CREATING A CULTURE OF INQUIRY IN THE HOME-BASED SETTING

To create a culture of inquiry, adults must use observations about what children say and do to learn about their interests 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

- Encourage parents to listen to their child's questions and ask open-ended questions that begin with:

    "I wonder what…"

    "I wonder how…"

    "I wonder why…"
- Have a child speak in the language(s) in which he feels most comfortable to support curiosity and questioning

EXPLORE TOGETHER

- Parents don't need to have all the answers. Instead, encourage parents to let their child take the lead and guide them in exploring their questions. Offer many opportunities for interactive- and exploration-based learning and encourage parents to learn with their children.

BE AN ACTIVE OBSERVER

- Encourage parents to be active observers to learn about their child's interests and abilities. Parents should adapt their language and materials to build on their child's existing knowledge and understanding.
- A child may express her curiosity non-verbally through her facial expressions, body language, and behaviors.

TALK WITH CHILDREN

- Have parents practice engaging their child in conversation in the home language they are most comfortable speaking to encourage, prompt, and expand their child's vocabulary for describing observations, developing questions, and making predictions.
- Visual supports such as pictures and books can give parents and children another way to communicate, besides verbal communication.

KNOW WHEN TO INTERVENE

- Help parents decide when it is the appropriate time to ask a question or offer help without distracting or overwhelming their child with too much feedback.

PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH TIME

- Encourage parents to give their child the opportunity to investigate and figure things out.