

What agency looks like in different age groups

Agency is defined as children making decisions that impact their world. This is much more than choosing the resources or serving their own meals. Often agency gets the focus in the older age groups but everyone can have agency, you just need to know what to look out for, such as...



Infants

- Noticing what children are playing with and leaving this out for further exploration.
- Being aware of children's preferred routines and following these.
- Learning children's cues and responding to these when children give them.
- Allowing children to decide who they prefer to form attachments with.



Toddlers

- Allowing children to play in a way that makes sense to them.
- Adapting the routine based on children's needs on the day.
- Using children's interests to connect them to learning opportunities.
- Responding to the children's choices with social relationships and not forcing "friendship" onto children without respecting the child's wants.



Pre-schoolers

- Including the children's ideas and suggestions within service decisions.
- Giving children more feedback to understand the consequences of their actions and decisions.
- Listening to children when they show that they have their own ideas and interests during planned experiences and being flexible with these.
- Supporting children to be involved.



Things to remember

- Younger children may not understand the consequences of their agency so it is important to balance duty of care with agency.
- Build children's understanding by providing feedback, and guidance around how their decisions can impact others and what their consequences can be to support increased agency.