

ENGAGEMENT

WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT?

Engagement is the sharing of attention, enjoyment and focus on something by a child and their learning partner (that's you!). Engagement is key in facilitating learning. The way that each child engages with others will be unique but there are some things parents can do to help with engagement.

BASIC STRATEGIES

Build on your child's interests: start by observing what it is your child is interested in and pays attention to. This might be a favourite toy, movement, colour, or sensory experience. Then, **follow their lead** by joining what they are doing or by imitating them.

Use high affect: some of us are naturally more expressive than others. Using high affect means being as expressive as you can through your tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language. Show the fullest emotional range possible, being mindful of your child's sensory needs. Reinforce successes with applause, cheering, hugs or any kind of reward that is meaningful to your child.

Try out a video model: choose something, like a toy or game, and film yourself carrying out the skills/activity needed. Watch the video together, and then engage with your child by doing the same activity.

Repeat: engagement takes practice. It's helpful to repeat the same activity or interaction frequently so your child has lots of opportunity to learn a new skill. Then you can continue to expand on your child's learning.

Interrupt: once you've gotten into a groove of engaging together with a particular activity, do something silly or unexpected to interrupt the cycle. Create opportunities to grow your child's skills!

