

Supporting YoungStar (2019/2020) Quality Indicator B.1.3(2)

The environment includes at least five defined interest centers that are developmentally appropriate and reflect either the WMELS' five domains or the SACF's nine content areas.

- Offering Children Materials and/or Experiences at Varied Levels of Difficulty and Addressing Different Learning Styles



Each child develops at their own unique pace and presents their knowledge and abilities in response to how they receive the experiences in their world.

In order for providers to offer meaningful learning experiences, activities and materials must be organized and offered in the way that provides the greatest potential for success. This takes careful planning and requires a deep understanding of each child's skills, needs and interests.

Using what they know about each child, a provider can carefully set up environments, adapt activities and materials and adjust their approach to teaching to match the various levels of ability of children in their care.



Consider the fine motor activities below. Notice that with just a small change in materials, there are two opportunities for varied levels of difficulty offered in each activity.

First, the baby is putting oranges in the big pot and then in the tray with sections.



Next, the baby is putting the paper in the open tube and then through the slot with the lid on.



Each of these activities becomes progressively more challenging.





Think about the children in your care. Do the materials and activities meet each child's current level of development while offering opportunities to challenge themselves?

Consider the fine motor activity on the left and how the materials may offer varied levels of difficulty. A child who is beginning to develop hand-eye coordination might try to fit the craft sticks into the large foam noodles. A child who is refining these skills may be able to fit a pipe cleaner into a drinking straw, requiring greater concentration and ability. Puzzles come in a variety of difficulty levels and writing centers offer many opportunities to include materials for various skill levels (e.g. thick and thin markers, stencils, visual aids, etc.).

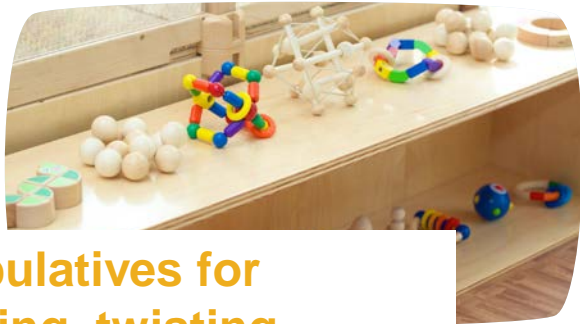
Puzzles and games requiring mathematical thinking, problem solving and persistence



How can varied levels of difficulty be represented in your interest centers?

Books ranging from wordless to short stories, simple to complex illustrations, board books to paperbacks

Manipulatives for grasping, twisting, connecting, squeezing



A selection of sensory materials that require a range of fine motor abilities, e.g., pouring into large or small containers



Board games with simple or complex rules



Along with each child's level of ability, **learning styles** should be considered when setting up an environment and planning activities for a child or group of children. A few examples of learning styles are...

Visual/Spatial- Child asks “show me” and enjoys pictures and drawing

Auditory- Child asks “tell me again” and enjoys using sound and music

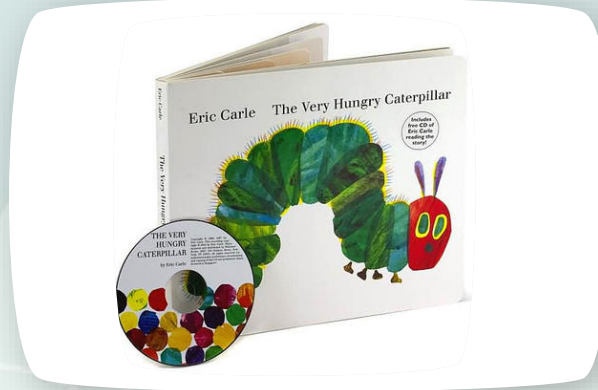
Kinesthetic- Child asks to “see” something, actually wanting to touch or hold it and enjoys large motor games and activities that include movement

Verbal- Child enjoys using words in speech and writing

Logical/Mathematical- Child asks “why and how” and enjoys puzzles and complex tasks



With careful planning, providers can incorporate multiple learning styles into a single activity.



Think about the children in your care. What can you do to ensure there are opportunities for them to learn in the way that they feel most successful?

This teacher has planned an activity focusing on one topic area while incorporating a variety of learning styles. Children hear the story, ask questions, look at the illustrations and words on the pages, and pass around props to touch and manipulate. In this one activity, multiple learning styles are being supported.

Related activities could include props for kinesthetic learners to act out the story, a copy of the book for visual learners to observe on their own and an audio book offering auditory learners an opportunity to hear the story again and again.

Menus with visuals



Writing tools/props



Specific roles/tasks



Have you ever noticed some children prefer to play in some areas over others? Considering this information, what could you offer to inspire them to play in other areas?

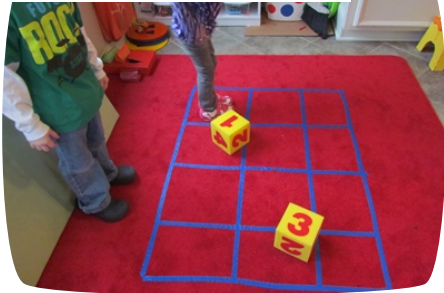
How about some theme inspiring music?



Keep in mind... Although certain interest areas and activities may naturally support one learning style, it is important to consider how other learning styles can be supported whenever possible. For example, the dramatic play area is typically set up to encourage dressing up and role playing. These activities often promote kinesthetic learning, but what else could be added to support auditory, visual, verbal or logical learning?



Life-size math game for kinesthetic learning



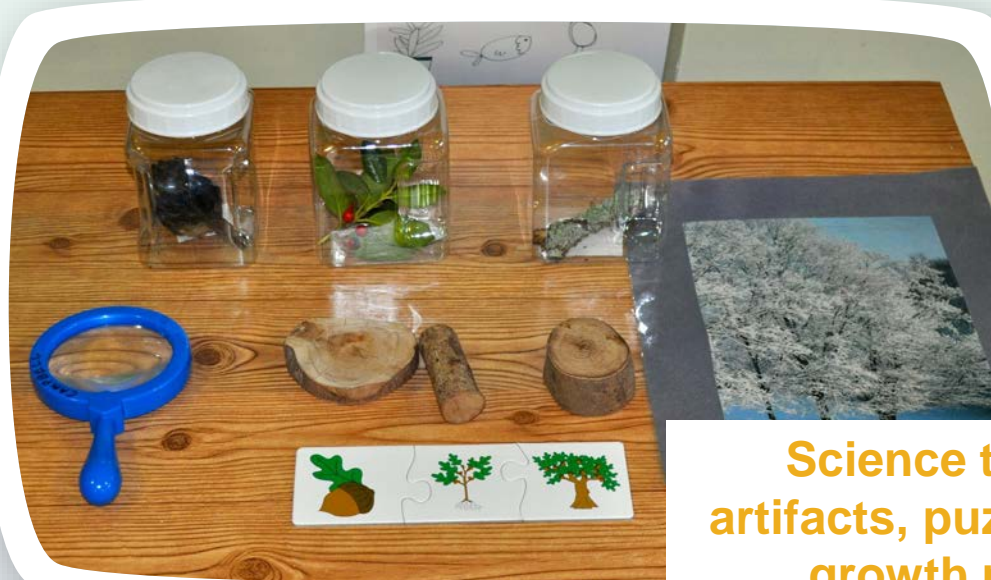
Complex game for logical learning



“Whisper phones” for verbal learning



Block area with visuals, props, writing/drawing supplies, tools, etc.



Science table with artifacts, puzzle showing growth process, magnifying glass, etc.

Let's identify the different learning styles these activities or areas support.



Similar to learning styles, **learning preferences** can change based on a child's current knowledge, mood and energy level, sensory needs, and other social and environmental factors. Therefore, it is important to know what each child needs to feel successful throughout the day and during the various experiences they have. Take into consideration these preferences and other factors that may affect children's learning...

Social/Interpersonal – Prefers to work in groups and enjoys collaborating

Sensory Considerations – Prefers a quiet learning space, sustains attention in smaller groups with less activity and distraction, avoids messy play, etc.

Solitary/Intrapersonal – Prefers to work alone and have personal space

Schedule/Routine Considerations – Prefers solitary play after drop-off, a quiet space leading up to nap time, active play before pick-up, etc.



When planning experiences, consider how individual preferences can be supported.

This teacher knows that Jason prefers to work alone at certain times of the day. Space is available for him to do this and the teacher helps other children respect his learning preference.



This teacher knows that Mandy does not typically take part in “messy play” unless she has a way to keep the materials from directly touching her skin. She is sure to have gloves, smocks, etc. available in the art and sensory area.



Through careful observation and taking the time to understand each child’s unique understanding of the world, providers can gain the information necessary to set up environments, make adaptations to activities and materials, and adjust their teaching in order to best meet the varying needs of every child in their care. Making this an everyday practice will support each child in reaching their greatest potential.



This presentation is designed to give **examples** of ways to meet **aspects** of the B.1.3(2) component in the 2019/2020 YoungStar Evaluation Criteria. The implementation of these practices can be demonstrated in a variety of ways that are unique to each program. For more information on offering children materials and/or experiences at varied levels of difficulty and addressing different learning styles, please contact your YoungStar Technical Consultant.

For general information, visit the following resources below:

- <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/learning-styles-preferences/>
- <https://www.whitbyschool.org/passionforlearning/auditory-visual-and-kinesthetic-helping-children-succeed-through-different-learning-styles>
- <https://www.education.com/reference/article/childrens-learning-styles/>
- <https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/empowering-your-child/building-on-strengths/different-learning-strengths-what-you-need-to-know>
- <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/ys-2019-20/adapting-toys.pdf>

