



# Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE Vol. III, No. 6

## 10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ Support children's health
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ Provide positive guidance
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ Foster curiosity and development through play
- ★ **Individualize care and learning activities**
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

## This Month's Hallmark of Quality Child Care

Individualize Care and Learning Activities

## Support Positive Approaches to Learning

Early childhood research has shown that children's positive approaches to learning are predictive of later school success. These behaviors include the ability to focus and concentrate and to be curious and persistent problem solvers. They require social-emotional competence—the ability to get along with others and to maintain self-control. These qualities are often characterized as “Approaches to Learning.” According to Marilou Hyson, in *Enthusiastic and Engaged Learners: Approaches to Learning in the Early Childhood Classroom* (2008):

- Children begin to develop these characteristics and behaviors at an early age.
- Even in the early years, children differ in their approaches to learning.
- These differences influence children's school readiness and school success.
- Children's experiences at home and in early childhood programs can strengthen or undermine their positive approaches to learning.
- Early childhood programs/providers can implement strategies that will promote positive approaches to learning by strengthening relationships with children, working together with families, designing supportive learning environments, and planning effective learning experiences.

This newsletter will illuminate the important approaches to learning that affect later school success and provide examples of how family child care providers can support children's positive approaches to learning.



# Defining Approaches to Learning

The concept of Approaches to Learning doesn't describe "what" children learn but "how" they learn, and is grounded in social-emotional competence. Using the example of a child approaching a difficult puzzle, Hyson describes several positive approaches to learning:

- **Intrinsic motivation to learn.** Faced with a number of choices in the learning environment, the child selects a difficult puzzle, not because he has to but because of his desire to master a challenge.
- **Interest and joy in learning.** The child's face, voice, and body language show that he already has a curious, eager attitude toward learning. He is always wondering how and why.
- **Engagement.** The child becomes deeply involved in his play with the challenging puzzle.
- **Persistence.** The child sticks with the puzzle for a long time.
- **Planning.** The child's strategies for solving the puzzle (turning the pieces in his hand to view them from different angles) show that he plans ahead, pondering how to go about solving it before he jumps in.



- **Ability to focus and control attention.** The child is able to attend to completing the puzzle despite his awareness of other friends in the room and distracting noises.
- **Flexible problem-solving.** When a piece didn't fit where he first tried it, he tries a new approach.
- **Inventiveness.** Even when doing something like a puzzle, which has one correct solution, the child shows a creative streak by pretending that one of the pieces is a rabbit hopping across the table.
- **Tolerance for frustration.** When he can't make a piece fit, he doesn't collapse into avoidance, anger, or apathy. Even though he's not happy, he can regulate his emotional state and behavior, getting through the difficulty and eventually experiencing success.

These approaches to learning are most likely associated with positive learning and developmental outcomes for children. Because children are impacted by a variety of factors (e.g., individual temperaments; influences of their families, cultures, communities, and child care settings), not all learning approaches produce positive outcomes. "Children may approach learning tasks in ways that are distracted, disengaged, or discouraged." These children need more support in developing positive approaches to learning.



# Strategies that Support Positive Approaches to Learning

Child care providers who carefully observe children at play, have an opportunity to identify the child's approaches to learning and document areas of strength as well as areas where more support is needed.

The following are ways to promote positive approaches to learning:

- Relationships are foremost in preparing a child to engage in learning. Establish a connection with the child through smiles, conversations, listening, and encouragement.
- Help children understand how to get along with each other by acknowledging kindness and empathy and teaching them words to express their emotions.
- Focus positive attention on each child whenever possible.
- Acknowledge each child's efforts.
- Identify and share with parents positive characteristics you see in their child (some parents may need this in order to see their challenging child in a different way).
- Establish clear routines and a predictable environment from the beginning.
- Set up your environment in a way that allows children to touch, explore, and master simple tasks with little or no frustration.
- Implement small group times.
- Elaborate on and expand on what the children are already doing, praising the children's work, and getting children who weren't engaged to participate in new activities.
- Have fun! Happy children are in a positive frame of mind to learn!
- Ensure that children have time to be physically active outdoors every day.
- Be flexible with your curriculum and schedule in order to take advantage of "teachable moments" and sparks of enthusiasm a child shows for a particular area of interest or activity. For example, if a child is distracted away from your reading time because he heard a big truck go by outside, take time to follow his interest and have a conversation about the truck, what kind it is, the color, it's purpose, how many wheels it has, what else makes big noises like that, etc.



## Citations:

Hyson, M. (2008). *Enthusiastic and engaged learners: Approaches to learning in the early childhood classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press and Washington, DC, NY and National Association for the Education of Young Children.

## Reflection Sheet and Award Book

- To receive the award book for this month, fill out your caregiver's reflection sheet and return it to the Learning to Grow Program in the postage paid envelope by the deadline posted.
- Indicate on Question #8 if you would like to receive free technical assistance or support related to a child care issue.
- Update your address or contact information if any changes have taken place.



**REMINDER:** Registered QCC participants can use their participation in the program to fulfill the relicensing requirement of “increased knowledge.” Ask your DHS Licensing Social Worker about the requirements today.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Any time that you are submitting more than one reflection sheet at the same time, feel free to enclose them in a single envelope. It will save postage costs for our funder and facilitate efficient data entry when they arrive.



Join us on Facebook!  
University of Hawaii Learning to Grow  
[www.facebook.com/learningtogrowhawaii/](https://www.facebook.com/learningtogrowhawaii/)

**Learning to Grow Quality Child Care for Registered Home-Based Providers** is a project of University of Hawai‘i, Windward Community College with funding from the Hawai‘i Department of Human Services ★ 808-462-4700 ★ [www.learningtogrowhawaii.org](http://www.learningtogrowhawaii.org)