

Early Childhood Pedagogy: Observe, Interact, Extend

A play-based planning guide connecting observation, responsive interaction, environments and reflection.

For: Early years practitioners, KG teachers and setting leaders

Observe with curiosity

Notice interests, attempts, communication, relationships and repeated patterns in play. Record what happened before interpreting it. Consider language and context; brief observations do not diagnose developmental needs.

Interact responsively

Join at the child's level, follow their attention and allow time to respond. Comment, model language and pose a useful question when it extends thinking. Balance adult guidance with children's agency.

Design an enabling environment

Offer accessible open-ended materials, clear routes, predictable organisation and space for movement and quiet. Review whether every child can reach, choose and use resources. Assess safety and supervision for the age group.

Extend and reflect

Introduce a new material, word, challenge or peer collaboration based on what you noticed. Revisit play to see whether thinking develops. Share observations with families and adapt to local curriculum, language and cultural expectations.

A classroom example

Children build a bridge that collapses. Observe their strategies, then introduce blocks with different widths and model words such as stable and support. Invite prediction and testing without taking over. Offer ways to handle, point to or describe materials.

Put it into practice

Print and complete with your team. Use initials or an anonymous reference; store personal information only in approved systems.

Observed play, strengths and child's interests

Learning possibility and relevant curriculum connection

Adult interaction and vocabulary

Materials, environment and access adaptations

Family insight and child's response

What developed? Next invitation or support

Further reading

Early Education: Early years pedagogy

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