

A Closer Look at Habits of Mind: Makes connections, notes relationships, and organizes items based on observed details.

Traits: The child ...

- Observes and notes distinguishing details (line, shape, color, texture, and/or other characteristics)
- Sort, categorizes, organizes items in a variety of ways based on observed relationships
- Recognizes patterns, similarities, and differences
- Makes a connection between one thing (idea, object, symbol, sign, story, experience) and another thing
- Connects and uses past experiences/knowledge in a new situation



Supporting the Emergence of Making Connections

Ask yourself ...

- How might I support a wide range of connections? Connections can exist between people, between ideas, or among materials. Challenge yourself to offer connection explorations across the senses. What sounds similar or different? What tastes similar or different? What do you notice about the textures?
- Where will you notice connections and relationships? What connections and relationships do the children notice? Sometimes adults have preconceived ideas about the correctness of connections. What happens when you invite children to make their own connections? How might this expand your understanding of the child's perspective?
- What could I read? Use a children's picture book, such as *If...* by Perry (1995) or books of photos from Tana Hoban, to think together about possible connections, relationships, and patterns.



Making Connections: Language to notice, spotlight, and reflect!

I am noticing that you are...(traits)

- noticing details (shape, size, color...)
- organizing materials in different ways
- making connections between ideas/materials/stories/experiences
- seeing and extending patterns
- noticing how things are the same and how they are different
- using your *schema* (your understanding of ____) to make a new connection
- noticing that your name and friend's names have lines/letters
- noticing that you can count materials/ages/fingers using numbers

I notice that you sorted the materials by _____ (size, shape, color, other)

You made a connection between_____.

I need help. How should we organize these materials?

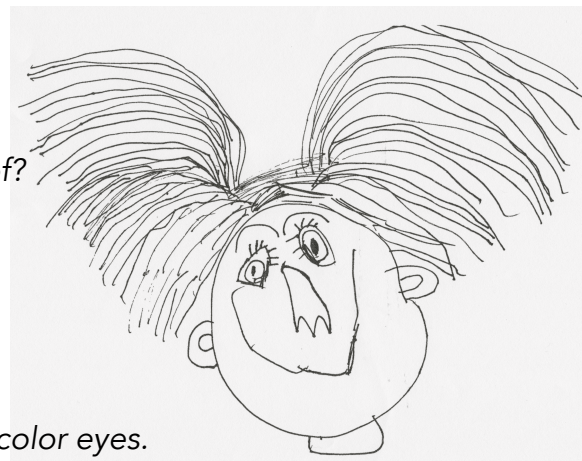
I see that you snapped your ideas together by _____.

What made you think of that? What does that remind you of?

What inspired your idea?

You made a connection!

- *You noticed that there are lines/letters in your name.*
- *You discovered that your age is a number.*
- *You noticed that you and your friend have the same color eyes.*
- *You found out that you can count_____ using numbers.*



Notes on Assessing Children's Expression of Making Connections

Humans are born to make connections and notice patterns. Making connections and noticing patterns forms the basis for cognitive development and human acquisition of language. You may have to observe carefully to recognize the connections being made in a child's play.

Sometimes children do not have the language to express the connection they are making or the relationship they have noticed. Listen closely to the language used. Think of how the language used might relate to events in the child's life or in the world at large. Sometimes you can ask a child to show you so they can physically move to or point to what they are noticing.

Connections, relationships, and patterns are at the foundation of the symbolic representation of sound through letters and quantity through numbers. The more you offer children diverse opportunities to notice and create connections, the more likely children will be able to generalize the habit to literacy and math contexts.