

A Parent's Guide to Characteristics of Effective Learning

Among Nursery's aims is to enhance the development and education of children under statutory school age; to support children in working towards and where appropriate beyond the Early Learning Goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is based on our belief that every competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.'

To support us to do this we work with the children promoting their development in three

Prime Areas- **Personal, Social & Emotional Development, Physical Development and Communication & Language**, plus four Specific Areas- **Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding of the World and Expressive Arts and Design**.

In addition to these we reflect on the different ways that children learn and support these in our practice. **The three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning are: Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creativity and Thinking Critically.**

Characteristics of Effective Learning	
Playing and exploring – engagement	Finding out and exploring Playing with what they know Being willing to 'have a go'
Active learning – motivation	Being involved and concentrating Keeping trying Achieving what they set out to do
	Thinking critically – thinking

Please find attached some information regarding the Characteristics of Effective Learning and tips on how you can support your children at home.

Please turn over

1) **Playing & Exploring- engagement.**



Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. *EYFS Statutory Framework 2012*

Finding out and exploring

This is one of the most important strategies for learning all through a person's life. It entails a child discovering:

- ❖ **Using their senses.**
- ❖ **What something does.**
- ❖ **What can they do with an object.**

Playing with what they know.

As children play and explore they build a repertoire of knowledge, skills and understanding, by:

- ❖ **Pretending objects are things from their experience**
- ❖ **Representing their experiences in play**
- ❖ **Taking on a role in their play**
- ❖ **Acting out experiences with other people**

Being willing to have a go-

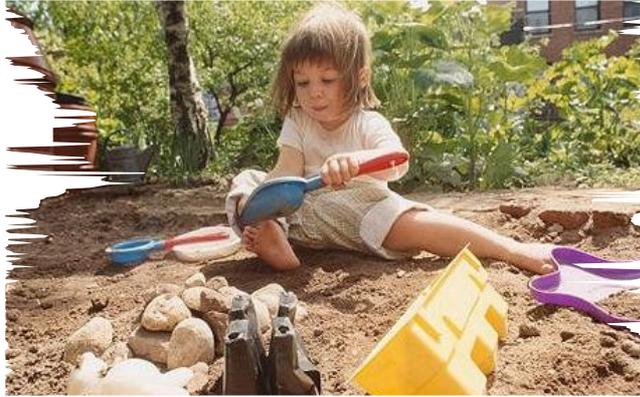
Children need to develop the confidence to take intellectual and physical risks to enable them to learn from their mistakes. Adults need to give emotional support to a child to have a go and to

- ❖ **Initiate activities,**
- ❖ **Seek challenges**
- ❖ **Take risks**
- ❖ **Have a 'Can do' attitude**

Promoting Play and Exploration at home

- ❖ Encourage your child to explore, and show your own interest in discovering new things.
- ❖ Help your child, as needed, to do what they are trying to do, without over directing.
- ❖ Join in your child's play sensitively, fitting in with their ideas.
- ❖ Model pretending an object is something else and develop roles and stories together.
- ❖ Encourage your child to try new activities and to judge risks for themselves; be sure to support them with encouraging words and body language.
- ❖ During activities talk more about what they are doing than the end product.
- ❖ Talk about how you and the children get better at things through trying hard and practice, and what we all can learn when things go wrong.
- ❖ Provide stimulating toys and activities which are open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways.

- ❖ Help children to concentrate by limiting noise, and making spaces visually calm and orderly.
- ❖ Plan experiences and challenges appropriate to your child's age and abilities.
- ❖ Ensure your child has uninterrupted time to play and explore.



Active Learning- motivation

The second characteristic of learning is about a child being *mentally* active and alert. It involves children in becoming deeply involved and concentrating, being motivated to persist (keep on trying) and gain satisfaction from achieving what they

have chosen to do.

Being involved and concentrating

In order for a child to concentrate fully on something they need to be motivated. Play and exploration are an important role in developing this. When a child is *concentrating they:*

- ❖ **Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time**
- ❖ **Showing high levels of energy and fascination**
- ❖ **Are not easily distracted**
- ❖ **Paying attention to details**

Keep on trying.

Is all about persistence, a child being motivated to master a new skill or understand a new idea, even though this may require considerable effort. Struggles/challenges are good for children. We want the children to learn to:

- ❖ **Persisting with activity when challenges occur**
- ❖ **Show a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off**
- ❖ **Bounce back after difficulties**

Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

This is to do with the supporting the children to gain satisfaction from achieving their goals *'rather than relying on the approval of others'* We want the children to:

- ❖ **Show satisfaction in meeting their own goals**
- ❖ **Be proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result**
- ❖ **Enjoy meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise**

Promoting Active Learning at Home

- ❖ Support your child to choose their activities – what they want to do and how they will do it.
- ❖ Stimulate children's interest through showing an interest in their activities.
- ❖ Help children to become aware of their own goals, make simple plans, and review how they are doing
- ❖ Describe what you see your child is trying to do, and encourage them to talk what they are doing and how well they are doing it.
- ❖ Be specific when your praise, emphasise effort such as how your child has concentrated, tried different approaches, persisted, solved problems, and had new ideas.

- ❖ Give your child reasons for an activity/action, rather than just giving them a direction and talk about how they are learning something new to develop their motivation.



3)Creating and Thinking Critically

The third characteristic is about a child learning to be creative in their thinking process. It involves them using their imagination to think flexibly and come up with new ideas. Also to learn to think critically to organise their thoughts, solve problems and come up with new strategies.

Having their own ideas

In order to be able to solve problems in their daily experiences, children, like adults, need to generate their own ideas and put these to good use. We need to support the children to be:

- ❖ **Thinking of ideas**
- ❖ **Finding ways to solve problems**
- ❖ **Finding new ways to do things**

Making links

This is to do with how as babies and young children make sense of their experiences, they are make connections between what they already know and new experiences. It involves:

- ❖ **Making links and noticing patterns in their experience**
- ❖ **Making predictions**
- ❖ **Testing their ideas**
- ❖ **Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect**

Choosing ways to do things

This aspect of the Characteristics of Learning involves the child in making choices as to how to go about something rather than following instructions. It involves them:

- ❖ **Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal**
- ❖ **Checking how well their activities are going**
- ❖ **Changing strategy as needed**
- ❖ **Reviewing how well the approach worked**

Promoting Creative and Critical Thinking at Home

- ❖ Use the language of thinking and learning: *think, know, remember, forget, idea, makes sense, plan, learn, find out, confused, figure out, trying to do.*
- ❖ Model being a thinker, showing that you don't always know, are curious and sometimes puzzled, and can think and find out.
- ❖ Encourage open-ended thinking by not settling on the first ideas: *What else* is possible?
- ❖ Always respect children's efforts and ideas, so they feel safe to take a risk with a new idea.
- ❖ Talking aloud helps children to think and control what they do. Model self-talk, describing your actions in play.
- ❖ Give children time to talk and think.
- ❖ Value questions, talk, and many possible responses, without rushing toward answers too quickly.
- ❖ Support children's interests over time, reminding them of previous approaches and encouraging them to make connections between their experiences.
- ❖ Model the creative process, showing your thinking about some of the many possible ways forward.

- ❖ Follow children's lead in conversation, and think about things together.
- ❖ Encourage children to describe problems they encounter, and to suggest ways to solve the problem.
- ❖ Show and talk about how to do things –including problem-solving, thinking and learning.
- ❖ Talk with children about what they are doing, how they plan to do it, what worked well and what they would change next time.