Learning Progression: Initiative and Persistence

**Ways to Support Initiative and Persistence:** Create an environment that encourages children to explore their interests and challenge themselves. Encourage diverse interests through a variety of books and materials for children to explore. Offer support, verbally and non-verbally, as children attempt new challenges or learn new skills. Scaffold activities so children experience small successes toward bigger challenges. Offer encouragement when children begin to show frustration. Set realistic goals and chart steps toward achieving them. Read stories about trying new things, sharing new ideas, or overcoming challenges. Model initiative and persistence by “thinking out loud” about facing and working through challenges.

**Data-informed decision making directions:**

1. **Gather** information by observing and interacting with children engaged in a variety of activities that explore interests and require varying levels of persistence.
   - Gather information across at least three different sessions. A session can be a particular situation (e.g., cleaning up), location (e.g., playground), and/or activity (e.g., field trip).
   - Information should be gathered from child-directed play activities, as well as during teacher-directed lessons.
   - Talk with family members and/or other caregivers about ways the child demonstrates initiative and persistence.
   - For additional information, see Key Terms and Additional Supports.

2. **Document** when and how child demonstrates initiative and persistence on the recording form.
   - Take anecdotal notes of the children while they are engaged in activities that explore a variety of interests and challenge the children at different levels from simple to complex.
   - Include enough detail in each column that someone else could picture and describe the child's behavior.
   - Consider using digital pictures, video and/or audio tape, or the children's work as alternative ways to document the children's behaviors.
   - For additional information, see Key Terms and Additional Supports.

3. **Summarize** the notes narratively on the recording form.
   - Generate statements that describe the specific behaviors the child demonstrated across the sessions. The narrative summary should be descriptions of what was seen and heard.
   - For additional information, see Key Terms and Additional Supports.

4. **Analyze** the information on the recording form and any additional information you may have gathered from other sources such as interviews with families or caregivers, other relevant assessments, or interactions with the child.
   - Look for patterns and trends by asking questions such as: What topics are of interest to each child? How long does a child continue to try something difficult or challenging? How many different ways does a child attempt a challenging activity? How often does a child seek support from a peer or adult? How often does a child complete tasks? Is their completion of tasks different for simple versus complex tasks?
   - For additional information, see Key Terms and Additional Supports.

5. **Interpret** by drawing conclusions about the child's behaviors related to taking initiative and being persistent.
   - Draw conclusions using the information you analyzed in the step above.
   - Use conclusions to rate the child's performance on the Initiative and Persistence Learning Progressions.
### Initiative and Persistence Recording Form (Multiple Children)

**Children’s Names:** ___________________________  **Observer(s):** ___________________________  **Dates:** ___________________________

**Directions:** List the names of the children you observe. Jot down notes in each column related to how each child shows interest in objects, activities, or topics and persists in working on tasks. Provide enough detail that someone reviewing the notes could picture a child’s behavior related to interests, planning and persistence. Consider using alternative ways to capture your observations (e.g., sticky notes, videotape, audio tape, digital pictures).

#### INITIATIVE – Interests & Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Objects, activities, and/or topics of interest to the child.</th>
<th>When/where child shows interest in the objects, activities, and/or topics</th>
<th>Brief description of the child’s behavior when engaged or interacting with objects, activities, or topics.</th>
<th>Activities the child plans and creates around an interest (with/without adult support)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child’s Name</td>
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<td>Child’s Name</td>
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#### PERSISTENCE – Persisting with Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Description of the task observed: What the task is, level of difficulty for the child (e.g., simple, one/two steps, multiple steps, challenging)</th>
<th>Length of time spent working on the task – indicate if the tasks was completed or left incomplete</th>
<th>Distractions or interruptions that occurred and describe child’s response to the distraction/interruption</th>
<th>Strategies child used to overcome challenges, complete the tasks, and/or ignore distractions with or without adult support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child’s Name</td>
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**Summarize Child’s Behaviors** (child’s name: ____________)  **Analyze Patterns and Trends**

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Key Terms and Additional Supports

Support for Gathering
- Ask the family members and other caregivers about each child’s likes/interest. This can be completed through conversations or an informal checklist.
- Jot down any themes you hear children talk about often.
- Have children interview one another about what they like to play, do, think about, etc.

Support for Documenting (Alternative notes to capture)
- How and/or when the children initiate activities or interactions.
- Children's level of independence in beginning tasks and continuing with tasks that become difficult
- Length of time children spend on activities of interest and those children find less interesting or more difficult
- Amount of assistance needed/requested.

Support for Summarizing (Alternatives)
- Visual summary idea: Make a graph that shows which behaviors the child demonstrates most often compared to less often. Share the graph with families and discuss ways that you will support the child’s development in these areas and ways they can support the child’s development at home.

Support for Analyzing (Identifying Patterns and Trends)
- Patterns are behaviors that repeat in predictable ways. Look for patterns in the child’s level of independence, peers and adults with whom the child prefers to interact and initiate interactions, activities and topics that particularly draw the child’s interest and attention, as well as activities that are more challenging and less interesting to the child. Pay attention to how the child expresses frustration and ways you can help the child avoid feeling frustrated. Use these patterns to engage in conversations with family members around initiative and persistence.
- Trends are the general direction that something is headed (i.e., determine if the child’s behaviors are increasing, decreasing, or staying the same). For example across the three sessions, does the child consistently interact more with familiar adults than with peers? Does the child have a limited or wide range of interests? What activities does the child complete more independently? What supports seem to help the child engage in activities with increasing levels of difficulty or greater independence?