CREATING A CULTURE OF INQUIRY

To create a culture of inquiry, notice what children say and do to learn about their interests, culture, and current understandings. This allows adults and children to become scientists together. A culture of inquiry includes all learners. Here are some ways to create a culture of inquiry.

MODEL A QUESTIONING MIND

- Listen to children's questions and ask open-ended questions that begin with:
  - "I wonder what…"
  - "I wonder how…"
  - "I wonder why…"
- Encourage children to speak in the language(s) in which they feel most comfortable to support curiosity and questioning.

EXPLORE TOGETHER

- Offer children many opportunities for interaction- and exploration-based learning and encourage their learning together. "Let's ask Jose if he thinks the wood will sink or float in the puddle!
- Let children take the lead but guide them in exploring their questions. You don't need to have all the answers. You can ask them, "How can we find out more?"

BE AN ACTIVE OBSERVER

- Be an active observer to learn about children's interests and abilities. Adapt your language and materials to build on a child's existing knowledge and understanding.
- Children may express their curiosity non-verbally through their facial expressions, body language, and behaviors.

TALK WITH CHILDREN

- Engage children in conversation. Use English and the children's home languages when possible, to encourage, prompt, and expand children's vocabulary for describing theiUse English and the children's home languages when possible, to encourage, prompt, and expand children's vocabulary for describing their observations, asking questions, and making predictions.
- Invite children to communicate in the languages they feel most comfortable using.
- Visual supports, such as pictures and books, can give children a nonverbal way to communicate.

KNOW WHEN TO INTERVENE

- When you observe your children, decide when it is the appropriate time to ask a question or offer help without distracting or overwhelming your children with too much feedback.

PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH TIME

- Give your children the opportunity to investigate and figure things out.