

Approaches to Learning

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The Approaches to Learning domain focuses on how children learn. It refers to the skills and behaviors that children use to engage in learning. It incorporates emotional, behavioral, and cognitive self-regulation as well as initiative, curiosity, and creativity.

An important part of becoming a successful learner is developing the ability to self-regulate in a variety of situations. This ability is also essential to early childhood mental health. In infancy, building emotional, behavioral, and cognitive self-regulation is part of consistent, responsive relationships. As children get older, they become better able to regulate on their own, though adults still provide guidance.

Cognitive self-regulation skills are also known as executive functioning. These skills include the ability to maintain attention, control impulses, and think in flexible ways. Another related skill is working memory, the ability to hold information in mind and use it to perform tasks. Executive functioning skills begin to emerge in the infant and toddler years and develop even more in the preschool years.

To read more about the Approaches to Learning domain, visit the [interactive Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework \(ELOF\)](#). The Approaches to Learning domain for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers includes the following sub-domains:

- [Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulation](#)
- [Cognitive Self-Regulation \(Executive Functioning\)](#)
- [Initiative and Curiosity](#)
- [Creativity](#)

Effective Teaching Practices

The effective teaching practices that follow are grouped in three categories: Interactions, Environment, and Individualization. Examples of ways to support goals for children are provided by sub-domain. It is likely, however, that these practices will also support goals for children in additional domains and sub-domains. This is the nature of teaching and learning in the early years.

Topic: [School Readiness](#)

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