



# Approaches to Learning

## Preschool Age Children

Children are born with a desire to learn and figure things out, but each child approaches learning in their own way. Check out these strategies to support your child's curiosity, problem solving, and more!

### Curiosity, Information-Seeking, and Eagerness

Introduce new materials to help your child use all their senses and capture their interest such as music, sidewalk chalk, clay, fabric, boxes, and a variety of books. This will encourage them to try new experiences.

Show genuine curiosity and excitement. Be a role model, showing how to approach new situations and engage in learning.

Support your child's communication and exploration by having rich conversations with them; listen and respond to their ideas, interests, questions, and concerns.

### Initiative, Effort, Engagement, and Persistence

Allow extended time for your children to work on activities they choose and try to avoid rushing. This promotes engagement, independence, initiative, and persistence.

Prepare children for transitions by informing them that they need to wrap up what they are doing. Try saying "In five minutes, we need to finish up."

Emphasize the importance of effort, not just getting it right. Encourage and praise children's efforts.



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### Risk-Taking, Problem Solving, Flexibility, and Resiliency

Model flexibility and positive approaches to new experiences. Be willing to try new ideas, activities, materials, foods, etc. This helps to not only demonstrate flexibility, but also risk-taking and resiliency.

Provide plenty of open-ended materials (blocks, water, buckets, newspaper, etc.), and encourage your child to use them in new ways.

Help children who have difficulty trying new things by introducing the material or change slowly and by preparing them in advance for changes that are coming. Allow them to observe before actively participating.

## Play and Imagination

Support children's ability to use their imaginations. Help make up new words to songs and new endings for stories.

Provide props for and promote play scenarios, such as post office, restaurant, veterinarian's office, pet store, grocery store, bank, and library.

Ask open-ended questions that encourage broad, creative thinking, like "What would happen if...?", "Why do you think...?", or "What could we do...?".

Expand children's experiences by exploring new places and introducing them to new indoor and outdoor activities.



This information was adapted from the South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines. To learn more, talk to your childcare provider or visit [sdstepahead.com](http://sdstepahead.com).