

# Moving Beyond Empty and Fill to Deep Investigations

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#### **Curriculum Considerations**

- Discovery and divergent learning
- Brain functions optimally in a high challenge and low threat environment
- ♦ Brain likes novelty
- ♦ Brain works best in a social situation
- ◆ Manipulatives enhance learning
- ◆ The environment must allow for "play" and exploration as well as inquiry
- Environment must be appealing and stimulating
- Set up of classroom is critical
- Environment supports resiliency skills—child has opportunities to be successful
- Teachers respond to child's promptings and questions
- ♦ One of the teacher's main objectives is always safety: physical, verbal, emotional

#### **Projects With Toddlers**

(adapted from From Handprints to Hypotheses: Using the Project Approach with Toddlers and Twos by Todd Wanerman)

Phase One—Getting Started

Phase Two—Developing the Project Work

Phase Three—Concluding the Project

- Has a beginning and ending
- > More than one step
- > Involves planning
- A goal or vision for a result
- Use of tools
- > Put elements together into something larger
- > Requires observation to adjust between the start and the finish
- > Negotiation, communication, and collaboration
- Skills, knowledge, and capacities
- Improves certain skills, knowledge, and capacities
- > Involves both work and play
- > Usually consists of a culminating product or event

## Questions and provocations to stimulate dialogue, language usage, and cognitive development in young children—

- Tell me about what you're doing . . .
- How did you do that?
- What do you think will happen if . . .?
- I was wondering if there's another way we can . . .
- How many did it take to do that?
- Is there anything you would like to change?
- What other pieces do you think we could include?
- Where do you think we can put this so other people can enjoy it, too?
- What are you making?
- Let me know if you need anything else to . . .
- What do you think will happen if you changed this?
- I see you used \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. Tell me the reason you chose those.
- How many more do you think you could make?
- Who else could we ask to help us with this?
- I see you're dressed like a(n) \_\_\_\_\_. Tell me about your job.
- Since we can't take this out of the classroom, what can we do to let other people know what this looked like?
- Who all worked on this project? What did they do?
- If you work here again tomorrow, will you do the same thing or something different?
- Let's make a list of all the pieces you used.

### SEAL

**Stimulus** (any sensory provocation)

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**Emotion** (positive or negative)



Attention (positive emotions drive executive functions—negative emotions drive survival)



**Learning** (the response to the attentional variant)

(adapted from Robert Sylwester's A Biological Brain in a Cultural Classroom)