

Approaches to Learning: Confidence & Risk-Taking

Standard: Children demonstrate a willingness to participate in new experiences and confidently engage in risktaking.

Children build their confidence through their relationships with nurturing and responsive caregivers. Caregivers who are attuned to children's needs and respond consistently and promptly, nurture feelings of self-worth in children. Children learn to feel that they are important, and they learn to trust. This builds the self-confidence that is needed for them to take on developmentally appropriate risks. These risks include developmental tasks such as crawling, walking, playing, trying new experiences, and building relationships with peers.

At first, children use their confidence to take on physical risks. Between nine and 12 months of age, children experiment with moving objects in different ways, such as pushing and throwing. They also master skills such as crawling and walking. They attempt and work on these skills in the context of secure relationships. Once children accomplish skills, caregivers can share in children's excitement, further building their confidence and sense of mastery for new skills to come. Around 18 to 24 months of age, they begin to take on emotional risks. They begin to play farther and farther away from their caregivers, but will still check in as needed. Between 24 and 36 months, children initiate interaction with peers, and attempt to tackle challenges on their own before reaching out to caregivers.

Caregivers play an important role in fostering confidence in children. They need to be sensitive to children's temperament and comfort levels in new situations. Children can become overwhelmed with their growing abilities and may display frustration or fear at times. When caregivers are sensitive to children's temperament, feelings, and comfort level, children feel safe and supported, and confidently engage in new experiences at their own pace.

A Perspective on Risk-Taking

The term "risk-taking" can be a bit unsettling for caregivers. Caregivers work hard to ensure that children always remain safe and secure. However, developmentally

appropriate risk-taking is a positive and natural behavior in children. When children feel trust in their caregivers and feel confident in their own abilities, they take on the necessary risks to learn new skills. With caregivers' support and encouragement, children attempt to master new skills and, when they are successful, build feelings of pride and self-worth.

Risk-taking refers not only to physical risks such as crawling and walking. Risk-taking also refers to the emotional risks that children take through their relationships with others. For example, a 12-month-old takes on an emotional risk when he or she relies on another person, different from their caregiver, to provide care. These are important risks children need to take to develop healthy social relationships in the future.

Birth to 9 months

7 months to 18 months

16 months to 24 months

21 months to 36 months

Discover how Confidence & Risk-Taking is related to:

- Self-Regulation: Foundation of Development
[Emotional Regulation \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/emotional/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/emotional/)
- Self-Regulation: Foundation of Development
[Behavior Regulation \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/behavior/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/behavior/)
- Developmental Domain 1: Social & Emotional Development
[Attachment Relationships \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/attachment/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/attachment/)
- Developmental Domain 1: Social & Emotional Development
[Self-Concept \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/self-concept/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/self-concept/)
- Developmental Domain 2: Physical Development & Health
[Gross Motor \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/gross-motor/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/gross-motor/)
- Developmental Domain 2: Physical Development & Health
[Fine Motor \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/fine-motor/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/fine-motor/)
- Developmental Domain 4: Cognitive Development
[Spatial Relationships \(https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/spatial/\)](https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/spatial/)

- Developmental Domain 4: Cognitive Development

Safety & Well-Being (<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/safety-wellbeing/>)

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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