EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

- Encourage children to use materials in new ways. Validate their feelings of disappointment when their efforts are not initially successful. Encourage them to try solving their problem another way.
- *Model* flexibility and positive approaches to new experiences. Demonstrate the willingness to try new ideas, activities, materials, foods, etc.
- Encourage children to seek help from each other or an adult when needed. Role-play multiple situations that involve solving problems and asking for help, providing words that children can then use on their own.
- Support and acknowledge children's efforts, helping children see that their efforts are more important than *results*.
- Support children's efforts to think flexibly and do things in their own way.
- Help children take safe risks. Be there to ensure their safety.
- Talk out loud while reasoning through a problem or working through a task to model the *problem-solving* process for children ("I see we ran out of juice, so I am going to pour some water instead.").
- Teach children the steps involved in problem solving - identifying the problem, generating possible solutions, choosing a solution, trying it out and evaluating how well it worked.
- *Engage* children in applying their prior knowledge by prompting them to ponder why something might have happened, such as why a plant might be wilting.

- Encourage children to talk out loud as they reason and work through a task.
- Encourage children to reach out for help and support from their peers to accomplish difficult tasks (stabilize a structure, grab something off a shelf).
- Routinely involve children in thinking through real-life problems (how to clear a path through the new snow).
- Promote reflection by asking *open-ended* questions as children are working on a project.
- Help children use conflict resolution skills when they are working through problems with other children. Model negotiation skills by talking about the problem, the feelings related to the problem, and how to explore possible solutions.
- Acknowledge and celebrate children's successes. Encourage them to recognize their own achievements and congratulate peers on their successes.
- Help children identify coping skills that will help them when feeling stress, such as asking for a hug, holding a blanket or taking a break.
- Role model relaxation skills, such as deep breathing, slowly counting and progressively relaxing muscles to help children cope with challenges.
- Encourage children to think of mistakes as opportunities to explore alternative solutions and ways to complete tasks. Avoid making critical or negative comments.
- Acknowledge that adults also make mistakes and discuss lessons learned from them.