

Category I



Initiative

By nature young children are inquisitive, enterprising, and motivated to take action to pursue their interests and ideas. Through everyday choices, plans, and decisions, children initiate personally meaningful activities that enable them to learn not only about the physical world but also about themselves and others as learners and adventurers. By acting on these initiatives, children gain confidence in themselves as capable persons and in others as supportive participants. As children develop over time, they strengthen their abilities to communicate their intentions, solve problems that occur in their own activities, and coordinate their ideas and activities with others.



A. Making choices and plans

- B. Solving problems with materials
- C. Initiating play
- D. Taking care of personal needs

LEVEL 1 • Child indicates a choice by pointing or some other action.

The child expresses choices, decisions, and plans through simple actions, such as pointing, going and getting an object, or just starting an activity with no prompt.

- 12/1 At planning time, when asked what he is going to do at work time, Dylan points to the puzzles.
- 2/5 During work time in the block area, Carlos asks Mark what he is going to put on top of the boat. Mark goes to the shelf, picks up the tub of cars, and brings it back to the boat.

LEVEL 2 • Child expresses a choice in one or two words.

The child states a choice or plan by using a word or a short phrase. The child may state this plan in response to adult prompting, as long as the adult has asked an open-ended question (“What will you do in the art area?”) rather than a yes-no question (“Do you want to color?”).

- 11/19 During planning time when her teacher asks her what she will use at work time, Cayli answers, “Pegs.”
- 11/3 At snack, Shayna points and says the word “Milk,” indicating that she wants more milk.

LEVEL 3 • Child expresses a choice with a short sentence.

The child expresses a choice or plan in a short sentence, adding no details about how the plan will be carried out. If the child just identifies the play activity (“I’m going to play with the truck”) without adding any more elements (such as the location or additional materials to be used), this is considered a level 3 plan. A plan that flits from place to place, such as “I’m going to the house area, and then to the art area, and then to the book area, and then. . .”

As active learners, children constantly make choices, decisions, and plans. As children develop, they progress from making (with some adult prompting) very simple choices and plans to making more specific and complex plans describing what they want to do.

should be scored at this level, because it includes no details about what the child will actually do.

- 10/2 At planning time Scott says, “I’m gonna play with the garage.”
- 12/2 At small-group time, when he is finished with the stamp pads and stamps, Jacob says, “I’m going to put my paper in my backpack.”

LEVEL 4 • Child makes a plan with one or two details.

At this level the child is able to add a bit more detail to a plan. This might include specifying a play location, a playmate, or the toys or materials to be used. If the child just says where he or she will play, this is not sufficient and should be scored as a 3 rather than a 4.

- 2/4 At planning time Pauline says, “I’m going to work in the block area with the fire truck.”
- 10/18 During work time, Taylor tells Ms. Kay, “Now I’m going to play spaceship with Devon and Dante.”

LEVEL 5 • Child makes a plan with three or more details.

The child makes complex plans and describes in some detail what will be used and how the plans will be accomplished. For a level 5 score the child’s plan must include a least three elements: for example, identifying the play activity and two materials to be used or naming the activity, the location, and two playmates.

- 5/20 During planning time Jalen tells his teacher, “I’m going to paint my mom a picture of our new truck and I’m gonna use two brushes and the green paint.”
- 3/19 At planning time Chloe says, “I want to be a bride. So I’m going to dress up in the house area and get those sparkly shoes, and carry the big yellow flowers.”