

Approaches to Learning: Curiosity & Initiative

Standard: Children demonstrate interest and eagerness in learning about their world.

Children are born with a natural interest in the people and objects found in their environment. After all, they are seeing things for the first time! Children use all of their senses to take in all this new information and use their developing skills to make sense of what they are seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching. Secure relationships build the trust that children need to exercise their curiosity. Caregivers who consistently respond to children's signals model positive and responsive interaction. Children use these early models to build the self-confidence they need to initiate exploration, attempt new experiences, and engage with objects and people.

As children develop new skills, exploration becomes increasingly purposeful and meaningful. When children are able to sit up, they have a different perspective on their world. They can look around in different directions and reach for objects. Their developing fine motor skills help children satisfy their curiosity through mouthing, grasping, and manipulating objects. Mobile children begin to choose what objects they want to engage with, and can move near caregivers to initiate contact.

With the emergence of language, children are able to express their preferences and can use simple words to initiate, engage, and maintain social interactions in order to learn about their world. By 36 months, children will ask questions during interactions. They appear to be curious about everything and need to understand how the world works. Children also become increasingly interested in and curious about their peers, and continue to broaden out their participation in new experiences.

More About Curiosity

Curiosity can be described as a natural interest that humans have in the world around them. Cultural context plays a large part in nurturing children's curiosity. The term "curiosity" is not universal, and cultures vary in the degree to which they value and promote curiosity. However, what is universal is children's inquisitive nature.¹ They use all of their senses to take in information, and enjoy discovering new objects and actions. This

interest in the world provides children with opportunities to interact and engage in meaningful experiences. They use communication to inquire and seek answers.

Children point, gesture, and use sounds to indicate questioning. Once verbal language emerges, they start to combine words to ask simple questions. Caregivers nurture this natural emotion; however, depending on cultural beliefs, how they nurture and support curiosity looks different. The most important take-away is that children's interest should be acknowledged and encouraged to support future learning.

Birth to 9 months

7 months to 18 months

16 months to 24 months

21 months to 36 months

Notes

Discover how Curiosity & Initiative is related to:

- Self-Regulation: Foundation of Development
[Attention Regulation \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/attention/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/attention/)
- Developmental Domain 1: Social & Emotional Development
[Attachment Relationships \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/attachment/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/attachment/)
- Developmental Domain 1: Social & Emotional Development
[Relationship with Peers \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/relationship-peers/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/relationship-peers/)
- Developmental Domain 3: Language Development, Communication, & Literacy
[Social Communication \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/social/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/social/)
- Developmental Domain 4: Cognitive Development
[Concept Development \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/concept-development/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/concept-development/)
- Developmental Domain 4: Cognitive Development
[Science Concepts & Exploration \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/science-exploration/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/science-exploration/)

Related Resources

Early Learning Moments Videos

(<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/resources/videos/ielg-moments/>)

Illinois Early Learning Guidelines: Standards

(<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/ielg-resources/ielg-standards/>)

Guidelines Videos

(<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/resources/videos/videos-guidelines/>)

Guidelines

Brochure

(<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/ielg-resources/guidelines-brochure/>)

Guidelines Poster

(<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/ielg-resources/guidelines-poster/>)

Illinois Early Learning Guidelines: A Guide for
Parents

(<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/ielg-resources/guidelines-parents/>)

Interactive Guidelines Flip Book

(<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/ielg-resources/guidelines-flipbook/>)

Illinois Early Learning Guidelines: Crosswalks
and Alignments

(<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/ielg-resources/ielg-crosswalks/>)

Illinois Prevention Initiative: Implementation
Manual 2013

(<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/ielg-resources/ipi-manual/>)

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