

Facilitating Play

This document offers teachers ideas for managing playtime in a Kindergarten classroom.

Supporting Kindergarten

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A block of time should be scheduled each day for children to choose places in which they wish to play. It is not necessary to schedule children or to set up a system of rotation, because structuring their play this way tends to deprive them of the opportunity to plan and organize their learning.

What, then, can teachers do to help children who seem to float aimlessly from one area to another or who visit the same area day after day and whose play seems to be stagnant?

Firstly, teachers can provide multiple invitations which interest children. This way, if a child has a favourite play area, she/he can spend a lot of time there and still experience many different learning opportunities. Also, a new invitation may suddenly spark the interest of the child who wanders.

Secondly, teachers can limit the number of children who can utilize a play space at one time. Children will feel attracted to and be more comfortable in areas where they have room to maneuver.

Thirdly, teachers can make children aware of new invitations that have been added to centres, thus stimulating their interest.

Fourthly, teachers can organize a system that helps children to plan their own learning (e.g., personal charts).

Fifthly, and most importantly, teachers need to observe children carefully and document their learning activities in order to determine the best way to enable, scaffold, and extend the play experiences of each individual child. Sometimes students may have physical or emotional challenges that need to be dealt with and sometimes they merely require a gentle word of encouragement. If teachers feel that, after much effort, they are not seeing progress, they should confer with the principal and the parents/caregivers.