



Playful Explorations: Building a Foundation for Development and Learning

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Curriculum Considerations

- ◆ Discovery and divergent learning
- ◆ Brain functions optimally in a high challenge and low threat environment
- ◆ Brain likes novelty
- ◆ Brain works best in a social situation
- ◆ Manipulatives enhance learning
- ◆ The environment must allow for “play” and exploration as well as inquiry
- ◆ Environment must be appealing and stimulating
- ◆ Set up of classroom is critical
- ◆ Environment supports resiliency skills—child has opportunities to be successful
- ◆ Teachers respond to child’s promptings and questions
- ◆ One of the teacher’s main objectives is always safety: physical, verbal, emotional

Questions and provocations to stimulate dialogue, language usage, and cognitive development in young children—

- Tell me about what you're doing . . .
- How did you do that?
- What do you think will happen if . . . ?
- I was wondering if there's another way we can . . .
- How many did it take to do that?
- Is there anything you would like to change?
- What other pieces do you think we could include?
- Where do you think we can put this so other people can enjoy it, too?
- What are you making?
- Let me know if you need anything else to . . .
- What do you think will happen if you changed this?
- I see you used _____, _____, and _____. Tell me the reason you chose those.
- How many more do you think you could make?
- Who else could we ask to help us with this?
- I see you're dressed like a(n) _____. Tell me about your job.
- Since we can't take this out of the classroom, what can we do to let other people know what this looked like?
- Who all worked on this project? What did they do?
- If you work here again tomorrow, will you do the same thing or something different?
- Let's make a list of all the pieces you used.

S E A L

Stimulus (any sensory provocation)



Emotion (positive or negative)



Attention (positive emotions drive executive functions—negative emotions drive survival)



Learning (the response to the attentional variant)

(adapted from Robert Sylwester's *A Biological Brain in a Cultural Classroom*)