

If you notice the child...	Consider	What this means in early childhood and community care settings
Says “no,” moves away, or stops participating when there is only one option	7.1 Optimize choice & autonomy	Offer meaningful choices about how, where, with whom, or with what children participate.
Joins more readily when familiar interests, people, objects, experiences, or topics are included	7.2 Optimize relevance, value & authenticity	Connect experiences to children's interests, identities, lives, cultures, and communities.
Leaves, disengages, or watches rather than joins when an experience is highly adult-directed	7.3 Nurture joy & play	Create space for curiosity, playfulness, imagination, exploration, humour, and delight.
Covers ears or eyes, moves away, freezes, becomes upset, or repeatedly attends to something else in the environment	7.4 Address biases, threats & distractions	Reduce sensory, social, emotional, and environmental barriers to engagement.
Stops, looks to others, or repeatedly asks “why?” or “what are we doing?”	8.1 Clarify the meaning & purpose of goals	Help children know what they are working toward and why it matters.
Stops, avoids, rushes through, repeatedly asks for help, or gives up when something becomes difficult	8.2 Optimize challenge & support	Adjust challenge and provide enough support for children to stay involved and grow.
Participates less when working alone but joins or stays longer when another child or adult participates with them	8.3 Foster collaboration, interdependence & collective learning	Create opportunities to play, learn, problem-solve, and contribute with others.
Stays on the edge of the group, leaves group experiences, or repeatedly seeks a familiar person	8.4 Foster belonging & community	Build relationships, routines, and spaces that strengthen connection and belonging.
Repeats an approach, stops, or looks to an adult after receiving feedback that doesn't tell them what to do next	8.5 Offer action-oriented feedback	Give specific feedback that helps children know what is working and what they could try next.
Says things like “I can't,” “I'm bad at this,” or “I don't want to,” or stops before trying	9.1 Recognize expectations, beliefs & motivations	Help children notice expectations, beliefs, feelings, and what motivates them.
Has difficulty naming, showing, or responding to what is happening for themselves or another person	9.2 Develop awareness of self & others	Support children to notice their own experiences and those of others.
Moves quickly on after an experience and needs prompting to recall what happened, what helped, or what they might try again	9.3 Promote individual & collective reflection	Create simple ways to revisit experiences and notice what children learned or discovered.
Avoids, argues with, or stays disconnected from another child after conflict or harm	9.4 Cultivate empathy & restorative practices	Support children to understand impact, repair relationships, and reconnect.

Supporting Children to Understand

Representation

If you notice the child...	Consider	What this means in early childhood and community care settings
Moves closer, squints, turns away, asks for repetition, or misses information that others are responding to	1.1 Support opportunities to customize the display of information	Adjust the size, volume, location, contrast, pace, or presentation of information.
Responds when information is shown one way, but not when it is presented another way	1.2 Support multiple ways to perceive information	Share information through words, pictures, objects, sounds, gestures, demonstrations, and experiences.
Rarely sees their family, culture, language, identity, or experiences reflected in materials, stories, or play	1.3 Represent a diversity of perspectives & identities authentically	Include authentic materials, stories, images, languages, families, cultures, and perspectives.
Pauses, looks to others, asks questions, or responds differently when unfamiliar words or symbols are used	2.1 Clarify vocabulary, symbols & language structures	Make unfamiliar words, symbols, signs, and directions clear and meaningful.
Looks to others, guesses, skips, or stops when print, numbers, signs, or symbols are used	2.2 Support decoding of text, mathematical notation & symbols	Help children access and make meaning from print, numbers, signs, and symbols.
Participates less or responds differently when an unfamiliar language or dialect is being used	2.3 Cultivate understanding & respect across languages & dialects	Use and value children's home languages, dialects, signs, gestures, and ways of communicating.
Has their words, pronunciation, dialect, language, or communication been corrected, dismissed, or misunderstood by others	2.4 Address biases in the use of language & symbols	Notice and reduce assumptions about which languages and ways of communicating are considered “right.”
Watches others, asks for help, or starts differently when an idea is only explained verbally	2.5 Illustrate through multiple media	Add pictures, objects, demonstrations, movement, stories, models, and play.
Looks to others, waits, or uses trial and error when an experience is new or unfamiliar	3.1 Connect prior knowledge to new learning	Connect new experiences to familiar people, places, ideas, routines, and experiences.
Focuses on one part of an experience and misses other information that is important for knowing what to do	3.2 Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas & relationships	Draw attention to what is important and help children notice patterns and connections.
Uses one familiar way to explore, respond to, or make sense of an idea even when other approaches are available	3.3 Cultivate multiple ways of knowing & making meaning	Invite different ways of exploring, experiencing, understanding, and making meaning.
Uses a skill or follows a routine in one situation but not when the people, materials, or setting change	3.4 Maximize transfer & generalization	Help children use what they know across different activities, routines, people, and places.

Supporting Children to Participate & Communicate

Action & Expression

If you notice the child...	Consider	What this means in early childhood and community care settings
Struggles to physically join in, move through the space, or respond in the expected way	4.1 Vary and honor methods for response, navigation & movement	Offer different ways for children to move, join in, and respond.
Struggles to access or use the available materials or tools	4.2 Optimize access to accessible materials, technologies & tools	Make sure children can access and use the materials and tools they need.
Struggles to communicate without getting frustrated	5.1 Use multiple media for communication	Offer different ways for children to communicate and share their ideas.
Struggles to create, build, record, or express their ideas using the available tools	5.2 Use multiple tools for construction, composition & creativity	Offer different tools and materials for children to create and show their ideas
Struggles with a new skill and needs more practice, modelling, or support	5.3 Build fluencies with graduated support	Provide practice and support as children develop new skills and adjust the support as they grow.
Is limited by expectations about the “right” way to communicate or express themselves	5.4 Address biases related to expression & communication	Teach and show all the different ways children communicate and express themselves.
Struggles to know what they are working toward or why it matters	6.1 Set meaningful goals	Help children know what they are working toward and why it matters to them
Struggles to know what to do when something unexpected, difficult, or frustrating happens	6.2 Anticipate and plan for challenges	Help children think about what might be tricky and make a plan for what they could do.
Struggles to keep track of materials, steps, ideas, or what comes next	6.3 Organize information & resources	Help children organize what they need, what they are doing, and what comes next.
Struggles to notice how things are going or decide what to try next	6.4 Enhance capacity for monitoring progress	Help children notice how things are going and think about what they might try next.
Is excluded or participates less because of a rule, routine, grouping, expectation, or practice	6.5 Challenge exclusionary practices	Notice and change routines, rules, or expectations that make it harder for some children to participate.