



Eden Park Primary and Nursery School

Isabelle Independence

"OUR GREATEST WEAKNESS LIES IN GIVING UP. THE MOST CERTAIN WAY TO SUCCEED IS ALWAYS TO TRY JUST ONE MORE TIME" -THOMAS EDISON

Definition

Independent Learning is learning that is self-directed. The learning is defined, organised, and completed by the determined learner. The ability to independently learn means that children can pursue their own research and recognise which educational material is most valuable to them. Teachers act as facilitators or guides towards achieving this independence for their pupils.

The stages of a curriculum that supports Independence

- Supported independence: Adult supporting the child to be independent, allowing a child to produce work in short bursts. Child can complete tasks by following instructions.
- Increasing pride and confidence in work: Child improves in level of confidence to work alone. They can think of solutions to problems they meet and explore the problems through research.
- Setting goals and generating solutions: They set goals and choose appropriate resources to complete their work and see mistakes as part of the learning process. They can explore complicated solutions to the work that they have and think through what issues may arise.
- Setting challenges: Able to identify own areas that they need to develop and work on them. The adult has stepped away from needing to give detailed direction.

Golden Rule

"Do nothing that the children can do. Otherwise, you are working too hard, and they are not working hard enough." Mr. Morgan!

Reading

Independence is the Eden Park Value most supported by the teaching of reading. Reading is central to all that we do and so we empower independence through our belief that reading is the passport to education. Reading is the most precious gift that we give. To teach reading is to teach independence.

"ONCE YOU LEARN TO READ, YOU WILL BE FOREVER FREE" -FREDERICK DOUGLASS



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Caution: Level of support

When encouraging children to learn more independently, there is a balance to find between stepping in and allowing them to work the problem out for themselves. When a child is becoming distressed or unhappy or looks likely to give up then encouragement should be used. When stepping in, it is the explanation and reasoning to solve the issue that is provided that will give the stimulus to find the right solutions next time so try to ensure that stepping in doesn't lead immediately to doing the work for the child.

Isabelle Independence Characteristics

- Explore different solutions to a problem
- Learn from your mistakes
- Work to become a confident reader
- Overcome obstacles by persevering
- Be resilient
- Challenge yourself
- Be diligent
- Confidently use helpful resources
- Embrace grey areas
- Ask for help appropriately

Created here is a framework that supports the teaching of this core value. It is a progression based on personal development and not age. Each of the developmental stages breaks into subsections making the progression easier to follow.

However, it is not a document in which children need to do each and all the activities and in the order they appear. Personal development is about moving towards being better, so this is not sequential and so teaching and focus will rightly be taken from across this framework.

See it as a resource bank, helping adults support children towards emulating the 10 essential characteristics.





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Supported independence

The child is supported to be able to independent, allowing a child to produce work in short bursts. Child can complete tasks by following instructions and will ask for support if needed. The child understands what “doing well” looks like and can work with some care and attention.

Principles and guidance:

- Child can produce work in small bursts and follow simple instructions
- The adult provides the necessary resources for the child to be successful
- The child is confident enough to ask for support. Adults should provide it if necessary and the child cannot be guided to making their own decisions.
- The child works on the task and the adult praises this success.

Activities that support this stage:

Following instructions

- Always promote reading. Use labels and text to give direction.
- Ensure literacy is available in each area within the classroom ensuring staff are giving meaning to the text around the room e.g. during circle time talk about the day of the week before finding the matching text to provide the children with the early building blocks they need for reading. Create a calm, neutral book area to provide an inviting space for the children to explore the available books.
- DEAR sessions. DRIVE skills taught in lessons. Lessons become increasingly reliant on children reading to understand a task.
- The children complete simple instructions without support from the adult. Complete listening and attention activities and simple memory games to provide a solid foundation for learning. As children's understanding develops, instructions become more complex.
- Provide simple instructions in a range of ways, such as spoken, on a video replay, a recipe, pictorially. Introduce a visual board with simple instructions such as washing hands etc. “Teams” and other electronic platforms used with increasing frequency.
- Play simple games with simple sets of rules that are the guidance. Play small group games such as ‘jelly beans’ to encourage the children to follow simple instructions. Where teamwork has been compromised, children have worked to independently produce and verify codes of rules for playground games.
- Provide instructions with time connectives such as then and next. Be aware that youngest children may well try to complete the last thing first. Ensure that they are asked to check if the instructions have been completed. In EYFS use a ‘now and next’ visual aid.
- Provide familiar instructions (such as how to put their coats on and line up, how to wash hands, how to tidy up) in a written/pictorial format rather than always aurally. Routines will help children establish what success looks like.
- Support the children by asking the child to find their coat, then holding out a coat and encouraging the child to push their arms through the sleeves, at each stage ask the child to try themselves but assisting when needed. Support with stages of hand washing,



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encouraging independence to wash the soap off gradually stepping back when the child has mastered each step. Tidy alongside the child labelling storage boxes with pictures to support the child with matching the objects to the labels.

- Maps are also an effective use of instruction so represent these in the classroom as a place to find chosen resources for instance. E.g. using a map of the school when setting out the parental outcomes. Using orienteering as part of the PE curriculum.
- Allow children the chance to make notes for their instructions or to write/ draw their own for others to follow. Provide opportunities for mark making in each area of the classroom and encourage children to give meaning to the marks they make.
- Within Texts That Teach, instruction writing is explicitly taught, including note taking. This skill is then utilised across the wider curriculum.
- Allow children the chance to see instructions in a written form and let them look over the instructions before starting. Use one step instructions, then moving on to two step instructions. The children will need to understand spoken instructions to understand written as they get older.
- Create a series of pictured instructions in a sequence and they can only return once all pictures are ticked off. Start with one picture and increase with ability.
- Writing checklists and success criteria towards the completion of a successful task.
- Model how to complete simple tasks multiple times. Keep language consistent.
- Scaffolding for the children as they learn. Give clues and ask questions to support the child in learning a new skill.
- Use high quality model texts. Use mathematical examples, moving from concrete to pictorial to abstract. Use talk partners and 'experts' to guide children who need more support.
- Continuous scaffolding up until outcome. At outcome continue to challenge. This requires staff challenging themselves also.
- Specifically use the build-up to an outcome as an opportunity to teach children how to be independent, so that during an outcome, they have the strategies to self-support, through use of working walls, dictionaries, problem solving etc.
- Provide resources that encourage independent problem solving, encouraging children to look for solutions themselves. Provide simple activities such as inset puzzles to develop critical thinking skills, always adapting to support the child's needs.
- Keep clear and distinct boundaries and routines, allowing patterns of behaviour to be built up. Follow a daily routine, using the tambourine, give clear instructions before each transition. Build expectations of behaviour, character, and honesty year upon year through a developing understanding of why the boundaries and routines are the way they are.
- Discuss correct choices and apply the consequences of these choices. Model mistakes. Model using simple tasks such as building a tower, what happens if I use a different shape, model techniques that do and do not work. Revisit behaviours as children grow to enable their world view to become increasingly sophisticated.
- Celebrating the effort of contributing despite the answer, to create a culture of children not being worried about making mistakes or contributing. Value each contribution according to its context. Lots of vocal praise and stickers.



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- Encourage a culture of asking questions. It is through questions that children clarify their understanding and move towards independence. Model asking simple questions, ask what, why and where questions encouraging the children to gain a deeper understanding.
- Allow children increasing opportunities to work together during which children focus on high quality questioning. Take time to unpick this when the task is complete.

Asking for Help

- The children need to identify when they might need help at this stage. Show the children a straightforward process of things they can do before asking for help:
 1. Were there any instructions that might help?
 2. Can we remember doing something like this before?
 3. Can we think of a way to solve the problem ourselves?
 4. Don't Panic: I can always ask for help from someone.
- Before an adult helps, ensure that the child has been asked to think about what they think they could do. As teachers, we are often too ready to step in with a solution when we should ask "What do you think?" and "I am not sure. How could we find out?" This approach is much more a coaching style, but it does require the adult to have patience.
- The adult could refer the child to another child before helping. "Why not ask Billy what he thinks? You have used his friendship before."
- Make deliberate mistakes as a teacher and allow children to tell you.
- Instruct the children "brain, Buddy, Boss" for the order in which to seek support.

Using others

- At times children may need help explaining the problem to others if you have referred them to someone else. Support in the explanation but not in the solution. They may need help in telling the other person:
 1. What the goal of the work is (what they are trying to achieve?)
 2. Where exactly they have stuck; what is stopping them moving on?
 3. What attempts that they have made already?
- Use children in independent tasks to offer suggestions and appraisals of what others are doing. Can other children, rather than the adult, be encouraged to lend advice for improvements in a piece of work?
- Encourage the children to give praise to each other for their work. Encourage them to say WHY they like the work rather than just say "it is good." This allows the receiver to have their skill valued at a deeper level as children are used to having praise as dismissal: "that's lovely...go and put it away."
- It will be necessary to model this as adults: when giving praise or when giving advice, tell the recipient why this is a good approach. It may be needed to do this as role play.
- Discuss with the children how they feel when they receive this praise for doing something well (calm, happy, excited). These are the feelings of personal satisfaction that are essential for strong independence.



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Increasing confidence in creating independent work

The children have increasing pride and confidence in work borne out of an understanding of how to have done the task well and a measure of their success in meeting this goal or instruction. They see complex problem solving modelled. They are encouraged to persevere.

Principles and guidance:

- The children move onto a stage of needing to feel confident about their own work. This will lead to a feeling of pride in achievements, celebrating the independence that led to this.
- Children look, increasingly, to solve problems with their own work themselves. This requires perseverance.
- They are shown how to solve more complex problems through modelling a range of possibilities and making links to previously encountered problems of a similar nature.
- Children set small goals for their own work, based on a clear understanding of the “success criteria” for the task. This is delivered to the children through positive instructions. The use of time frames will assist setting reasonable deadlines and points of time to check their processes.

Activities that support this stage:

Confidence

- Ensure the children can build a sense of personal satisfaction in their work. Associate this with “trying their best” and showing determination/ perseverance.
- What reward systems can teachers create to show this satisfaction. Stickers/ awards/ charts/ telling parents/ Teams and Tapestry.
- Always try to say WHAT they did that was good and WHY you are pleased. Avoid “good work” on the bottom of marking but “I really like the way you...”
- Share the successes of one child with the class, reiterating what they did well. This will lead to other children including this in their own work independently.
- Celebrate the effort of independence and having a go regardless of the outcome to encourage further independence (before looking at correction).
- Reward children who have made a mistake but then collaborated with you or someone else on how to correct it. Children should be encouraged to explore why they were wrong not just that they were.
- Can they identify the mistake they made in the calculation/ spelling and see why they did it? Look for opportunities to highlight children doing this. E.g. Harry noticed that this word ‘didn’t look quite right’ so he went to find a dictionary.

Modelling solving problems

- Work on how to solve problems with the children actively and model these aloud.
- Give children a set of choices to make and ask them to justify their choice.
- Share the idea of “pros and cons” with different solutions. These can work to help children make better choices when starting to work on their own. This also leads to



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conversations about the fact that there may not be one 'right choice' but grey areas that need navigating.

- Ask what the consequence would be if....
- Use Open ended problems where this IS more than one solution: so how many ways of answering this can you find rather than just find the answer.
- "Not saying no" to allow for more open-ended conversation. For instance, "why would you want to do it like that?" Try as an adult to allow children to experiment with content or presentation if the child is not able to experiment with answers. Can they produce a diagram/ picture/ model or image to explain their thinking? Can they explain to others how to do something, or why they chose to do it like that?
- Try not to answer irrelevant questions. This applies at all times of the day. Instead ask the child what they think.
- Ensure **perseverance** by sharing with the children times when they have learnt to do something by really keeping going such as walking, riding a bike, tying shoelaces, playing a game. Show them regularly that they have already learnt so much. Learning is making sense of the unknown.
- When solving a problem, support new learning by showing children to common connections between subjects and areas of learning. These commonalities will help make the links in other areas of learning. Focus on the skills also that were used such as reading or drawing or effective communication.
- Think aloud when modelling, showing how your mind is working. Great when demonstrating a maths problem or doing a collective piece of writing
- Give different answers to a maths problem and ask the child to explain what the teacher has done incorrectly
- Model and undo: do something with a child and then take it apart again
- Always/ sometimes / never statements
- Emphasise time management: this will make sure that learning is not prohibited by distractions and wasted time.

Supportive resourcing

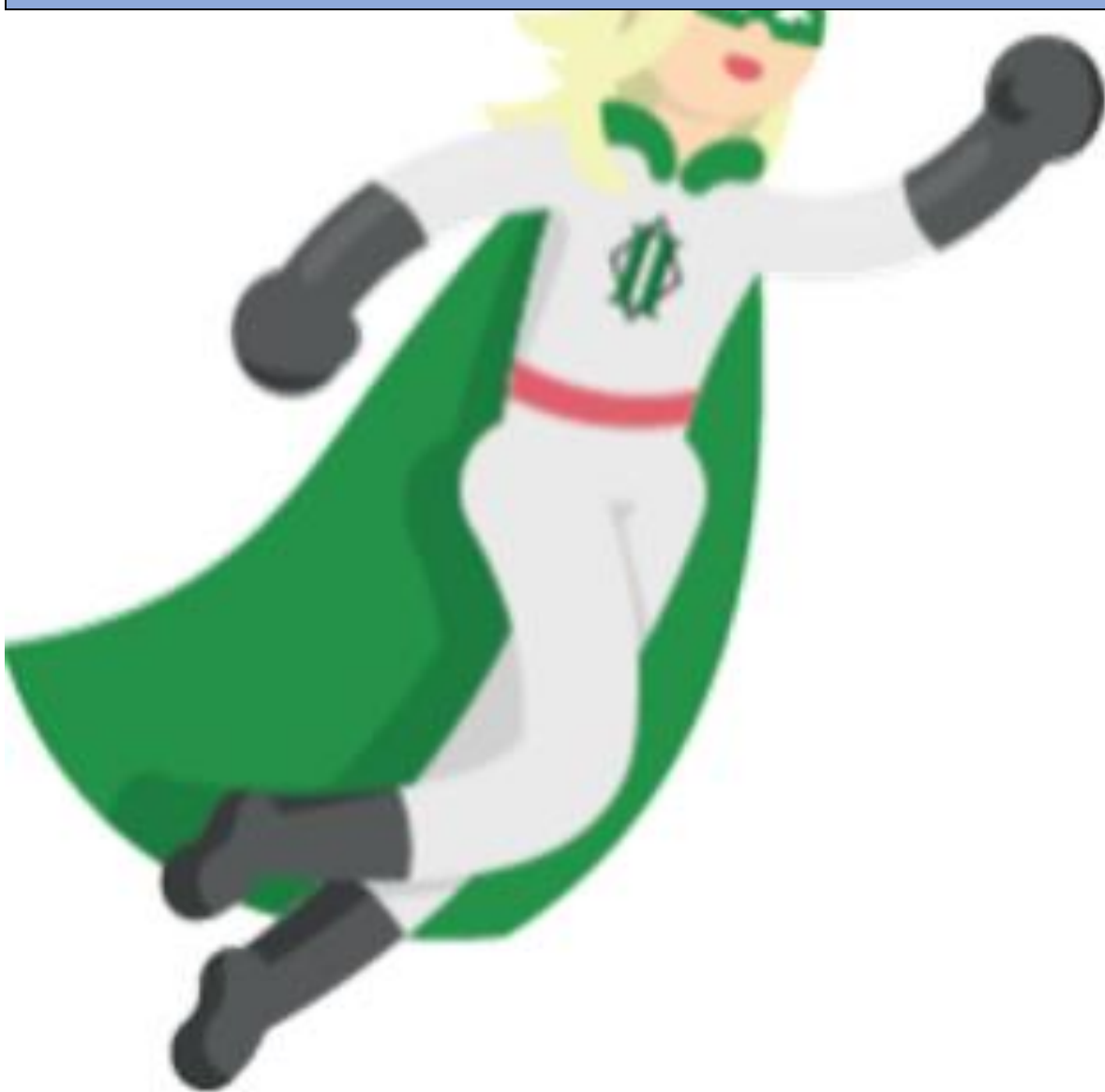
- Create a simple check list for what they have done e.g. CAPED (check, answer another way, prove it, explain it, draw it) so they have done an editing process before handing work in.
- This idea is best supported with a complex problem as often simple problems have a yes or no answer. This relates strongly to maths problem solving, where different solutions can be modelled, and some shown to be less efficient. "We could do it like this.... we would get there, but what are the problems with problem solving like this?" (Often in maths it will simply be inefficient. In science it may be impractical to solve a question like this or in History it maybe we were not there or that there is too much to read.)
- Display children's work on the TV and use it as an editing tool, showing how the child would now be able to edit their own work before giving it in
- Allow children chance to practice their ideas before committing. E.g. use of iPad to record / voice record a hold a sentence.



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- Be happy to set small time frames such as simple deadlines or points that you will check in. This allows the child to focus on the next thing that they need to achieve and should follow the same structure of the instructions that have been given.
- Learning walls are essential at this stage of the process. Ensure that your learning walls meet the guidance issued: that they are relevant and the material on them supports learning rather than just celebrates it. Include plans/ vocabulary choices/ time frames/ useful hints. The children need to know that using the wall is not weakness/ cheating but is them taking a positive position in their learning.
- Do not give early finishers **more** to do, give them **different** to do.





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Setting goals and generating solutions

The child explores complex problems and tasks and can complete them using a range of resources, producing varied solutions. They can see mistakes as part of the learning process.

Principles and guidance:

- The teaching of the use of different resources will be essential to allow the child to explore further.
- This may also mean that there is a cross over both with the Creativity Framework and the Teamwork Framework
- The child becomes able to make distinct choices about how to proceed as they can identify issues that may arise and so can generate a successful way forward.
- By this stage, the child is starting to be able to use “failure” positively, identifying mistakes in a previous attempt and try to correct them.

Activities that support this stage:

Extending resourcing

- Teach resources skills. We do this with scissors and glue a lot, but what about a glue gun, wall stapler, trimmer? Allow the children to do more to present their work and look after their room.
- Teach a skill that will lead to greater independence such as the use of a dictionary or an edit facility in IT or audio/ visual resources.
- Caution: When handing over increasing responsibility to the children is it important not to expect “perfection” but instead to expect a “best attempt.” If wishing for improvement suggest rather than tell. “Why don’t you try this?” is more empowering than “do this.”
- Hand back some presentation to the children and so cut back on full worksheets.
- Allow them to present within a frame rather than in a specific box etc. as a result you will need not to expect perfection
- Resources must be clearly labelled as to where they are. Do not always put them out. Allow children the opportunity to ask for additional resources and support,
- Additional resources may involve the use of other people. Using teamwork is not a counterpoint to independence if the child in making the choice to involve others for support. These others may have a greater level of expertise or may be able to make suggestions about ways forward, proving the child with the motivation to carry on with the task on their own again.

Positive Mindset

- Encourage growth mindset: “I don’t know this yet; it is OK to find things hard.”
- Encourage risk taking as show that any mistakes made are simply part of new learning.
- Have next steps: if you need to work on this, try this. This could include a “what to do if you finish” type challenge, reinforcing that there is no real finished.
- To achieve this, an atmosphere needs to be created in which mistakes are embraced as part of the learning. There is no such thing as a mistake, just a new point in learning.



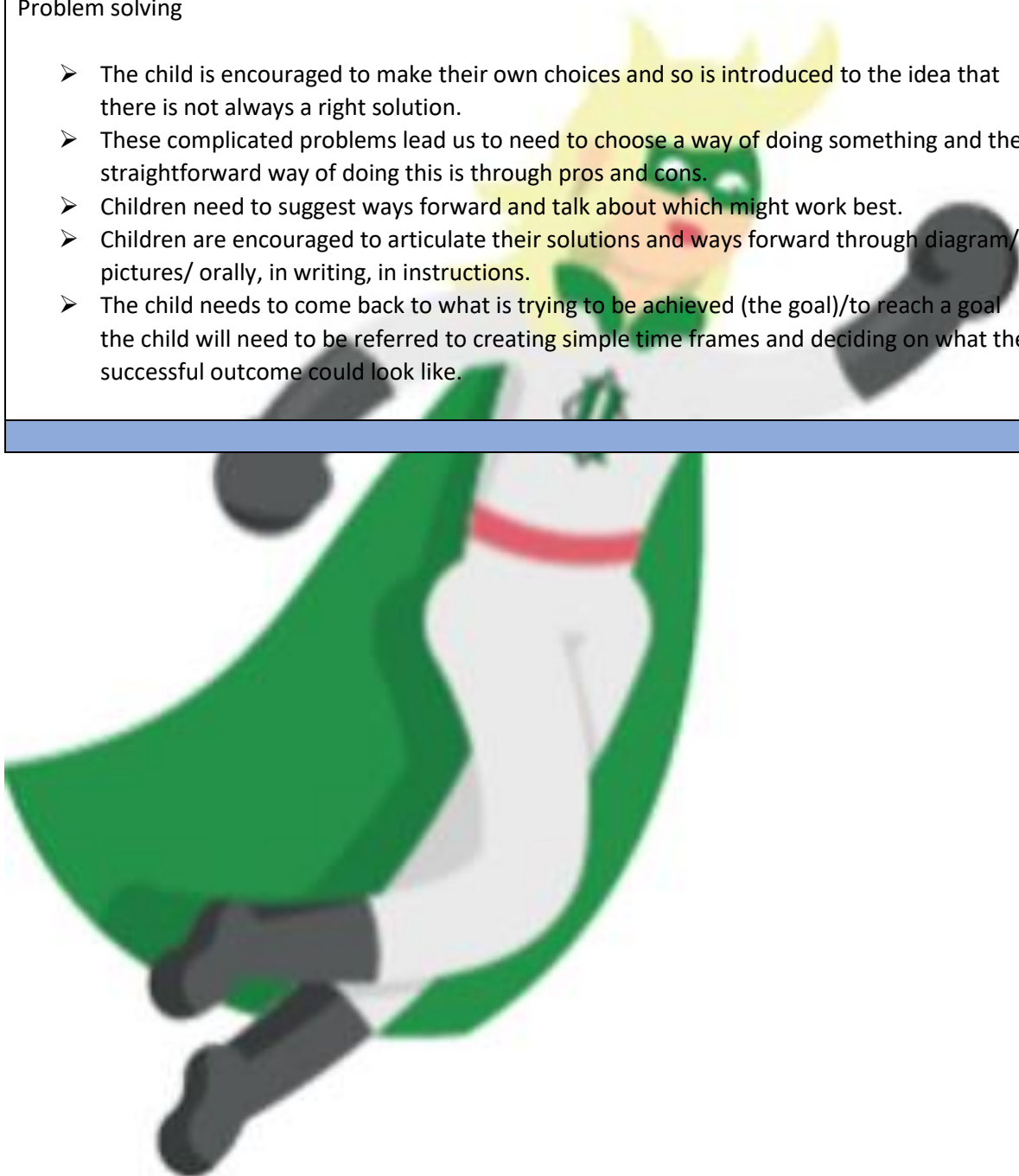
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- At the end of a task, always evaluate what went well and which resources/ skills proved to be the most useful.
- Embrace grey areas: show that there are a full set of choices we could make, for instance in writing and explore which is best. This will often be about the grammar structure.

Problem solving

- The child is encouraged to make their own choices and so is introduced to the idea that there is not always a right solution.
- These complicated problems lead us to need to choose a way of doing something and the straightforward way of doing this is through pros and cons.
- Children need to suggest ways forward and talk about which might work best.
- Children are encouraged to articulate their solutions and ways forward through diagram/ pictures/ orally, in writing, in instructions.
- The child needs to come back to what is trying to be achieved (the goal)/to reach a goal the child will need to be referred to creating simple time frames and deciding on what the successful outcome could look like.





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Setting Challenges

Setting challenges: Able to identify own areas that they need to develop and work on them and can set their own challenges.

Principles and guidance:

- Children are now able to set their own challenge and expect themselves to be challenged within a work concept.
- Children are driven and focused and able to conduct long tasks independently
- The children make decisions based on reasoning about ways forward
- The children do not need support selecting appropriate resources and are able to tackle tasks without much input
- Children can set a goal for their work and measure the extent to which they have been able to meet it.
- Children can identify their own areas of weakness and show determination for them to improve.

Activities that support this stage:

Complex problem solving

- Here the problems set may not have an entirely correct solution such as “How do we improve the environment” “How can we make the classroom more successful” “What would happen if we banned cars” “Who is the greatest historical character.”
- Allow a child to make a choice for an outcome/ answer that may not be correct, and then evaluate the outcome/ work and see what alternatives could have been made.
- Encourage the child to take time to understand the problem and that one answer will need to be arrived at.
- Model how to break the problem down into smaller and more manageable steps.

Resourcing:

- Children should access resources without being told and know when to use resources so do not suggest resources for a task and allow the child to make a series of choices for themselves.
- Provide challenges and problems in worded forms, insisting on the child being able to read the challenge and decide what is being expected of them at completion. This requires the role of the adult to be able to really step back from teaching but also from supporting the learning.
- Children need to think about the resources that they need to solve the problem. Independent learners will be expected to select and use appropriate resources and not rely on the adult to provide these.

Setting their own problems and identifying weakness



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- With limited direction, the children move to a stage where they can self-assess their work and identify areas that they have not done as well
- They can move from this to a stage where they show a determination and resilience to improve. This might be through practice or through starting to identify why they are making a mistake.
- The children can use this level of understanding to improve and start to produce work that is of a higher standard as they have approaches to improve it that did not need adult intervention.

“I’M STILL LEARNING.” –MICHELANGELO

