

Indicator #24
Curiosity and Initiative

Student shows interest in a growing range of topics, ideas, and tasks.

Research

Focusing on the how of learning involves the children's feelings about learning and also their behavior while learning. The goal is to develop children who are more eager to learn. Those children who are more eager to learn tend to do better in reading and mathematics than those who are less motivated. Kindergarten teachers must encourage children's inclination to ask questions and wonder. It is their job to help them refine their questions and think of ways to get the answers they are seeking. For students to be curious and show interest they must feel entitled to ask questions and explore. The role of a teacher is not to provide answers but to help the child find answers. Student's learning is fostered through curiosity in a range of topics that helps a child begin to make sense of their world through exploration. The ability to explore and seek meaningful information is essential for a child to learn in all different settings, throughout their schooling and in life.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8. (n.d.). Retrieved June 06, 2016, from <https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSDAP.pdf>

Curiosity and Initiative
AL.1.PK.A

Explore and ask questions to seek meaningful information about a growing range of topics, ideas and tasks.

The learner will:

- Show interest in new experiences by watching others, handling materials, or asking questions

The learner may also:

- Utilize senses to explore and learn from the environment
- Show interest and interact with peers about their work or actions
- Demonstrate interest in new materials and experiences that are introduced into the classroom
- Ask questions to understand something (e.g. "How does that work?")
- Watch peers play and ask to join in

Effective Practices:

- Stimulate children's curiosity through use of "provocation" strategies when introducing new topics or ideas (e.g. ask children to guess what might be inside a box)
- Provide real objects that can be manipulated or explored to understand a concept
- Respond to children's questions with explanations that help them to understand
- Encourage children to research answers to questions through books and other media
- Regularly rotate classroom materials and formally introduce new objects and activities into the classroom by showing excitement

ACTIVITIES

Activity:

Materials

Sensory material (play-doh, gak, etc.), bin of tools (plastic silverware, play-doh tools, etc.), tray, extra plastic bag with some of the sensory material inside.

Provide students with the sensory material on the tray and ask questions as needed to encourage exploration. Ask them what they might do with it and provide them with time to explore. Look for evidence of student-driven conversation about what they are doing with the material.

Activity Prompt:

Tell the student, "Here is some play-doh (or other material). Show me what you can do with it."

Extension Activity:

Provide students with tools that they can use with the sensory material for further exploration and conversation.

Prompt: "Here are some tools that you can use. Show me what you can do with them."

Additional Support:

- Provide students with peer support (small group, partner, etc.).
- For students struggling to engage with the sensory material, provide students with a plastic bag pre-filled with the sensory material. Offer them the opportunity to try it in this different way. Encourage them to manipulate it.

Evidence Collection Strategies:

- The teacher will observe and document students' ability to engage in exploration of the materials provided.

Home School Connection:

- Encourage families to provide children with new experiences and encourage them to participate. Ideas include: cooking, games, sports, visiting new places.

Self-exploration: Use common materials to do something new! Ideas include: making a blanket fort, build with cooking ware, recycled materials.

Learn more about child-driven interests: visit the library, research on the internet, explore outside, etc.

Activity:

Observation of Free Play

Designate open centers for students to choose where they would like to go. This will provide an opportunity to observe their interests and what they are curious about.

Suggestions for centers: Housekeeping, blocks, sensory table table with tools, science or discovery table, library center with books including nonfiction selections to see child interests, writing center with variety of materials, and art center with variety of materials.

Activity Prompt:

Encourage students' to select centers on their own. The teacher will add new materials to centers and introduce the materials to students prior to the students choosing centers. Allow students to choose which center they are interested in. When children are playing ask, "What made you pick this center today? What did you and _____ do today in this center?"

Evidence Collection Strategies:

- The teacher will observe and document students' ability to choose a center and note what they are curious about.
- Teachers can create a flip chart of centers and how many students are allowed in a center at one time. The student will place a clothes pin, with their name on it, on the center of their choice. The teacher can take a picture of the clothes pins and see from day to day if students pick different centers or always the same centers.

Collect materials made at different centers for documentation or take pictures of material/children playing. Listen closely to the conversations taking place in each center and complete a running record.

Home School Connection:

- Get to know your child survey or interest survey together as a family:

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Free-Student-Interest-Survey-Now-Editable-266751>