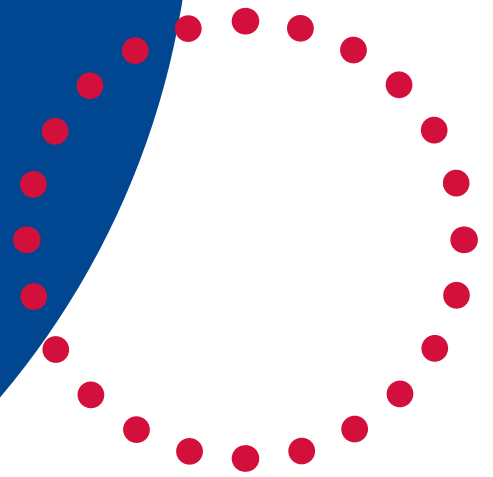
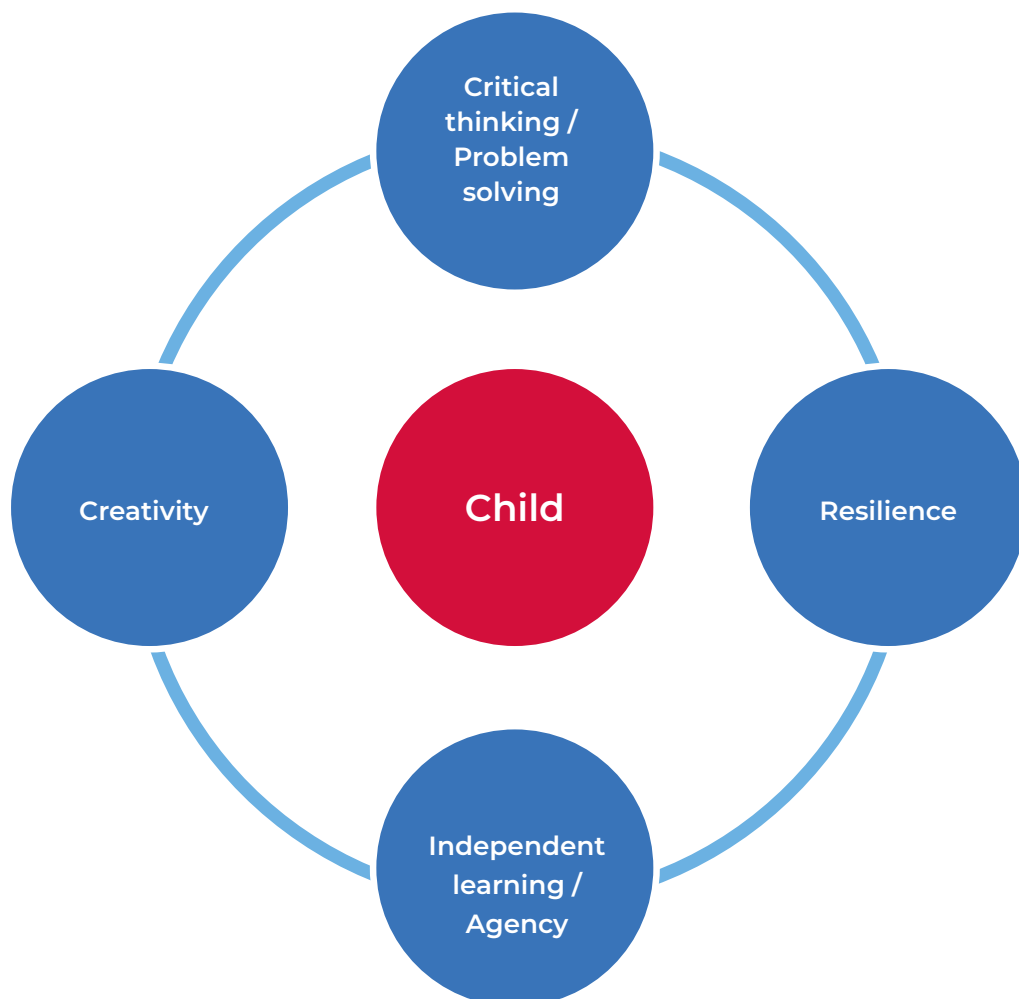


Preparing children for 21st century learning



The transition from early childhood education to primary school is where interactions between different education systems, curricula and philosophies occur. Learning experiences that develop key 21st century skills are critical in preparing children for a positive start to school and beyond into adult life.



1

Critical thinking / Problem solving

Critical thinking means judging the value of information and figuring out how to solve a problem or make a decision. Critical thinking requires open-mindedness, curiosity and thinking about others' points of view.

Problem solving is the capacity to think through and resolve situations where an answer may not be obvious. Structuring learning around problems to be solved can support a range of cognitive skills, as well as interpersonal skills such as cooperation and communication.

2

Independent learning / Agency

Children who have confidence in their ability to learn will be more motivated to obtain their learning goals. Supporting the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills is likely to enhance a child's beliefs in their abilities. Supporting children's agency means recognising that children have a right to make choices about their own learning. Agency allows children to develop independence, self-esteem, identity and wellbeing.

3

Creativity

Creativity is a way of thinking or acting or making that is original. Resources that can be used in a lot of different ways can provide insight to a child's creativity. Important dispositions that underpin creativity are curiosity, motivation, risk-taking, open-mindedness and the capacity to tolerate ambiguity.

4

Resilience

Personality traits such as perseverance can change over time with the life experience of the child, however, developing persistence and perseverance in a given activity is supported by the learning environment.

Resilience is being able to bounce back from stress, challenge, tragedy, trauma or adversity. When children are resilient, they are braver, more curious and more adaptable. Resilience can promote a sense of self-worth, self-belief, independence and optimism.

Putting it into practice

- Create spaces where children's decisions are important and valued.
- Involve children in decisions that affect daily routines.
- Use language that assists children to express wants, needs and feelings.
- Promote an environment in which children can see they are cared for and supported.
- Let children know it is acceptable to ask for help and provide clear paths for doing so.
- Implement practices that encourage mindfulness.
- Build confidence by helping children to master small steps, and acknowledge strengths, interests and attempts, bravery and effort.
- Nurture optimism and model resilience.
- Enable clear and regular communication about what is happening for the child.
- Provide adjustments that support the child's participation and individual learning needs.



Play-based learning

Play-based learning promotes discovery, creativity, imagination and improvisation in young children. The EYLF highlights the importance of balance between child-led, child-initiated and educator-supported learning experiences. Supporting child-led and child-initiated activities enhances the cognitive, social, emotional and physical aspects of a child's learning, and develops the skills children need to independently explore, solve problems, create and construct meaning within their world.

A play-based and developmentally appropriate curriculum encourages active participation, enables the inclusion of all young children and eases a child's transition from early childhood education to primary school. Research also indicates that children are more enthusiastic about the learning process when some play-based principles are applied.⁶

Play-based learning is a holistic learning approach, which emphasises a child's physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, communication skills and general knowledge.

⁶ OECD. Publishing. (2017). *Starting Strong V-Transitions from Early Childhood Education and Care to Primary Education*. OECD Publishing.

