosity about objects, events and people
- Using senses to explore the world around them
- Engaging in open-ended activity
- Showing particular interests

Playing with what they know

- Pretending objects are things from their experience
- Representing their experiences in play
- Taking on a role in their play
- Acting out experiences with other people

Being willing to 'have a go'

- Initiating activities
- Seeking challenge
- Showing a 'can do' attitude
- Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences, and learning by trial and error

Being involved and concentrating

- Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time
- Showing high levels of energy, fascination
- Not easily distracted
- Paying attention to details

Keeping on trying

- Persisting with activity when challenges occur
- Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off
- Bouncing back after difficulties

Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

- Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals
- Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result
- Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise

Having their own ideas

- Thinking of ideas
- Finding ways to solve problems
- Finding new ways to do things

Making links

- Making links and noticing patterns in their experience
- Making predictions
- Testing their ideas
- Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect

Choosing ways to do things

- Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal
- Checking how well their activities are going
- Changing strategy as needed
- Reviewing how well the approach worked

Positive Relationships

What adults could do

- Play with children. Encourage them to explore, and show your own interest in discovering new things.
- Help children as needed to do what they are trying to do, without taking over or directing.
- Join in play sensitively, fitting in with children's ideas.
- Model pretending an object is something else, and help develop roles and stories.
- Encourage children to try new activities and to judge risks for themselves. Be sure to support children's confidence with words and body language.
- Pay attention to how children engage in activities – the challenges faced, the effort, thought, learning and enjoyment. Talk more about the process than products.
- Talk about how you and the children get better at things through effort and practice, and what we all can learn when things go wrong.

- Support children to choose their activities – what they want to do and how they will do it.
- Stimulate children's interest through shared attention, and calm over-stimulated children.
- Help children to become aware of their own goals, make plans, and to review their own progress and successes. Describe what you see them trying to do, and encourage children to talk about their own processes and successes.
- Be specific when you praise, especially noting effort such as how the child concentrates, tries different approaches, persists, solves problems, and has new ideas.
- Encourage children to learn together and from each other.
- Children develop their own motivations when you give reasons and talk about learning, rather than just directing.

- Use the language of thinking and learning: think, know, remember, forget, idea, makes sense, plan, learn, find out, confused, figure out, trying to do.
- Model being a thinker, showing that you don't always know, are curious and sometimes puzzled, and can think and find out.
- Encourage open-ended thinking by not settling on the first ideas: What else is possible?
- Always respect children's efforts and ideas, so they feel safe to take a risk with a new idea.
- Talking aloud helps children to think and control what they do. Model self-talk, describing your actions in play.
- Give children time to talk and think.
- Value questions, talk, and many possible responses, without rushing toward answers too quickly.
- Support children's interests over time, reminding them of previous approaches and encouraging them to make connections between their experiences.
- Model the creative process, showing your thinking about some of the many possible ways forward.
- Sustained shared thinking helps children to explore ideas and make links. Follow children's lead in conversation, and think about things together.
- Encourage children to describe problems they encounter, and to suggest ways to solve the problem.
- Show and talk about strategies – how to do things – including problem-solving, thinking and learning.
- Give feedback and help children to review their own progress and learning. Talk with children about what they are doing, how they plan to do it, what worked well and what they would change next time.
- Model the plan-do-review process yourself.

Enabling Environments

What adults could provide

- Provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways.
- Make sure resources are relevant to children's interests.
- Arrange flexible indoor and outdoor space and resources where children can explore, build, move and role play.
- Help children concentrate by limiting noise, and making spaces visually calm and orderly.
- Plan first-hand experiences and challenges appropriate to the development of the children.
- Ensure children have uninterrupted time to play and explore.

- Children will become more deeply involved when you provide something that is new and unusual for them to explore, especially when it is linked to their interests.
- Notice what arouses children's curiosity, looking for signs of deep involvement to identify learning that is intrinsically motivated.
- Ensure children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in activities.
- Children can maintain focus on things that interest them over a period of time. Help them to keep ideas in mind by talking over photographs of their previous activities.
- Keep significant activities out instead of routinely tidying them away.
- Make space and time for all children to contribute.

- In planning activities, ask yourself: 'Is this an opportunity for children to find their own ways to represent and develop their own ideas?' Avoid children just reproducing someone else's ideas.
- Build in opportunities for children to play with materials before using them in planned tasks.
- Play is a key opportunity for children to think creatively and flexibly, solve problems and link ideas. Establish the enabling conditions for rich play: space, time, flexible resources, choice, control, warm and supportive relationships.
- Recognisable and predictable routines help children to predict and make connections in their experiences.
- Routines can be flexible, while still basically orderly.
- Plan linked experiences that follow the ideas children are really thinking about.
- Use mind-maps to represent thinking together.
- Develop a learning community which focuses on **how** and not just what we are learning.