



Educational Insight 2: Understanding Your Child's Learning and Development

Because knowledge and learning are tied to the surroundings and relationships in people's lives, each person learns differently. Everyone is shaped by culture, individual experiences, and unique personal characteristics. Due to the diversity in family beliefs, attitudes, and goals, there is no single way to offer new learning opportunities, whether we're talking about adults or children.

WHAT FACTORS CAN HELP CREATE A POSITIVE LEARNING CLIMATE?

Children who see their family members as educators feel pride and more motivation to learn. Expectations and attitudes about education are among the most important influences on children's school success. When children experience higher family expectations, they put more time and effort into academic activities. Overall, learning can also deeply influence your feelings about yourself, your abilities, and your future goals.

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILDREN FIND A LOVE OF LEARNING?

Families who draw on their own learning experiences often develop effective ways to teach their children. You can build your children's interest in learning by helping them:

- Direct children's attention to the task they're working on
- Explain new information
- Relate new ideas to familiar experiences
- Respond to children's questions

WHO IS THE EXPERT?

Your child's educators learn about your child's unique likes and dislikes, temperament, and communication styles when you share information with them. Because you know your own child best, share your child's story with the educator and really help them connect. Being willing to enter into a collaborative relationship with your child's educator is also key to building a strong partnership between the two of you and will help you make realistic goals for your child's learning.

HOW CAN WE HELP THIS TO HAPPEN?

- Adopt an approach of collaborating with educators to share learning goals and ideas to support children's learning both at home and during Zoom meetings.
- As you feel comfortable, think about your educator as a partner and share openly about your family, including your goals for your child, your family culture, and your future plans. Think about how you can include your family's experiences in your conversations.

THINKING ABOUT CONTENT LEARNING

First, let's continue to consider **play based learning** as a way support children toward school readiness. As we learned in Educational Insight, The Science of Play, we know that play is how young children learn about the world. When children play, they learn how objects work, how people think, feel, and act, how to solve problems, think critically and creatively, share their thoughts and ideas, work well with others, and manage their emotions. When you play with your child, it helps them learn and is an effective way of introducing learning content, like Literacy and Math skills.

Tips for Building Literacy Skills

- Invite families to share their feelings about engaging children with books
- Look at and read books with your child
- Read books that are in your home language
- Take a picture walk through a book by looking at and describing the pictures, as you read the story
- Ask your child questions during the story time to see how they're following along
- Act out parts of the story with your child
- When your child picks a favorite story, feel free to read it more than once

Tips for Helping Caregivers Approach Mathematics

- Look for ways to ask math related questions throughout daily conversations:
 - » Ask: How much? How many? Can you count... What shape is that?
- Include your child in tasks like cooking, setting the table, and folding laundry. Talk about practical applications: How many table settings do we need? Can you match the socks? What's a pair?
- Build things together and talk about measurement; How high is that tower? Let's use a ruler.

You have a very important role in your child's education. Think about how you can strengthen your child's love for learning as they move on to kindergarten. Skills you build now in developing strong partnerships with your child's educators will serve you well as your child continues on in school. Whether we are in the classroom or interacting virtually we still need to stay connected. Remember: We're better together!

Resources:

ECLKC: Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series: Families As Learners
Coaching Insight: The Science of Play
NAEYC: Ways to Build Math Into Your Child's Day