Advances in our understanding of children’s learning and development can inform how we promote children’s well-being, healthy development, and transferable learning. Development and learning are dependent on the quality of the experiences we provide, and science can inform how to provide quality experiences.

**How children learn and grow.**

- Development is dependent on experience and the quality of those experiences.
- Development is dynamic and how growth in one area impacts others as such experiences need to support children’s holistic development, including social-emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

**How to help children learn and grow.**

- Supportive environments and strong relationships that nurture a sense of belonging and community.
- Joyful experiences that help children get into a mindset to learn free from stress and distraction.
- Developmentally appropriate instruction that supports learning and motivation.
- Child-directed experiences that foster skills and habits that enable continuous learning, including self-regulation and a sense of agency.
- Individualized resources and support to respond to children's needs and address barriers.
**Instructional Strategies**

Children learn best when they can be **active and engaged** in experiences that are **meaningful, socially interactive, iterative, and joyful**. Strategies to help children include:

- **Meaningful learning** that builds on prior knowledge and experiences to develop deep understanding and transferable knowledge and skills.
- **Inquiry and investigations** that foster higher-order thinking including the ability to find, analyze, synthesize, and apply knowledge to new situations.
- **Well-scaffold instruction** with the right amount of challenge to support engaging learning experiences.
- **Active child-directed opportunities** that allow children to practice and apply learning through hands-on experiences.
- **Collaborative learning experiences** that encourage children to question, explain, and elaborate on their thoughts and co-construct solutions.
- **Joyful and engaging learning** that supports deep understanding and helps learning stick.
- **Multifaceted and complex tasks** that require planning, monitoring, and reflection to support the ability to understand and self-manage one’s learning.
- **Formative assessment** that provides ongoing feedback provided to children and helps refine teaching practices.

**Recommended Readings**

- [Making Schools Work](https://www.amazon.com/Making-Schools-Work-Bringing-Classroom/dp/0807767387)
- [Power of Playful Learning](https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/summer2022/power-playful-learning)
- [Kids Can Learn More From Guided Play Than From Direct Instruction, Report Finds](https://hechingerreport.org/kids-can-learn-more-from-guided-play-than-from-direct-instruction-report-finds/)