

# Approaches to Learning

- Initiative and Curiosity

- Reasoning and Problem Solving



For young children, growing and learning begins with each child's personal experiences and understanding of the relationship of self to home and family. Their understanding gradually expands to include the people they meet through activities such as early childhood care and education programs, their neighborhood, the community and the larger world.

Adults need to identify children's current knowledge and understanding of their world, and use it as a basis for making new experiences, ideas, and concepts meaningful. The learning experiences for young children need to focus on concepts that are related to the child's everyday life, and provide encouragement for the child to successfully try new things.

## Strategies to support inclusive learning environments:

- ❖ Use appropriate verbal, visual, and physical cues in interactions and activities to meet the special needs of individual children
- ❖ Use vocabulary and phrases in the child's native language when introducing new ideas/concepts
- ❖ Provide opportunities for interaction with typically developing peers

Some general accommodations to support children with special learning or developmental needs can be found on page 9 and in Rule 51.

# Initiative and Curiosity

## Widely Held Expectations

- Child uses initiative, curiosity and persistence to learn about the world
  - Carries out complex and varied sequences of activities independently
  - Explores ways to use new materials
- Child engages in imaginative play
- Child increasingly uses communication to ask questions and seek answers

## Learning in Action: Examples

### The Child

- Asks adults to read stories, signs, or notes
- Participates with different art materials, dramatic play, and puzzles/toys/blocks
- Shows a willingness to listen to a new story or song
- Notices new displays and discusses them with the adult
- Asks questions about new materials in science area
- Tries alternative methods to solve a problem and is highly involved and persistent

### The Adult

- Experiences the outside world with children
- Asks open-ended questions to engage children's imagination (require more than a one-word answer)
- Responds to children's curiosity and questions with enthusiasm and encouragement
- Asks questions and helps children find answers through active, hands-on exploration
- Sets up activities and materials for exploration

## THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A safe, natural space for children to visit and explore
- Opportunities for sand and water play, clay, paints, markers, books and blocks

## Related Standards

### Nebraska K-12 State Standards

#### Reading/Writing

1.2.1

1.3.1

#### Science

1.2.1

1.3.1

1.4.1

#### Mathematics

1.2.1

1.5.4

### Nebraska Rule 11

#### Regulations

004.05C

004.06C

004.06D

004.06E

#### Head Start Outcomes Framework

7.1.1

7.1.2

7.1.3

7.1.4

# Reasoning and Problem Solving

## Widely Held Expectations

### Related Standards

Nebraska K-12  
State Standards  
Reading/Writing  
1.2.1  
Science  
1.1.1  
1.1.3  
1.2.1  
1.3.1  
1.4.1  
Mathematics  
1.1.2  
1.2.1  
1.2.2  
1.3.1  
1.4.1  
1.6.2

- Child shows increasing ability to classify, compare and contrast objects, events and experiences
  - Makes comparisons among objects that have been observed
  - Sorts objects by similar qualities
- Child tries several alternative methods to solve a problem and is highly involved and persistent
  - Uses active exploration and trial and error to solve problems
  - Demonstrates persistence in problem solving
  - Increases ability to make predictions and find more than one solution
- Child reflects on experiences and information, and interprets or draws conclusions based on the information

## Learning in Action: Examples

### The Child

- Asks for assistance after trying for a minute or two to put together a difficult puzzle
- Tries several methods to reach an object high on a shelf before asking for assistance
- Looks for help when trying to hang up a painting that is still wet
- Constructs a bridge with blocks using past experiences as a guide

### The Adult

- Helps children identify characteristics of objects or events in their environment
- Provides opportunities to increase the child's ability to make independent choices
- Encourages and provides materials for a variety of sensory experiences
- Gives children ample time to problem solve without intervening

### THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Opportunities to observe and make predictions about natural events (growing seeds, caring for animals, charting weather, etc.)
- A variety of tools that can be used for exploring and investigating

Nebraska Rule 11  
Regulations  
004.05D  
004.06C  
004.06D  
004.06E

Head Start  
Outcomes  
Framework  
7.3.1  
7.3.2  
7.3.3

# Resources

*A Mind at a Time*--Mel Levine

*Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*--Daniel Goleman

*Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach*--Lilian G. Katz and Sylvia C. Chard

*Einstein Never Used Flashcards: How Our Children REALLY Learn--and Why They Need to Play More and Memorize Less*--Kathy Kirsch-Pasek and Roberta Michnick Golinkoff

*Group Games in Early Education: Implications of Piaget's Theory*--Constance Kamii and Rheta Devries

*Making Friends: The Influences of Culture and Development*--Luanna H. Meyer, Hyun-Sook Park, Marquita Grenot-Scheyer, Ilene S. Schwartz and Beth Harry

*Pathways to Play: Developing Play Skills in Young Children*--Sandra Heidemann, Deborah Hewitt, Don Franklin, Michael Siluk, F. Wardle

*Planning Around Children's Interests: The Teacher's Idea Book 2*--Michelle Graves

*Reconsidering children's early development and learning toward common views and vocabulary: draft report to the National Education Goals Panel*--U.S. Department of Education

These books and many other resources may be borrowed by Nebraska residents from the Early Childhood Training Center. A web-based search of these media materials is offered at [www.esu3.org/ectc](http://www.esu3.org/ectc) or telephone contact may be made by calling 1-402-597-4826 or 1-800-89CHILD.

## Books for Children

*Alphabet Under Construction*--Denise Fleming

*The Art Lesson*--Tomie dePaola

*The Curious George series*--H.A. Rey

*From Head to Toe*--Eric Carle

*Is Your Mama a Llama?*--Deborah Guarino

*The Little Engine That Could*--Watty Piper

*Margaret and Margarita/Margarita y Margaret*--Lynn Reiser

*Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*--Virginia Lee Burton

*Snow Play*--Kate Spohn