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| **Supporting Children’s Thinking Skills**  The preschool years are a time when children’s brain development is in high gear. Children are developing thinking skills like: making connections and inferences, problem solving, and developing the ability to be aware of their own thinking and communicate their thoughts with others through language. Supporting the development of these thinking skills provides children with the tools they need to be successful both in school and in life outside of the classroom. Below are some interactions and instructional strategies that provide opportunities for children to stretch and grow their thinking skills. |

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| **Interaction and Instruction (I&I) Strategies** | **Description** | **Aligned CLASS® Dimensions** |
| 1. **Explore Connections** | Provide learning activities and/or problems to solve that are linked to children’s lives outside of school/real world experiences/other aspects of their learning. |  |
| 1. **Consider the “whys” and “hows” behind learning** | Provide opportunities for children to consider, explore, experience, and discuss varied perspectives about the “whys” and “hows” behind what they are learning. | image.pngimage.png |
| 1. **Promote child-led analytic problem solving** | Give children an active role in problem solving peer conflicts and classroom challenges and scaffold their ability to take an open-ended, analytic approach to solving problems. | image.pngimage.png  image.png |
| 1. **Support creativity in thoughts and products** | Provide creative, engaging materials aligned with children’s interests and scaffold their use by encouraging open-ended exploration and creative play. Encourage creative thinking in discussions and the underlying idea that there is more than one way to look at something, approach a problem, or use materials. | image.pngimage.pngimage.png |
| 1. **Provide conversation and feedback that expands, extends, and clarifies** | As children engage in discussions and classroom activities, provide narration about what they are doing; ask questions that encourage them to elaborate further, explain their thinking, or persist in challenging moments; and provide hints when needed that allow them to understand material in increasingly sophisticated ways. | image.pngimage.png |

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| 1. **EXPLORE CONNECTIONS** | **Description:** Provide learning activities and/or problems to solve that are linked to children’s lives outside of school/real world experiences/other aspects of their learning. | | | | **Aligned CLASS Dimensions:** | | |
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|  | **Choose one of the following resources and individualize to your needs.**  **Determine which aspects you’d like to use (or not).** | | | | | |
| * [Making Learning Meaningful for Children](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/making-learning-meaningful)   Describes strategies that will help teachers to make learning meaningful for children by engaging in activities and interactions that support their understanding of the world around them by linking new learning to previous experience; relating concepts to children’s lives; and providing hands-on learning. | | | * [Thick and Thin Conversations](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/thick-thin-conversations)   Describes how teachers can increase the duration and quality of conversations with children. | | | |
|  | **Select one-two video(s) to watch focusing on:**  **What does the teacher say and do related to promoting *exploring connections*?**  **How do the children respond?** | | | | | |
| * [Let Your Noses Work](http://vzaar.com/videos/4502004) | | * [Winter Weather Conversation during Breakfast](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_pjmgtmp8&t=Winter+Weather+Conversation+during+Breakfast) | | * [Talking About Sam from Green Eggs and Ham](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_afa29nvs&t=Talking+About+Sam+from+Green+Eggs+and+Ham) | | |
|  | **Ideas for SMART goals. Pick one Do strategy to try as is or modify to better fit your goals.** | | | | | |
| * When introducing your next study, start by asking children what they know about this topic already, what experiences they have had with the topic, and what they are curious about. Write down children’s ideas in a “KWL” chart and follow up by incorporating ways that they can find the answers to their questions into lessons over the next several weeks. * When presenting a new lesson each day next week, connect concepts to previous learning, such as, “Remember when we learned about…?” or “How is this similar to the other book we read?” * Pick 1 transition at a time in which to embed learning activities: Give children something engaging to do as they transition that relates to their current learning study. For example, as children move from breakfast to whole group, give them a “question to think on,” such as, “What is one thing you have at home or school that you don’t use anymore that you could re-use in another way?” while they clean up. As they come to the carpet, they share their answers to the question. | | | | | | |

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| **2. CONSIDER THE WHYS AND HOWS BEHIND LEARNING** | **Description:** Provide opportunities for children to consider, explore, experience, and discuss varied perspectives about the “whys” and “hows” behind what they are learning. | | | **Aligned CLASS Dimensions:** | | | |
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|  | **Choose one of the following resources and individualize to your needs.**  **Determine which aspects you’d like to use (or not).** | | | | | |
| * [Using the Scientific Method](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/using-scientific-method)   Identifies and describes the 5 steps of the scientific method (Question, Observe, Predict, Experiment, and Discuss) that teachers can incorporate into their practice. | | * [Providing Feedback](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/providing-feedback)   Includes strategies for teachers to provide feedback that supports children’s engagement and learning by engaging in frequent back-and-forth exchanges; asking children to explain their thought processes; and encouraging children’s efforts. | | | | |
| * [Fostering Children's Thinking Skills](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/fostering-childrens-thinking-skills)   Includes strategies teachers can use to support children’s understanding and deepen their knowledge of their surroundings by using the scientific method, problem solving, and applying knowledge. | | * [Focusing Children on Learning Goals](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/focusing-children-learning-goals)   Describes strategies teachers can use to help children understand what they’re learning by helping them to focus on learning goals by setting the stage before the activity; making targeted statements to direct focus during the activity; and providing “wrap-up” statements at the end of the activity. | | | | |
|  | **Select one-two video(s) to watch focusing on:**  **What does the teacher say and do related to *considering the “whys” and “hows” behind learning*?**  **How do the children respond?** | | | | | |
| * [Comparing Capacity at the Sand Table](http://earlymath.erikson.edu/comparing-capacity-at-the-sand-table-ideas/) | | * [Attendance Routine to Build Number Sense](http://earlymath.erikson.edu/attendance-routine-build-number-sense/) | | | | |
|  | **Ideas for SMART goals. Pick one Do strategy to try as is or modify to better fit your goals.** | | | | | |
| * When introducing your next study, start by asking children what they know about this topic already, what experiences they have had with the topic, and what they are curious about. Write down children’s ideas in a “KWL” chart and follow up by incorporating ways that they can find the answers to their questions into lessons over the next several weeks. * Pick 1 transition at a time in which to embed learning activities: Give children something engaging do as they transition that relates to their current learning study. For example, as children move from breakfast to whole group, give them a “question to think on” such as “What is one thing you have at home or school that you don’t use anymore that you could re-use in another way?” while they clean up. As they come to the carpet, they share their answers to the question. | | | | | | |

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| **3. PROMOTE CHID-LED ANALYTIC PROBLEM SOLVING** | **Description:** Give children an active role in problem solving peer conflicts and classroom challenges and scaffold their ability to take an open-ended, analytic approach to solving problems. | | | **Aligned CLASS Dimensions:** | | | | |
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|  | **Choose one of the following resources and individualize to your needs.**  **Determine which aspects you’d like to use (or not).** | | | | | | |
| * [Supporting Social Problem Solving](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/professional-development-workshop-suites/workshop-suite-supporting-social-problem-solving/)   Presents a series of games and fun, playful activities that can be used throughout the day to foster children’s self-regulation skills. | | * [Fostering Children's Thinking Skills](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/fostering-childrens-thinking-skills)   Describes strategies teachers can use to help children understand what they’re learning by helping them to focus on learning goals by setting the stage before the activity; making targeted statements to direct focus during the activity; and providing “wrap-up” statements at the end of the activity. | | | | | |
|  | **Select one-two video(s) to watch focusing on:**  **What does the teacher say and do related to *promoting child-led analytic problem solving*?**  **How do the children respond?** | | | | | | |
| * [Problem Solving During Center Time](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_ra134v6v&t=Problem+Solving+during+Center+Time) | | * [Counting and Adding During Math Game](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_o5u0cevl&t=Counting+and+Adding+during+Math+Game) | | | | | |
|  | **Ideas for SMART goals. Pick one Do strategy to try as is or modify to better fit your goals.** | | | | | | |
| * Create a social problem-solving toolkit that includes 5-9 different problem-solving option cards that children can select from (i.e., share, take turns, trade, ignore, get a teacher). Look for at least one opportunity each day this week to offer the social problem-solving toolkit to children who are struggling with a peer conflict. * When children don’t know a right answer or how to solve a problem, encourage children to use additional resources, like looking in a book with you, recalling a previous activity, or getting help from a peer. Try this out 3 times across the day. * Create opportunities for children to solve problems. Ask them questions like, “Why did that happen?” and “What could we do?” to examine the problem and determine possible solutions. | | | | | | | |

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| **4. SUPPORT CREATIVITY IN THOUGHTS AND PRODUCTS** | **Description:** Provide creative, engaging materials aligned with children’s interests and scaffold their use by encouraging open-ended exploration and creative play. Encourage creative thinking in discussions and the underlying idea that there is more than one way to look at something, approach a problem, or use materials. | | | **Aligned CLASS Dimensions:** | | | |
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|  | **Choose one of the following resources and individualize to your needs. Determine which aspects you’d like to use (or not).** | | | | | |
| * [Using the Scientific Method](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/using-scientific-method)   Identifies and describes the 5 steps of the scientific method (Question, Observe, Predict, Experiment, and Discuss) that teachers can incorporate into their practice. | | * [Asking Questions](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/asking-questions-birth-five)   Focuses specifically on how to use different types of questions to extend conversations with children and that help children access higher-level thinking skills. | | | | |
|  | **Select one-two video(s) to watch focusing on:**  **What does the teacher say and do related to *supporting creativity in thoughts and products*?**  **How do the children respond?** | | | | | |
| * [Why Won't He Come Out?](http://vzaar.com/videos/4502007) | | * [Calendar Center Conversation](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_32r88psh&t=Calendar+Center+Conversation) | | | | |
|  | **Ideas for SMART goals. Pick one Do strategy to try as is or modify to better fit your goals.** | | | | | |
| * During interest areas, tune in to what your children are talking about and playing with. When you notice a child expressing an interest, ask them to share more about their thoughts/questions about that topic and find out how they might want to see this interest focused on in an additional activity (i.e., “What else could we do to learn more about…?”). * Pick 1 transition at a time in which to embed learning activities: Give children something engaging to do as they transition that relates to their current learning study. For example, as children move from breakfast to whole group, give them a “question to think on” such as “What is one thing you have at home or school that you don’t use anymore that you could re-use in another way?” while they clean up. As they come to the carpet, they share their answers to the question. | | | | | | |

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| **5. PROVIDE CONVERSATION AND FEEDBACK THAT EXPANDS, EXTENDS, AND CLARIFIES** | **Description:** As children engage in discussions and classroom activities, provide narration about what they are doing; ask questions that encourage them to elaborate further, explain their thinking, or persist in challenging moments; and provide hints when needed that allow them to understand material in increasingly sophisticated ways. | | | | **Aligned CLASS Dimensions:** | | | | |
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|  | **Choose one of the following resources and individualize to your needs. Determine which aspects you’d like to use (or not).** | | | | | | | |
| * [Asking Questions](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/asking-questions-birth-five)   How to use different types of questions to extend conversations with children and that help children access higher-level thinking skills. | | | * [Scaffolding Children's Learning](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/scaffolding-childrens-learning)   Scaffolding strategies teachers can use to provide children with the right level of support by providing hints; offering a range of answers; and encouraging children to use additional resources. | | | | | |
| * [Providing Feedback](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/providing-feedback)   Includes strategies for teachers to provide feedback that supports children’s engagement and learning by engaging in frequent back-and-forth exchanges; asking children to explain their thought processes; and encouraging children’s efforts. | | | * [Thick and Thin Conversations](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/thick-thin-conversations)   Describes how teachers can increase the duration and quality of conversations with children. | | | | | |
|  | **Select one-two video(s) to watch focusing on:**  **What does the teacher say and do related to *providing conversation and feedback that expands, extends, and clarifies*?**  **How do the children respond?** | | | | | | | |
| * [Winter Weather Conversation during Breakfast](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_pjmgtmp8&t=Winter+Weather+Conversation+during+Breakfast) | | | * [Comparing Capacity at the Sand Table](http://earlymath.erikson.edu/comparing-capacity-at-the-sand-table-ideas/) | | | | | |
| * [Why Won't He Come Out?](http://vzaar.com/videos/4502007) | | * [Calendar Center Conversation](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_32r88psh&t=Calendar+Center+Conversation) | | | * [Talking about Patterns during Center Time](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_1mu3boep&t=Talking+about+Patterns+during+Center+Time) | | | |
|  | **Ideas for SMART goals. Pick one Do strategy to try as is or modify to better fit your goals.** | | | | | | | |
| * Aim to have 3 back-and-forth exchanges with children--providing prompts, hints, information, clarification--until they have a deeper understanding. Start during centers and meal times before extending to group times. * When children don’t know a right answer or how to solve a problem, encourage children to use additional resources, like looking in a book with you, recalling a previous activity, or getting help from a peer. Try this out 3 times across the day. | | | | | | | | |

**Sample Action Plans:**

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| Action Plan: Provide conversation and feedback that expands, extends, and clarifies (I&I Strategy) | |
| KNOW  Week of 10/07/19 | Learn scaffolding strategies to use to provide children with the right level of support so that they can be more successful than they would be independently.  Resource: [Scaffolding Children’s Learning](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/scaffolding-childrens-learning)  As you are reviewing this resource, consider how providing hints; offering a range of answers; and encouraging children to use additional resources allow children to come to the answer through this kind of conversational feedback. |
| SEE  Week of 10/07/19 | Watch: [Talking about Patterns during Center Time](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_1mu3boep&t=Talking+about+Patterns+during+Center+Time) |
| DO  Week of 10/14/19 | Each day this week, look for a child who is struggling to complete a task or answer a question.   * Instead of providing the answer/solving the problem for them or moving on to another child, give the child a hint or suggestion that will help them solve the problem/answer the question on their own. * If they still don’t get it, encourage children to use additional resources, like looking in a book with you, recalling a previous activity, or getting help from a peer. |
| Follow Up  Week of 10/21/19 | Feedback provider:   * Will observe both large group and interest areas (10/17 from 9:30-10:30) * Will listen for how the teacher provides support to children to come up with correct answers or solve problems themselves. (10/17 from 9:30-10:30) * Will have a reflective conference with teacher following observation. (10/24/19 from 2:15 - 3:00) |

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| Action Plan: Explore connections (I&I Strategy) | |
| KNOW  Week of 10/07/19 | Learn to make learning meaningful for children by engaging in activities and interactions that support their understanding of the world around them.  Resource: [Making Learning Meaningful for Children](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/making-learning-meaningful)  As you are reviewing this resource, think about the ways to connect your teaching to the lives of your students by linking new learning to previous experience; relating concepts to children’s lives; and providing hands-on learning. |
| SEE  Week of 10/07/19 | Watch: [Winter Weather Conversation during Breakfast](https://aeiionline.org/advancing-effective-interactions-and-instruction-2/tools-resources/for-use-in-professional-development/standalone-player/?v=1_pjmgtmp8&t=Winter+Weather+Conversation+during+Breakfast) |
| DO  Week of 10/14/19 | When introducing your next study, start by asking children what they know about this topic already, what experiences they have had the topic, and what they are curious about. Write down children’s ideas in a “KWL” chart and follow up by incorporating ways that they can find the answers to their questions into lessons over the next several weeks. |
| Follow Up  Week of 10/21/19 | Feedback provider:   * Will observe a whole group time to watch the creation of the KWL chart. (10/17 @ 10:00) * Will have a follow-up observation to see if children are going back to the KWL chart. (10/24 @ 11:00) |