

Promoting Engagement in Learning

Importance of Engagement in Learning

Engagement in learning refers to one's degree of interest, attention, curiosity, motivation, or passion related to a learning task.

In MNPS pre-k classrooms, children who were more engaged in learning activities had **better math achievement**, **narrative comprehension**, and **vocabulary** going into kindergarten. In addition to these academic outcomes, being deeply engaged in pre-k fosters a love of learning and discovery that will serve children for years to come.

How Engaged are Your Students?

Individual children express their enthusiasm (or lack thereof) in different ways. Engagement may also look different depending on the setting, time of day, and activity. It is important for teachers to be able to gauge children's engagement level—and to have strategies for re-engaging young learners when their attention starts to wander.

Higher engagement may look like...

Volunteering responses or comments
Tension in body (leaning in, moving closer)
Persistence & intense concentration
Positive or attentive affect

Creating an Engaging Environment

- Allow children to lead parts of the day
- Vary the materials and activities available throughout the year
- Validate children's interests and include them in your plans
- Incorporate choice as much as possible

As the teacher, **your enthusiasm** for topics and activities is **contagious**.
Show your students how exciting learning can be!

Tips for Re-engaging Your Students

- Pause to “shake the wiggles out” (a quick movement break, with or without music)
- Whisper excitedly (change your volume or inflection)
- Make silly mistakes (children will LOVE to correct you)

Remain flexible when the unexpected happens. Sometimes the best option is to stop an activity and **move on to something else**.

Lower engagement may look like...

Engaging in problem behaviors
No tension in body (slouched)
Lack of persistence & easily distracted
Flat affect or staring into space

