

LEARNING ABOUT CHILDREN'S INTERESTS

Child Interests Practice Guide

Make your way to this Early Childhood Personnel Center website to discover a treasure trove of resources related to building on children's interests. You'll find a definition, examples, and lots of links to additional articles and information [here](#). A companion resource, [Interest-Based Child Learning E-Learning Lessons](#), features three e-lessons to support learning about, practicing, and applying ways in which families and educators can use children's interests.

Checklist and Guidelines for Identifying Children's Interests

This resource includes evidence for the benefits of building on child interests, an inventory that educators and families can use to identify possible interests, and thoughtful guidance on how to use what is learned from using the checklist. Try it out [here](#).

Implementing a Curriculum Responsively: Building on Children's Interests | Implementación de un Currículo en Forma Receptiva: Aprovechar los Intereses de los Niños

This 15-minute video describes how educators can implement a curriculum responsive to individual children's interests. Watch to discover ways to learn about children's interests and discover options for reflecting those interests in the learning environment, learning experiences, and adult-child interactions. A companion handout has tips, additional resources, and guidance for using the video in professional development. These resources are available in [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

BUILDING ON CHILDREN'S INTERESTS

The Plan: Building on Children's Interests

This article outlines a plan that teachers, children, and families can easily initiate and follow to build on children's interests. It is a process of learning about what a child or a class is interested in and then planning a positive authentic learning experience around and beyond that interest. Click [here](#) to read about "sparks" – the things, phenomena, and conversations that can reveal what children might want to investigate further.

Interest-Based Learning: Using Interests, Not Just Following Them

Using children's interests as the basis for our curriculum decision making helps to ensure that learning is not only interesting but also meaningful and relevant to children. Read how Australian educator Luke Touhill explores the interplay between adult- and child-directed activities and interactions [here](#).

Toddlers as Investigators: Understanding Emergent Curriculum

How can the curriculum for toddlers be informed by the interests of those children? This article offers clear, thoughtful examples of how to do that in ways that will support toddler experiences that are characterized by exploration and curiosity. Learn more [here](#).

Following Children's Lead with the Project Approach

The Project Approach is an approach to teaching and learning where children learn through in-depth explorations of topics that emerge as shared interests during children's play, phenomena in the school community, or inspirations from teachers. It is one way to build curriculum around the interests of children. This article chronicles an example of how one teacher used insights about child interests to structure opportunities for exploration and deeper learning across domains of development. Learn more [here](#).

Natural Resources is a free, monthly, one-way listserv. Each issue features readily available and free resources on a specific topic related to children from birth through age 8 and their families. [Highlighted resources are in Spanish. Los recursos destacados están en español.](#) Natural Resources is compiled and distributed by Camille Catlett. Past issues are archived at <https://scriptnc.fpg.unc.edu/natural-resources-monthly-newsletter> To subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact Camille Catlett at camille.catlett@unc.edu