



## Characteristics of effective learning

### A Parents Guide



## Playing and exploring - Engagement

Children investigate, experience things and 'have a go'.

**Playing and exploring is split into three sections:**

Finding out and exploring

Playing with what they know

Being willing to have a go.

Children use their senses to explore the world around them. They choose *how* to play and *what* to play with, initiating their own play and following their own interests. The child learns through open ended play experiences and through pretend play including role play. They may play on their own or with others, communicating to themselves as well as others. They challenge themselves within their play, taking risks as they 'have a go' at new experiences. They play with confidence having a 'can do' attitude.

### **An example of role – playing.**

At 12 months old - a child may observe an adult closely and engage them in eye contact. They may pass a cup while playing in the kitchen area to indicate the adult to drink it. At 2 years old a child may mimic what they have seen and will pour imaginary tea from a tea pot into a cup and offer it to an adult. At 4 years old, a child may mark make on a piece of paper and offer a menu like in a restaurant and explain what is on offer, using language they have seen imitated when in that environment or when playing with an adult drawing on previous experiences.





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## Active Learning - Motivation

Children are involved and concentrate, keep on trying when challenges occur and show satisfaction in their achievements.

**Active learning is split into three sections:**

Being involved and concentrating

Keeping on trying

Enjoy achieving what they set out to do.

Children are learning to show concentration and are not easily distracted. They will show attention to detail, following routines and being able to predict what might happen next. The child will keep trying and can cope with difficulties that arise, beginning to correct their mistakes. They feel a sense of satisfaction at their own achievements and will respond positively to challenges, keeping on trying to achieve their goals.

### An example of active learning.

At 12 months old a child may persist at trying to put a hat on their head. They may make several attempts at this and struggle, even using their voice or gain eye contact to indicate needing help. However, they will eventually succeed and will be very pleased with themselves for completing the task. At 2 years old they may struggle to put on a pair of trousers, they may become frustrated with their attempts and may refuse offer for help or verbal guidance. Eventually they will succeed and show pride in their attempt exclaiming "I did it!". At 4 years old a child may be attempting to put on their coat and zip it up independently. This takes concentration to complete without getting distracted by what is going on around them. It may take a few attempts of finding the arm holes, sliding the zip ends together, but in the end, they will complete the task. Showing immense pride in succeeding to get themselves ready.





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## Thinking creatively and critically - Thinking

Children have their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing this.

**Thinking creatively and critically is split into three sections:**

Having their own ideas (creative thinking)

Making links (building theories)

Working with ideas (critical thinking)

Children are learning to take part in pretend play, create their own ideas, review their progress and problem solve, feeling confident to share their own ideas. When problem solving, they will start to link ideas and make connections to previous learning, predicting what might happen and plan out what to do. They will reflect on what they have done, test out their ideas and if unsuccessful, look at different ways to do things. Their level of focus and concentration will remain high, ignoring distractions around them.

At 12 months old a child may discover how to use a spoon successfully by exploring which end holds the most food, turning their spoon around and attempting to scoop the food up, finally discovering that the end with the widest part gives the most food. At 2 years old, a child may be attempting to eat beans with a fork but be unsuccessful in their attempts after they fall off the sides. They may continue to try, persisting in what they do. They then may draw on previous experience, using a spoon instead, asking for one if they don't have one. At 4 years old a child may have problems cutting up their food with a knife and fork. They may stab with the fork, and practice turning the knife in different ways or move their hand to hold the fork in another way. They may make several unsuccessful attempts, pulling the food apart rather than slicing. They may also closely observe others to see what they are doing in order to solve this problem, then may ask for help to achieve success. Next time, they may draw on this previous experience to achieve this goal.

