

The early learner

Approaches to learning in the early years

How teachers support skills development

Categories	What teachers do:
Thinking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model the language of thinking, such as “I wonder”, “I noticed”, “I inferred”. • Ask open-ended questions. • Provide sufficient thinking time to respond to questions, and so on. • Offer open-ended materials. • Provide time for reflection at all stages of learning—before, during and after inquiries. • Co-create and reflect on individual learning goals within the zone of proximal development.
Research skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure sufficient time for uninterrupted play (in responsive learning spaces) to practise and develop research skills. • Collaborate with, for example, the librarian and technology specialists to build research skills and to help students identify sources of information. • Model academic integrity by acknowledging where materials and ideas came from.
Communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan opportunities for students to practise and apply these skills in meaningful contexts (including play, class meetings and small-group learning engagements). • Encourage students to consider potential opportunities and challenges arising from shared ideas.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage physical cues. • Model appropriate, respectful and rich language use. • Encourage communication using different languages. • Ask open-ended questions. • Put thinking ahead of knowing. • Have informal conversations. • Encourage students to explore a variety of perspectives and modalities.
Social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide explicit opportunities for students to practise and develop these skills, including (dramatic) play and games. • Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their social skills. • Reflect and provide feedback on different interactions and other moments they observe. • Offer students opportunities for taking perspective. • Use the language of the learner profile in conversations and discussions, and in the development of essential agreements. • Model the social skills and language needed to greet, solve problems, share resources, and so on.
Self-management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure sufficient time for uninterrupted play. • Support children with transitions by sharing a visual timetable and by counting down reminders. • Provide opportunities to meet as members of a learning group.

- Involve students in planning and organizing learning spaces (including cleaning up).
- Create an atmosphere where learning is viewed as a process of gradual improvement.
- Continually reflect on how they are supporting student agency as an intrinsic motivation for participation.
- Develop their skills in supporting students with developing their ability to self-regulate (including focus, working memory, managing emotions and making choices).

How students develop approaches to learning

Thinking skills	
Sub-skills	What students do:
<p>Critical thinking</p> <p>Analysing and evaluating issues and ideas, and forming decisions</p>	<p>Analysing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe carefully. • Find unique characteristics. • Consider meaning taken from materials and events. • Synthesize new understandings by seeing relationships and connections. <p>Evaluating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize information. • Evaluate evidence. • Test generalizations, strategies or ideas. <p>Forming decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise understandings based on new information and evidence. • Draw conclusions and generalizations. • Apply rules, strategies and ideas from one context to another.
<p>Creative thinking</p> <p>Generating novel ideas and considering new perspectives</p>	<p>Generating novel ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use discussion and play to generate new ideas and investigations. • Make unexpected or unusual connections between objects and/or ideas.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice some “visible thinking” routines (Ritchhart, Church and Morrison 2011). <p>Considering new perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek information. • Consider alternative solutions, including those that might be unlikely or impossible, in play and other situations. • Ask “what if” questions. • Practise some “visible thinking” routines.
<p>Information transfer</p> <p>Using skills and knowledge in multiple contexts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply skills and knowledge in unfamiliar situations or outside of school. • Make connections between units of inquiry.
<p>Reflection and metacognition</p> <p>Using thinking skills to reflect on the process of learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify strengths and areas for improvement. • Reflect on their learning by asking questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did I learn today? • What can I already do? • What will I work on next?

Research skills	
Sub-skills	What students do:
<p>Information literacy</p> <p>Formulating and planning, data gathering and recording, synthesizing and interpreting, evaluating and communicating</p>	<p>Formulating and planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask or express through play questions that can be researched. • Select information sources and digital tools. <p>Data gathering and documenting (audio recording, drawing, photographing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information from a variety of sources (people, places, materials, literature). • Use all senses to observe and notice details. • Record observations—drawing, charting, tallying—using emergent writing skills, when possible, to write comments, annotate images, and so on. <p>Synthesizing and interpreting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort and categorize information and materials; arrange into forms or order, for example, with graphs, marks or symbols using emergent writing skills. • Analyse and interpret information. <p>Evaluating and communicating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice relationships and patterns. • Present information in a variety of modalities. • Acknowledge sources, for example, from a book, movie or peer.

The early learner

Media literacy

Interacting with media to use and create ideas and information

- Draw connections among media resources.
- Use media to communicate, share and connect with others.
- Communicate information and ideas using a variety of media (as their skills progress).

Communication skills	
Sub-skills	What students do:
<p>Exchanging information</p> <p>Listening, interpreting and speaking</p>	<p>Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to information. • Listen actively and respectfully to others' ideas. • Ask for clarifications. <p>Interpreting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret visual, audio and oral communication: recognizing and creating signs, interpreting and using symbols and sounds. • Understand the ways in which images and language interact to convey ideas. • Recognize the meaning of kinaesthetic communication (body language). <p>Speaking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express oneself using words and sentences. • Participate in conversations. • Negotiate ideas and knowledge with peers and teachers.
<p>Symbolic exploration and expression</p> <p>Using language to gather and communicate information</p>	<p>Reading, writing and mathematics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take on pretend roles and situations. • Understand symbols. • Access a variety of sources for information and for pleasure.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make inferences and draw conclusions. • Understand that mark-making carries meaning. • Use mark-marking to convey meaning. • Document information and observations in a variety of ways. • Communicate using a range of technologies and materials.
<p>Social skills</p>	
<p>Sub-skills</p>	<p>What students do:</p>
<p>Interpersonal relationships, social and emotional intelligence</p> <p>Developing positive interpersonal relationships and collaboration</p>	<p>Interpersonal relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise empathy and care for others. • Listen closely to others. • Be respectful to others. • Play cooperatively in a group: sharing, taking turns. • Help others. <p>Social and emotional intelligence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of own and others’ feelings. • Manage anger and resolve conflict. • Be self- and socially aware. • Be aware of own and others’ impact as a member of a learning group.

Self-management skills	
Sub-skills	What students do:
<p>Organization</p> <p>Managing time and tasks effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose and complete tasks independently. • Follow the directions of others. • Follow classroom routines. • Share responsibility for decision-making.
<p>States of mind</p> <p>Using strategies that manage state of mind</p>	<p>Mindfulness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility for own well-being. • Be aware of body–mind connections. <p>Perseverance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate persistence in tasks. • Use strategies to problem-solve. • Manage own emotions. • Manage feelings and resolve conflict. <p>Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work through setbacks. • Work through disappointment. • Show ability to adjust to new situations.

