

Approaches to Learning: Creativity, Inventiveness, & Imagination

Standard: Children demonstrate the ability to use creativity, inventiveness, and imagination to increase their understanding and knowledge of the world.

Children are active learners when exploring their environment. They first observe the world around them. They pay attention to sounds, colors, movement, and engage in interactions with their caregivers.

As they grow, children become more purposeful when engaging with their environment. They mouth and manipulate objects in order to learn about them. Children repeat actions in order to produce outcomes they enjoy, such as smiling at a caregiver to get a smile in return. Around one year of age, children become more creative in how they interact with people and objects. They start to experiment with new ways of doing things, and expand how they interact with objects and people. For example, at six months, children will hold a toy car in their hands and play by mouthing the object. At 13 months, children will hold the car and push it around the floor. This demonstrates growth in children's cognitive development, as they use objects the way they are intended to be used. While this knowledge is not translated into innovative actions, it does set the stage for the development of creativity in the future.

Once children develop symbolic thought, their play becomes increasingly creative and inventive. Children will use objects in new and unexpected ways. They might place a basket on their head, or use their feet to move an object. Children begin to imitate adult actions and use objects to represent things they are familiar with. For example, children may pretend to drink milk out of a cup, or pretend to brush their hair with their hands. Children's developing language abilities also provide new ways to explore creativity. Children use language to pretend play, engage others in playful interaction, and express feelings and inventive ideas.

Birth to 9 months

7 months to 18 months

16 months to 24 months

21 months to 36 months

Discover how Creativity, Inventiveness, & Imagination is related to:

- Self-Regulation: Foundation of Development
Attention Regulation (<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/attention/>)
- Developmental Domain 1: Social & Emotional Development
Emotional Expression (<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/emotional-exp/>)
- Developmental Domain 1: Social & Emotional Development
Relationship with Adults (<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/relationship-adults/>)
- Developmental Domain 3: Language Development, Communication, & Literacy
Social Communication (<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/social/>)
- Developmental Domain 3: Language Development, Communication, & Literacy
Expressive Communication (<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/expressive/>)
- Developmental Domain 4: Cognitive Development
Symbolic Thought (<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/symbolic/>)
- Developmental Domain 4: Cognitive Development
Creative Expression (<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/ielg/creative-expression/>)

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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