

## Objective 11 Demonstrates positive approaches to learning

### Strategies

- Provide one or two toys or materials at a time for young infants, exchanging them when the child's attention diminishes.
- Provide appropriate amounts of visual stimuli, e.g., pictures, mobiles, and signs, so children are neither over- nor understimulated.
- Use the child's name to get his or her attention, e.g., say, "Look, Juan!" as you begin to speak.
- Help the child stay focused by singing about an activity if it is helpful to the child, e.g., sing, "This is the way we stack the blocks, stack the blocks, stack the blocks...."
- Provide children with time, space, and a variety of interesting materials for play.
- Provide recyclable as well as new materials that can be used in a variety of innovative ways, e.g., boxes, tubes, spools, containers.
- Provide many opportunities for children to make choices from among interesting materials that are familiar and challenging, and encourage children to use them in many ways.
- Rotate materials regularly to maintain children's interest. Provide materials that build on those already familiar to the children.
- Interpret and expand on what children do and say. Model deliberate, strategic engagement in activities and self-talk to help children stay engaged and persist with challenging tasks.
- Provide opportunities for children to observe others solving problems and to work with other children and adults to solve problems together.
- Support children's efforts during challenging tasks by providing specific, positive verbal feedback or physical support while encouraging them to come up with solutions, e.g., "Keep turning the puzzle piece to figure out how it fits."
- Describe children's problem-solving strategies, e.g., "You tried reaching into the jar to get the balls out, and then you turned the jar over and dumped them."
- Limit directions to one step at a time for toddlers and two or three steps at a time for preschoolers and kindergartners. Reinforce the directions visually by demonstrating the activity, by using pictures, or by using picture and word cues.
- Encourage children to learn from their mistakes. Encourage them to make and test predictions and to examine their thinking.
- Respond to children's explorations and discoveries with enthusiasm and encouragement rather than by providing rewards like stickers or prizes.
- Support children's spontaneous interests, e.g., their examinations of the locust shells found in the play yard, in addition to offering teacher-directed activities based on the children's interests.
- Encourage children to solve problems for themselves when appropriate. Be available to offer support, encouragement, and new ideas when needed.
- Demonstrate, explain, and engage children in trying different ways of doing things. Discuss whether the strategies worked well.
- Take time to answer *why* questions, offering explanations that the child can understand.
- Encourage children's inclination to ask questions and wonder. Help them refine their questions and support them in finding answers.
- Play games that support children's curiosity and internal motivation, such as "Mystery Bag." Hide an object inside a bag. Give verbal clues about its identity. Let children feel, describe, and guess what it is before looking at it.



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### Strategies, continued

- Encourage children's imaginations by finding images in clouds or puddles. Discuss pictures in which part of an object is hidden.
- Nurture children's curiosity by providing thought-provoking, hands-on, investigatory experiences that motivate them to apply their developing skills and prior knowledge and that challenge them to think.
- Ask children open-ended questions such as, "What do you think would happen if you...? What else could you do with...? Can you think of another way to...?"
- Point out strategies children used successfully in similar situations, e.g., prompt, "Yesterday you used the broom to get the dishes from behind the sink. I wonder if it would work to get the puzzle piece that dropped behind the shelf?"
- Organize the play environment to encourage sociodramatic play, including props, utensils, and tools to support different roles. Create new settings for dramatic play with preschool and older children, e.g., a post office, clinic, grocery store, bakery, or campsite. Serve as a sensitive play tutor, engaging in play while following the children's leads.
- Plan so that children can spend days or weeks investigating interesting objects in their environment, seeking answers to their questions, and finding solutions to problems.
- Provide well-defined boundaries for preschool and kindergarten children who need support in order to focus, e.g., use freestanding cardboard dividers for table activities and colored tape to define work spaces on the floor. Limit the number of objects they are given.
- Model flexibility by changing an activity to incorporate children's interesting ideas. To help children consider different perspectives or solutions, explain why the activity is being changed.
- Emphasize the process children use to come up with possible approaches to tasks instead of focusing on finished products and answers.
- Guide preschool and older children in doing in-depth, long-term, and open-ended studies and explorations.
- Encourage children to think of multiple ways to create something using the same materials. For example, they might see how many different ways they can make a boat using milk cartons, paper, foil, craft sticks, etc.