

A Unique Child: Observing how a child is learning

Playing and exploring – engagement

Finding out and exploring

- Showing curiosity about objects, events and people
- Using senses to explore the world around them
- Engaging in open-ended activity
- Showing particular interests

Playing with what they know

- 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'

- Initiating activities
- Seeking challenge
- Showing a 'can do' attitude
- Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences, and learning from trial and error

Active learning – motivation

Being involved and concentrating

- Showing a deep drive to know more about people and their world
- Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time
- Showing high levels of involvement, energy, fascination
- Not easily distracted
- Paying attention to details

Keeping on trying

- Persisting with an activity or toward their goal when challenges occur
- Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off and that their skills will grow and develop (growth mindset)
- Bouncing back after difficulties

Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

- Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals (*I can!*)
- Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result
- Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise (intrinsic motivation)

Thinking creatively and critically – thinking

Having their own ideas (creative thinking)

- Thinking of ideas that are new and meaningful to the child
- Playing with possibilities (*what if? What else?*)
- Visualising and imagining options
- Finding new ways to do things

Making links (building theories)

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

Working with ideas (critical thinking)

- 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