

# 1. Children are naturally curious and have an innate desire to learn about the world.

## Advocacy Strategies

*\*potential for DEY mini-grant funding*

### 1. Advocate for Play-Based, Inquiry-Driven Learning

- **Strategy:** Promote approaches that allow children to explore, question, and discover rather than memorize and repeat.
- **Suggestions:** Encourage programs to use emergent curriculum that builds on children's interests. \*Share how play supports brain development and long-term academic success. Push back on academic pushdown that replaces exploration with worksheets or drills.

### 2. Encourage Environments That Spark Wonder

- **Strategy:** Support the creation of spaces that invite hands-on exploration, discovery, and creativity.
- **Suggestions:** Advocate for classrooms filled with open-ended materials, sensory bins, nature items, and rotating provocations. Help design environments that celebrate curiosity over control.

### 3. Champion Educator Practices That Follow Children's Questions

- **Strategy:** Promote teaching methods that start with what children wonder about and guide learning from there.
- **Suggestions:** Encourage educators to use open-ended questions, listen closely, and build projects based on children's observations. Share documentation of children's learning journeys that began with a simple question or interest.

### 4. Educate Families and Policymakers on the Value of Intrinsic Motivation

- **Strategy:** Help adults understand that children are naturally driven to learn when their interests are respected and supported.
- **Suggestions:** \*Provide workshops or materials on curiosity-led learning and why external rewards or rigid goals can dull motivation. Highlight research that shows how curiosity fuels deeper learning and long-term success.

### 5. Protect Time and Freedom for Exploration

- **Strategy:** Advocate for unhurried, flexible daily schedules that give children the space to follow their ideas and interests.
- **Suggestions:** Recommend longer blocks of open-ended time for self-directed play, discovery, and project work. Encourage policies that allow children to revisit and deepen investigations over days or weeks.