

Fostering Competent Learners: Essential Dispositions



Across all ages and domains, early learning experiences will support children to:

■ **Be creative**

Support young children's growth and development by encouraging creative thinking and novel approaches to solving problems. Children should have opportunities to create, express themselves in a variety of ways and approach problems from new perspectives. The focus of early learning experiences should be on the process instead of the product, promoting learning, exploring and thinking over achieving a specific result or answer.

■ **Be inquisitive**

Encourage children to explore, seek new information and ask questions. Children should feel comfortable questioning information, testing out new ideas and simply playing with materials

in new and unusual ways. Those supporting young children's growth and development should create safe environments in which children can explore and experiment.

■ **Be flexible**

Foster children's ability to adapt to new situations, to be flexible in their responses and to actively engage in new environments. Exposure to new ideas, environments and situations in meaningful ways can promote resilience.

■ **Be critical thinkers**

Encourage children to use critical thinking skills to help them organize and use the great amount of information available today. Those supporting young children's growth and development should promote an understanding of the concepts behind specific skills (e.g., understanding quantity as well as learning the sequence of counting), provide opportunities to engage in higher-order thinking skills and encourage children to question the accuracy of information they receive.

■ **Be purposeful and reflective**

Promote children's engagement in purposeful action. Very young children should be actively involved in play and will benefit from reminders of the results of their actions. Three- and four-year-olds should play an active role in planning experiences, setting goals and celebrating accomplishments. They should be encouraged to be reflective and to learn from mistakes.

■ **Be social learners**

Social interactions form the basis for children's learning. Encourage children to interact with adults and peers, ask questions and jointly solve problems. Those supporting young children's growth and development should provide opportunities to learn through cooperative experiences with adults and children.