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Early Childhood Support Services
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Rethinking science in early childhood

When considering science we tend to think about planned experiences that focus on the combination of compounds to create a specific result. But what actually is science? How do young children engage in child-focused science experiences?

If we break down any science experiment it consists of 4 main parts, which children do all the time during play...

1

Hypothesise: This is where children think about what might happen. They may or may not verbalise this, but a good way to develop this skill is by asking children what they think might happen next, or what they think you are doing. To hypothesise children need to collect facts and observations and use these to problem solve an outcome.

2

Experiment/Investigate: This is where children explore different materials, resources, physical responses and so forth. As children explore and investigate their world they start to realise certain actions will always have the same response or how they can modify their actions to change the response.

3

Repetition: Through repetition children are able to establish patterns and become familiar with the outcomes of their experiments. For example if every time a baby drops their spoon on the floor they get another one, they learn the process. If each time a child placed a ball down it rolled in a different direction they may repeat this more to try and understand the outcomes.

4

Document: Children can document the outcomes and findings of their experiments in many ways. It may be something they just record in their memory. It could be through discussion. They may draw their findings, especially if investigating nature with a magnifying glass. They may become part of the educator's documentation with photos, language and processes.