

Moving Beyond Empty and Fill to Deep Investigations

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Curriculum Considerations

- ♦ Discovery and divergent learning
- Brain functions optimally in a high challenge and low threat environment
- ♦ Brain likes novelty
- ♦ Brain works best in a social situation
- ♦ Manipulatives enhance learning
- ♦ The environment must allow for "play" and exploration as well as inquiry
- Environment must be appealing and stimulating
- ◆ Set up of classroom is critical
- ♦ Environment supports resiliency skills—child has opportunities to be successful
- ♦ Teachers respond to child's promptings and questions
- ♦ One of the teacher's main objectives is always safety: physical, verbal, emotional

Projects With Toddlers

(adapted from From Handprints to Hypotheses: Using the Project Approach with Toddlers and Twos by Todd Wanerman)

Phase One—Getting Started

Phase Two—Developing the Project Work

Phase Three—Concluding the Project

- ➤ Has a beginning and ending
- ➤ More than one step
- > Involves planning
- A goal or vision for a result
- ➤ Use of tools
- > Put elements together into something larger
- > Requires observation to adjust between the start and the finish
- > Negotiation, communication, and collaboration
- ➤ Skills, knowledge, and capacities
- > Improves certain skills, knowledge, and capacities
- ➤ Involves both work and play
- ➤ Usually consists of a culminating product or event

Questions and provocations to stimulate dialogue, language usage, and cognitive development in young children—

- Tell me about what you're doing . . .
- How did you do that?
- What do you think will happen if . . .?
- I was wondering if there's another way we can do . . .
- How many did it take to do that?
- Is there anything you would like to change?
- What other pieces do you think we could include?
- Where do you think we can put this so other people can enjoy it, too?
- What are you making?
- Let me know if you need anything else to . . .
- What do you think will happen if you changed this?
- I see you used _____, ____, and _____. Tell me about how you chose those.
- How many more do you think you could make?
- Who else could we ask to help us with this?
- I see you're dressed like a(n) ____. Tell me about your job.
- Since we can't take this out of the classroom, what can we do to let other people know what this looked like?
- Who all worked on this project? What did they do?
- If you do this again tomorrow, will you do the same thing or something different?
- Let's make a list of all the pieces you used.

SEAL

Stimulus (any sensory provocation)

Emotion (positive or negative)

Attention (positive emotions drive executive functions—negative emotions drive survival)

Learning (the response to the attentional variant)

(adapted from Robert Sylwester's A Biological Brain in a Cultural Classroom)