

Teaching and Learning

Childs interests



Anyone who has ever spent quality time alongside young children will know that their drive to learn is often powered by their own interests and fascinations. Attempting to teach young children without acknowledging these interests and their prior experiences, can be frustrating for everyone involved and can lead to missed valuable learning opportunities. By acknowledging, and building on, children's own interests we help children feel valued.

How meaningful a learning experience is perceived to be is also crucial. When we see learning as something which is useful to ourselves and our own lives, we tend to be more engaged in the process. Practice which is shaped by our observations and interactions with the children in order that we can provide a meaningful learning experience is, therefore, vital.

Birth to 5 Matters 2021

TASK 1

Within your team reflect on your own practice and consider these questions:

- Do you provide open ended opportunities indoors and outdoors based on the children's interests where they can explore and experiment with confidence? Can you think of some examples?
- Is your provision based on your observations of children's interests and fascinations? If not, how can you make sure this is happening?

TASK 2

Below we have some examples of potential interests or fascinations:

- Child 1 really enjoys collecting pebbles
- Child 2 really likes fixing
- Child 3 really likes magic

In a pair, discuss what you could provide to support each child's learning across all areas based on these interests? Don't forget to think about children's learning styles and characteristics of effective learning.

Try to think a little bit deeper, for example if a child enjoys playing with dinosaurs could you paint using the dinosaurs' feet, create a dinosaur fossil digging area, stomp and move around like dinosaurs or create dinosaurs with junk modelling? The opportunities are endless. Be sure to identify root of the curiosity/interest to enable you to effectively offer opportunities within your provision.

Apply this to the context of your work, think of one child who struggles to engage in the provision. Why do you think that is? Do you know what their interests are? If you don't know, how can you find out? Can you think of ways to support their learning through their interests?