Child Engagement In Learning
As An Indicator Of
Program Quality

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My Path to Engagement

• Head Start CLASS Reviews and the Matrix

• Epiphany and My Search to Define Engagement

• Intention, Interactions & Engagement

• Research
  • Basic Types of Engagement
  • Activity Settings and Context
  • Levels of Engagement

• Research to Practice
  • Engagement Quality Profile
  • Observing and Measuring Engagement
  • Paths to High Quality Engagement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># OF CHILDREN</th>
<th>ACTIVE APPROPRIATE</th>
<th>PASSIVE APPROPRIATE</th>
<th>ACTIVE INAPPROPRIATE</th>
<th>PASSIVE INAPPROPRIATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child is actively engaged in appropriate learning / play</td>
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<td>Child is passively observing, listening to other child(ren) actively engaged in appropriate learning / play</td>
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<td>Child is actively engaged in inappropriate play or behavior</td>
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</table>

**WHAT IS THE CHILD DOING?**

**WHAT IS THE TEACHER DOING?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER ENGAGEMENT DESCRIPTION &amp; BALANCE DECISION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVE</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher is actively supporting, participating in learning / play</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher is actively supporting, participating in learning / play</td>
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<td>Teacher is passively observing, listening, and supervising learning / play.</td>
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</table>
Intentional Engagement Interactions
Genuine

possessing the claimed or attributed character, quality, or origin; not counterfeit; authentic; real
Passionate

having, compelled by, or ruled by intense emotion or strong feeling
Focus

a central point, as of attraction, attention, or activity
Inherent

existing in someone or something as a permanent and inseparable element, quality, or attribute
Radiation

the complete process in which energy is emitted by one body, transmitted through an intervening medium or space, and absorbed by another body
Intentional

• Who
• Why
• Where
• When
• How
Interactions

• On
• To
• For
• Between
• With
Intentional Interactions

Intentional Non-Interactions

Unintentional Interactions

Unintentional Non-Interactions

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Variations in Children’s Classroom Engagement Throughout a Day in Preschool: Relations to Classroom and Child Factors

Virginia E. Vitiello, Leslie M. Booren, Jason T. Downer & Amanda P. Williford

• Engagement with Teacher
  • Teacher / Child Communication

• Engagement with Peers
  • Sociability, Assertiveness and Communication

• Engagement with Tasks
  • Self Reliance

• Negative Engagement
  • Conflict with Teacher or Peers
Variations in Children’s Classroom Engagement Throughout a Day in Preschool: Relations to Classroom and Child Factors

Virginia E. Vitiello, Leslie M. Booren, Jason T. Downer & Amanda P. Williford

Activity Settings and Context

• Teacher-Directed
• Free Choice
• Outdoor Time
• Routines & Transitions
• Meals & Snacks
Observed Engagement as an Indicator of Child Care Program Quality
Stephanie Mahler Ridley, R.A. McWilliam & Christie S. Oates
Early Education and Development, June 2010

“When attempting to assess children’s development we need to look at what children are doing in the present and observing engagement behavior affords us that opportunity. Measuring group engagement provides immediate and relevant feedback regarding the quality of the care environment.”
Levels of Engagement
R.A. McWilliam & Amy M. Casey
from Engagement of Every Child in the Preschool Classroom © 2008

- Persistence
- Symbolic Behavior
- Encoded Behavior
- Constructive Behavior
- Differentiated Behavior
- Focused Attention
- Undifferentiated Behavior
- Casual Attention
- Non-Engagement
Levels of Engagement
R.A. McWilliam & Amy M. Casey
from Engagement of Every Child in the Preschool Classroom © 2008

• Persistence: *problem solving, goal oriented*
• Symbolic Behavior: *pretending with objects, language*
• Encoded Behavior: *social, communicative, contextual*
• Constructive Behavior: *intentional manipulation*
• Differentiated Behavior: *different and participatory*
• Focused Attention: *selective attention to environment*
• Undifferentiated Behavior: *repetitive, simple*
• Casual Attention: *relaxed, wide ranging attention*
• Non-Engagement: *waiting*
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Children rarely engage in pretend play and only for very short periods of time.

Children occasionally engage with table toys, but only for brief periods of time.

Children frequently engage in inappropriate behaviors and it takes a long time for the teacher to redirect them.
LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Persistence
Symbolic Behavior
Encoded Behavior
Constructive Behavior
Differentiated Behavior
Focused Attention
Undifferentiated Behavior
Casual Attention
Non-Engagement

Children are often engaged in problem solving for extended periods of time.
Children are frequently engaged in pretend play for long periods of time.
Children are rarely not engaged, but if they are not engaged it’s only briefly.

Infrequent Short Duration
Frequent Long Duration

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Persistence
Symbolic Behavior
Encoded Behavior
Constructive Behavior
Differentiated Behavior
Focused Attention
Undifferentiated Behavior
Casual Attention
Non-Engagement

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

QUALITY OF ENGAGEMENT PROFILE

LOW
HIGH

Infrequent
Short Duration
Frequent
Long Duration

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Persistence
Symbolic Behavior
Sophisticated
Encoded Behavior
Constructive Behavior
Differentiated Behavior
Focused Attention
Casual Attention
Casual Attention
Undifferentiated Behavior
Non-Engagement
Non-Engagement
Frequent Long Duration Sophisticated Child Engagement
Infrequent Short Duration Unsophisticated Child Engagement
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Videos

Context / Activity Setting
Teacher-Directed
Free Choice
Outdoor Time
Routines & Transitions
Meals & Snacks

Observation Guidance
1. What levels of engagement do you observe?
2. Think about the engagement between:
   a. Children and teacher
   b. Children and peers
   c. Children and tasks
3. How do you think context and activity setting impact the quality of child engagement?

Levels of Engagement
Persistence: problem solving, goal oriented
Symbolic Behavior: pretending with objects, language
Encoded Behavior: social, communicative, contextual
Constructive Behavior: intentional manipulation
Differentiated Behavior: different and participatory
Focused Attention: selective attention to environment
Undifferentiated Behavior: repetitive, simple
Casual Attention: relaxed, wide ranging attention
Non-Engagement: waiting, wandering, inappropriate
Paths to High Quality Engagement

• Create learning environments that support frequent and long periods of sophisticated engagement
  • Classroom set-up including materials and centers
  • Outdoor environment including equipment and props
  • Schedule and types of activities

• Balance intentionality and interactions to promote and sustain sophisticated engagement
  • Plan, attune, and align with genuine child interests and passions
  • Observe, reflect, and be prepared to respond and interact flexibly (*intentionally* and *unintentionally*)
  • Follow the child’s lead