

# Practical Ingredients of Active Learning for Infants and Toddlers

To ensure an environment that builds trust, autonomy, and initiative and where active learning can flourish, infant and toddler caregivers provide what we call the five ingredients of active learning:

1. **Materials** — There are abundant, age-appropriate materials the child can use in a variety of ways. Learning grows directly out of the child's direct actions on the materials.
2. **Manipulation** — The child has opportunities to explore (with all his or her senses), manipulate, combine, and transform the chosen materials.
3. **Choice** — The child chooses what to do. Since learning results from the child's attempts to pursue personal interests and goals, the opportunity to choose activities and materials is essential.
4. **Child communication, language, and thought** — The child communicates his or her needs, feelings, discoveries, and ideas through motions, gestures, facial expressions, sounds, sign language, and words. Adults value, attend to, and encourage the child's communications and language in a give-and-take manner.
5. **Adult scaffolding** — Adults establish and maintain trusting relationships with each child in their care. Adults recognize and encourage each child's intentions, actions, interactions, communications, explorations, problem solving, and creativity.