

Scaffolding Children's Learning

Narrator: Welcome, to this short module on scaffolding children's learning. The main purpose of scaffolding is to provide children with the right level of support, so that they can be more successful than they would be without your help.

Scaffolding children's learning fits into the foundation of the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning's House Framework. The House is a way to help us think about the teaching practices that are critical to school readiness for all children.

Research shows that interactions are the classroom processes that are important for children's social and academic development. There are a number of more specific instructional interactions that we can identify and use to help children learn. Scaffolding is one of those.

Teachers scaffold children's learning when they provide different levels of support and feedback to meet individual needs. There are at least three methods that teachers can use to provide children with just the right amount of support and feedback. One way to scaffold or support children's learning is to provide hints. A hint provides just a little more information to help the child arrive at a more accurate response or action. A hint can be given verbally, or it could be a picture or a gesture.

Teacher: One idea would be to use the picture. I see you have the tail of the airplane. What else comes next? I see two wings...

[Child speaks indistinctly]

Teacher: All right, let's see.

Narrator: Another way to scaffold children's learning is to offer a range of possible answers. When the teacher sees that a child is struggling to come up with an answer or response, the teacher gives two or three possibilities from which the child can choose.

Teacher: Is it plastic or paper?

Girl: Plastic.

Teacher: Plastic. So, can you put it in the plastic bin? Very nice.

Narrator: Here's another way to scaffold children's learning. The teacher can encourage the child to use additional resources to help the child understand the concept or idea.

Teacher: We haven't done dolphin yet. I don't think I have a picture of a dolphin. Where could we find a picture?

Girl: A stamp of it.

Teacher: There is a stamp of it. Where can we get a picture of a dolphin? Was there a dolphin in the seahorse book? Wait, I see a book over here. This book says "About Fish." Do you think it has a dolphin in it?

Narrator: Additional resources include books, visual reminders in the classroom, or other children. There are lots of opportunities for teachers to use scaffolding throughout the school day and in a variety of activities. Scaffolding can be used to help children learn all sorts of new knowledge and skills. Teachers need to be careful observers and provide the support that the individual child needs to keep on learning.

This presentation highlighted the ways that teachers can use scaffolding in their interactions with children. Teachers can use hints, give a range of possible answers, or suggest additional resources.

Please see our tips and tools and helpful resources that accompany this presentation.

Thank you for listening.