

5 ways to enhance children's agency

There are some simple ways to build opportunities for children to have agency through the curriculum that can help support element 1.2.3 of the NQS.



Use open ended resources

The more open ended your resources, the more children have agency over how they choose to play and what they are interested in. Resources such as loose parts, construction, and areas such as home corner and sand pits support agency and choice to occur.



Notice how children play

Pay attention to how the children are playing and what they are playing with as this will help you to understand what they prefer. If children are still using a resource that is them showing they are still learning through it. If children are playing in a certain way, e.g. stacking, that is them showing you an interest.



Provide opportunities to select resources

While it is not necessarily practical for children to have access to all of the resources there are ways to allow them to choose what they want, in addition to what is in the room. This could be through photos of resources, or coming to the store room to pick what they need (assuming it is safe).



Have a flexible routine

If the routine is based on what the adults need, or the clock, then it is not allowing children to have agency. Create opportunities in the routine to follow the children's cues and needs around meals, movement between inside and outside, rest times etc.



Roster based on children's preferences

Another way to support children's agency is through rostering staff who have strong attachments with children onto shifts that are best going to support their needs. This might be helping to settle them into the service, get to sleep, or even in rooms that help with transitions etc.