Children's Active Engagement

Relevant Satellite Accreditation Standards

III. The Daily Program for Children

    B. Children learn through self-paced play, and through active engagement with materials, the provider, and other children.

II. Physical Environment, Equipment and Materials

    B. Materials and equipment are developmentally suited and appealing to all children in the group.

        6. Materials are located close to the place children are likely to use them, and children are able to find and replace materials on their own.
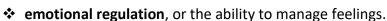
The Basics

Children's active engagement in early childhood education settings supports later academic achievement. Actively engaged children often demonstrate **motivation** and **persistence**. They create, build, experiment, discuss, and explore. On the other hand, disengaged children may show signs of **dysregulation,** including irritability, attention problems, and challenging behavior.
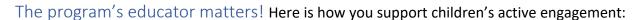

The program's environment matters! Look around—does every child in your program have access to developmentally appropriate materials within reach? Space to move? Can they choose to interact with peers and to spend time alone? Environments of actively involved children often include child choice and

movement. Children then develop:

- ❖ **emotional regulation**, or the ability to manage feelings.
- ❖ **self-control**, or the capacity to manage behavior.
- ❖ **independence**, which includes making decisions, practicing self-care, and solving problems.

The program's educator matters! Here is how you support children's active engagement:

- ❖ Observe, interpret, and respond to children's cues in a respectful and supportive way.
- ❖ Use descriptive feedback to expand children's play and learning.
- ❖ Explain choices that are safe, open, and available.
- ❖ Provide open-ended materials like blocks, sand, and art supplies.
- ❖ Rotate materials based on children's interest and behavior.

I want to learn more!

- Entering and Sustaining Play
- Children's Engagement within the Preschool Classroom and Their Development of Self-Regulation
- Variation in Children's Classroom Engagement Throughout a Day in Preschool: Relations to Classroom and Child Factors

Photos from Heidy Jimenez German and Nora Jimenez of New Era Learning Care