

10. Children need space to fail and struggle so they can learn to persist and try again.

What We Believe

We believe that children need space to fail and struggle because it helps them develop persistence, problem-solving skills, and resilience. Learning doesn’t happen without challenge, and early experiences with effort, frustration, and retrying build the foundation for a growth mindset. Struggle is not a sign of failure—it’s a critical part of how children learn to keep going.

Why This is Important

Allowing children to experience and work through challenges in early childhood supports the development of perseverance, confidence, and independence. When children are supported—not rescued—through frustration, they learn that effort matters more than immediate success. These skills are essential for lifelong learning, coping with setbacks, and navigating relationships. In environments where struggle is avoided or seen as negative, children may develop a fear of failure, low self-esteem, or a lack of motivation to try new things.

✓ What it looks like when we get it right.	✗ What it feels like when we get it wrong.
An educator observes a child trying to build a tall tower that keeps falling. Instead of fixing it, the adult offers encouragement and asks open-ended questions, such as, “What do you think would help it stay up?”	The adult quickly steps in and builds the tower for the child to avoid frustration. The child misses a learning opportunity and may feel incapable or dependent on adult help.
Educators openly talk about mistakes and model how to recover from them (“Oops, I spilled the water—let’s clean it up together!”). Children see that mistakes are expected and manageable. They become more willing to take risks and learn from errors.	Mistakes are treated with criticism or embarrassment, or children are discouraged from trying again. Children may fear failure, avoid challenges, or give up easily when faced with something that feels difficult.
Children are given time to complete puzzles or tasks independently, and afterward, they’re invited to reflect on what worked and what didn’t. Children take pride in their efforts, developing self-awareness and resilience.	Tasks are rushed or adult-controlled, with little room for exploration or trial-and-error. Children may become passive or anxious, feeling pressure to get things “right” rather than to learn through the process.