

Understanding of children as competent, curious, capable of complex thinking and rich in potential

Engagement #1 – Expanding Natural Curiosity

Learning Outcome: Educators will reflect on how they value children’s ideas and contributions to the program.

Materials Required:

- A copy of the Engagement Planning chart (page 3 of this booklet)
- A copy of [“How Does Learning Happen?”](https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf)
(<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>)

Activity:

1. Review planning charts (page 3 of booklet).
2. Complete the “Today I Do” section.
3. Read pages 35 to 36 of “How Does Learning Happen?”
4. Complete the “Tomorrow I Will” section of the chart individually.
5. Share with the group, if applicable.
6. As a pedagogical leader, take time to reflect on the “Points to ponder for pedagogical leaders.”

Possible Questions for Reflection during Activity:

What does “children’s natural curiosity” mean to you?

How do you foster “children’s natural curiosity” in your program?

Points to Ponder for Pedagogical Leaders:

How is “natural curiosity” encouraged in your program values?

How do you support individual team members’ natural curiosity?

Engagement #1 Chart

Expanding Natural Curiosity

Consider additional ways you can expand on children's natural curiosity...

	As the Educator	In the Environment	With Objects & Materials	As a Communicator
My current practices that expand on children's natural curiosity ... (Today I do)				
Read pages 35 to 36 HDLH				
Tomorrow I will				

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Engagement #2

Learning Outcome: Educators will recognize opportunities to encourage meaningful explorations and inquiry.

Materials Required:

- A copy of [“How Does Learning Happen?”](https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf) (<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>)

Activity:

1. Review **the beginning** of Karyn Callaghan’s video [“Supporting Curiosity and Investigation”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frwlnhvOuS8) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frwlnhvOuS8>)
2. Watch until the counter reaches 2:20, then stop the video.
3. Review the following questions:
 - If you were the educator in this environment, what would you do now?
 - What would your response be to the child walking away?
4. Watch the rest of the video and reflect on the following:
 - What cues are you looking for before you step in to assist the child?

Possible Questions for Reflection during Activity:

How will you recognize children's cues?

In what ways do adults limit a child's investigations?

How will you respond to the children's cues to test their theories?

Points to Ponder for Pedagogical Leaders:

How will you support educators to develop their observation skills?

In what ways do you encourage team members to observe children's cues for meaningful explorations and inquiries?

In what ways do you as a pedagogical leader limit an educator's investigation?

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Engagement #3 – Objects and Materials

Learning Outcome: Educators will examine ways to promote children’s engagement in the program.

Materials Required:

- Engagement #3 photos copied below (page 8)
- A copy of [“How Does Learning Happen?”](https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf)
(<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>)

Activity:

1. Study the included photos (page 8)
2. Reflecting on the photos, ask the following questions:
 - Do you think these children are engaged?

 - Why do you think this?

3. What are some other ways you have observed children demonstrating a sense of being engaged?

Possible Questions for Reflection during Activity:

How are you going to use the information that was identified during the above activity?

In your program, what objects and materials limit children's exploration?

What new objects and materials will you add to your program?

Points to Ponder for Pedagogical Leaders:

How do you role model the introduction of new material and objects in your programs?

How do you recognize educators for their efforts when trying new things, if applicable?

Engagement #3 – Photos



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Engagement #4 – Role of Educator; Environment as Educator

Learning Outcome: Educators will examine the environment and their role in promoting children’s engagement.

Materials Required:

- Engagement #4 scenarios outlined below (pages 11-13)
- A copy of [“How Does Learning Happen?”](https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf)
(<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>)

Activity:

1. On pages 35 and 36 of the documents “How Does Learning Happen?”, read the paragraphs, “Role of the educator” and “The environment as educator.”
2. Review each of the included scenarios and answer the included questions.

Possible Questions for Reflection during Activity:

How are you going to use the information that was identified during the above activity?

In your own environment, what objects and materials limit children’s engagement?

What changes will you make to your environment to enhance engagement?

Points to Ponder for Pedagogical Leaders:

Following your reflections from this activity, how will you promote and support active engagement and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry?

Engagement #4 – Scenarios

Role of the Educator

Scenario A)

After arrival, a kindergarten child brings their backpack out, in their backpack is a bag of CDs with no cases. They share with you that some are shiny, sparkly, some have rainbows, and all of them are round. The other children wander over to peek in the bag and take great interest in the CDs.

- What questions would you ask?

- What would you do to engage the children in this scenario?

Scenario B)

A child arrives to the program on Monday morning, excited to talk about the camping trip they took on the weekend. You are the educator in the program and an avid camper yourself. You are very excited about the prospect of adding camping to the curriculum.

- What questions will you ask?
- How will you approach this learning opportunity?
- What will your role be in this scenario?

Environment as Educator

Scenario C)

Visible from the front window in the program is a construction site. On the site is a backhoe, dump truck, and construction workers with hardhats and fluorescent safety vests. Most of the day, you notice many children at the window watching the construction and only a few children attending to the activities available in the program.

- How do you respond to the children?
- What do you do with the program activities you have set out?

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Engagement #5 – Role of the Educator; Environment as Educator

Learning Outcome: Educators will examine the environment and their role in promoting children’s engagement.

Materials Required:

- A copy of [“How Does Learning Happen?”](https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf)
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Activity:

1. Read the statement below, from page 36 of “How Does Learning Happen?”:

“A lack of clutter [as well as] thoughtfully organized, rich open-ended materials invite the children to make relationships, and to communicate their ideas in many ways ... It is not merely a matter of decorating. The arrangements of materials should invite engagement, meaning-making, and exploration. Thinking of ‘aesthetic’ as being the opposite of ‘anaesthetic’, a shutting down of the senses, may help with appraising the environment in a richer way.”

2. As an educator, tour the programs and document the following:
 - Are the majority of materials single purpose or open-ended? List possible improvements.

- Is the program environment educator or child inspired? List possible improvements.

 - What makes the program inviting and engaging to children? Discuss possible improvements.

 - How are the materials arranged and organized to encourage open exploration? List possible improvements.
3. Identify the changes that can be implemented to best reflect the statement you read in the first step.
4. Develop an action plan to implement the above recommendations. See template on the next page.

Possible Questions for Reflection during Activity:

What activities within your program do not attract children?

Why might this be?

What changes might be needed?

How will you do this?

Points to Ponder for Pedagogical Leaders:

How will you support and encourage the team through the planning and implementation of the action plan created?

How will you encourage those who are resistant to change?

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Engagement #6 Think, Feel, Act –

Empowering Children in the Middle Years (2018)

Learning Outcome: Educators will explore concepts that promote freedom by providing independence and opportunities to manage their own choices in after-school programs.

[Environments That Support Engagement and Expression by Carol Anne Wien, PhD., pg. 4](#)

(<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-think-feel-act-empowering-children-in-the-middle-years-en-2021-01-29.pdf>)

Materials Required:

- Copy of the above article.

Activity:

1. Review the article approximately one week prior to the session.
2. On page three of the article, focus and discuss the section titled “After School, What Do 9- to 12-Year-Olds Require? Freedom, Independence, and Opportunity.”

Reflection Questions from the Article:

1. Explore and reflect on the impact of the organization of space, organization of time, and the use of repetitive routines.

2. What areas of the educator's current environment is "script for action"?

3. What can the educator do to change this environment to open up scripts for action in your program?

4. Determine how you can incorporate this with children four years of age and younger? What does this look like?

Additional Extensions:

1. Reflect with the children's input on how to create more independence within their environment.
2. Provide a number of opportunities for children to take the lead in the program and plan with their peers to create activities that they wish to see in the environment. Offer the children an opportunity to document, collect materials and plan the curriculum focus. At the end of the activity (length of time will vary, e.g., one day to a week in length, etc.), provide time to document the implementation process, learning outcomes, what they would change and next steps. This could be ongoing in the environment with several projects happening at one time.
3. Access the video "[Being a Leader](https://youtu.be/dtnZYe8fYN4)" (youtu.be/dtnZYe8fYN4). Watch the video as a group in your environment, then create the children's own leadership video and share with families.

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Engagement #7 Think, Feel, Act –
Empowering Children in the Middle Years (2018)

Learning Outcome: Educators will reflect on what it might mean to create “opportunities to explore, care for, and interact with the natural world” as the children engage with an entangled human/non-human existence in the world.

[Pedagogies for Times of Climate Change: Closing the Gap Between Nature and Culture](https://files.ontario.ca/edu-think-feel-act-empowering-children-in-the-middle-years-en-2021-01-29.pdf) by Veronica Pacini Ketchabaw, PhD., and Randa Khattar, PhD., pg. 47

(<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-think-feel-act-empowering-children-in-the-middle-years-en-2021-01-29.pdf>)

Materials Required:

- Copy of the above article

Activity:

1. Distribute a copy of the article approximately one week prior to session.
2. As a group or individually, consider whether you promote or invite children to connect with their immediate environment from a place of curiosity and attentiveness.
 - If yes, how is this demonstrated? If no, how do we attempt to bring it to the programs?

Reflections Questions from the Article:

1. How might we constructively, creatively, and practically engage with growing concerns about human-induced climate change, species extinctions, waste challenges, etc.?
2. How might we work with children to transform understandings about our place in the world, and how we think about and conduct our ecological relationships?
3. How might we develop nature-culture pedagogies?
4. How might we support children to create life-sustaining and enhancing ecological relationships?

Additional Extensions:

1. **Stop and Listen** activity: while walking in the community or at a park, the educator will suddenly stop walking and quickly request that the children stop walking, instruct everyone to close their eyes and listen to what they can hear. Identify the sounds.
2. Take a walk in the community: observe how nature has adapted to culture (birds, nests in building signs, eavestroughs, etc.). Discuss the natural habitats and why they change.
3. Create a hands-on learning opportunity with earthworms. See pages six to seven.
4. Have the children share their own observations from their home environment or a nature or culture surrounding. Have parents assist their children by sharing their findings via photos or handwritten documentation.
5. Consider creating a weather inquiry. See page eight in the above article.

Engagement Reflection

Personal Reflection

Please document your personal beliefs on the following:

- What does it mean for a child to be engaged in their environment?
- How does engagement impact children's learning?
- What adaptations and changes might be made to ensure the inclusion and participation of every child?
- Describe your level of engagement with children.