

Blending Early Childhood Pedagogy with Deeper Learning Principles

It starts with shared understanding

Connections

Between EC Pedagogy & Deeper Learning Principles

There are strong connections and alignments between deeper learning principles and long-standing early childhood education frameworks. The educational philosophies of Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and others valued student-driven, experiential learning grounded in real-world contexts and investigations.

Recognizing the continuity with early childhood pedagogy reminds us that crucial mindsets and skills are established even before elementary school.

Understanding these alignments can strengthen efforts to create a seamless, progressive learning journey across grade levels.



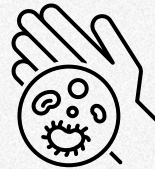
Child-Centered Learning

Instruction that is focused on building student agency and interests.



Critical Thinking

Development of critical thinking and problem-solving from an early age.



Hands-On

Emphasis on active, hands-on exploration and inquiry.



Collaboration

Recognition of collaboration being central to the learning process.



Whole Child

Focus on nurturing the whole child, including social-emotional needs.

Fostering Connections

A Discussion Starter for Early Childhood and Elementary Educators

When early childhood and elementary teachers come together to explore pedagogical connections, thoughtful questions can uncover shared philosophies and spark ideas for alignment.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

For Early Childhood Teachers

What student-centered learning practices do you find most effective for nurturing agency and exploration?

How do you cultivate critical thinking and problem-solving skills through play and inquiry?

What social-emotional learning strategies help children develop collaboration and communication skills?

For Elementary Teachers

How are you implementing deeper learning practices like project-based learning in your classroom?

In what ways do you incorporate student voice and choice into your instruction?

How do you build on young students' innate curiosity and interests?

DEBRIEF AND EXPLORE

Where do you see the strongest connections between your approaches?

What are benefits and challenges with greater vertical alignment?

How can we improve transitions for students between early childhood and elementary?

DISCUSSION STRUCTURE

Explore perceptions: What assumptions exist about differences? Similarities?

Connection: Identify shared goals and approaches using above questions.

Brainstorm: How can alignment be strengthened? What steps are feasible?

Reflect: Summarize key takeaways and next steps.