



Reflect on your own experiences with children, families, and colleagues. If you are an supervisor, administrator, or adult educator, how might you use these questions and activities to help other adults reflect on their experiences?

Turn Questions into Action

If you're wondering how to allow more risk-taking in your environment, consider what Adriana, a family childcare provider, has done.

Adriana has hung a rope from a tree in her backyard. To enable children of all developmental levels to access it, she has put some climbing blocks right next to the tree. As she watches, she decides which children will need support from her, and which are ready to have a go on their own.

Examine risk-taking in your setting.

What do you consider to be risky play activities for young children?

Consider how you might add an element of risk – a new play opportunity, activity, or structure into your environment that will challenge children's abilities and offer them ways to test their skills. Write down your ideas.

Carefully plan how you will introduce a new play opportunity, activity, or structure to the children. How will you introduce it?

Regularly observe and record the details of how different children approach the activity or structure. Study your documentation for more insights into individual children and new possibilities for your environment. Record your reflections. What makes you uncomfortable? What are your safety concerns? What issues might you face with parents? What are your fears?

Consider how children experience your schedule

In the opening video for this competency, you were introduced to the idea of “untiming the curriculum.” Reading about this teacher research project could inspire you to see what would happen in your own setting if you took your watches and clocks away.

Remembering that research suggests children don’t engage in the deeper complex play of learning until they are engaged for at least 40 minutes, assess whether you are interrupting children’s learning by segmenting your schedule into small blocks of time. Try this approach to assessing the children’s experience of your schedule.

Write down your daily schedule, including the times, routines, and activities you follow with the children. Then, assign one of three colors to each of the following categories. Use them to color-code your schedule as follows:

- 1st color: Teacher chooses and directs what happens
- 2nd color: Children and teachers negotiate the focus of what happens

- 3rd color: Children choose and engage in self-directed activities.

Now, add up the total time allocated for each of these colors.

Adapted from Curtis and Carter, *Learning Together with Young Children* (2008).

What does this information tell you?

Consider what changes you could make in your schedule to provide a more enriching social environment for children's play and learning? Discuss these ideas with your colleagues. Together, devise a plan to put your ideas into action.
