

Aligning Emergent Curriculum and Deeper Learning

Finding commonalities and connections

Alignment

Between Emergent Curriculum & Deeper Learning

Curriculum alignment refers to the intentional sequencing of learning objectives and experiences across grade levels to create a coherent, progressive learning journey for students.

For example, the emergent curriculum model centered on student inquiry and interests aligns with deeper learning approaches that develop critical thinking and problem-solving. Aligning teaching practices around these shared principles can strengthen continuity for students transitioning from early childhood to elementary.

Identifying aligned learning progressions and potential gaps will help inform efforts to bridge programs.

Child Centered Learning

Learning tailored to children's interests, strengths, and needs.

Aligns with student-driven inquiry and critical thinking in deeper learning.

Flexibility & Responsiveness

Willingness to alter direction based on children's evolving interests and questions.

Aligns with adaptability in deeper learning.

Integration of Learning

Learning integrated across domains, reflecting interconnectedness of knowledge/skills. Deeper learning emphasizes interdisciplinary projects.

Collaboration & Co-Construction

Knowledge built through exploration, dialogue and reflection. Deeper learning expands collaboration globally.

Observation & Documentation

Teachers observe play and learning to inform planning and reflection.

Parallels assessment for learning in deeper learning.

Environment as Facilitator

Thoughtfully designed spaces provoke curiosity, discovery and stimulate learning. Deeper learning environments encourage exploration and innovation.

Fostering Curricular Alignment

A Discussion Guide for Early Childhood and Elementary Educators

The goal is to visually capture each team's insights and facilitate discussion on connections and misalignments.

The collaborative hands-on process allows for organic conversation and consensus building.

Child-Centered Learning

How are children's/students' interests, strengths and needs driving learning?
What opportunities exist for student voice, choice, and inquiry?
How can we build in more student ownership over learning across levels?

Integration of Learning

How is interdisciplinary learning promoted through projects and activities?
Where can additional cross-curricular connections be made?
How can learning be better connected to real-world contexts?

Observation & Documentation

How are observations being used to inform planning and instruction?
What systems are in place for tracking growth and mastery?
How can documentation practices align more seamlessly across levels?

Flexibility and Responsiveness

How adaptable are teachers to student needs, interests, and pace?
What mechanisms enable pivoting the learning focus?
How can we build in more flexibility for continuity between levels?

Collaborative & Co-Construction

What collaborative learning opportunities are provided and how can they be expanded?
How are students co-constructing and sharing knowledge?
How can collaboration extend to experts and community partners?

Environment as Facilitator

How does the classroom environment provoke inquiry, discovery, and thinking?
What enhancements could make the space more intellectually stimulating?
How can continuity in learning environments be supported across levels?

Gather

A large whiteboard or chart paper
Different colored dry erase markers or sticky notes.
Virtual workspace like Miro

Create

Teachers by grade or age group respond to the questions in each area using an assigned color marker or sticky note.

Discuss

Discuss similarities and differences you notice. Identify alignment opportunities.
