

2. Children are active learners who construct knowledge through hands-on experiences.

Advocacy Strategies

*potential for DEY mini-grant funding

1. Promote Learning Through Play and Exploration

- **Strategy:** Advocate for learning environments where children engage actively with materials, people, and ideas through meaningful play.
- **Suggestion:** Share examples of how children learn concepts like math, science, and literacy through block play, pretend scenarios, and sensory activities. Push for recognition of play as a legitimate, deep learning experience.

2. Advocate for Open-Ended Materials and Real Tools

- **Strategy:** Encourage the use of materials that children can manipulate, investigate, and use in multiple ways.
- **Suggestion:** Recommend including items like loose parts, natural materials, clay, water, and real-life tools. Encourage programs to minimize pre-made, one-outcome worksheets or toys with one or limited use.

3. Support Project-Based and Inquiry Learning

- **Strategy:** Promote long-term investigations and projects where children ask questions, test ideas, and build understanding through experience.
- **Suggestion:** Advocate for time in the schedule and flexibility in the curriculum to support deep, hands-on exploration. Help educators document and showcase children's thinking, discoveries, and evolving ideas.

4. Educate Others on How Young Children Learn Best

- **Strategy:** Help families, administrators, and policymakers understand that young children learn through doing—not sitting still and listening.
- **Suggestion:** *Share brain research and developmental science that supports active, sensory-based learning. Offer tours, videos, or documentation panels that show hands-on learning in action. Create family engagement opportunities where parents experience play-based learning firsthand.

5. Protect Time for Deep, Uninterrupted Engagement

- **Strategy:** Advocate for daily schedules that allow children extended periods to explore, build, experiment, and revisit their ideas.
- **Suggestion:** Push for policies that prioritize depth of experience over quantity of instruction. Support practices where children return to previous work to extend or refine their thinking.