Toddler

Answer Key for Building Bridges (18–36 months)

This handout provides sample responses to support discussions following video observations on how children engage in engineering and how educators use the M[5] Early STEAM Approach to support children's engineering experiences and problem-solving.



Video:
Building Bridges (18–36 months)

Building Bridges (18–36 months)– Audio Descriptive Version

Slide 15: Observe: Children Building Bridges

What did you notice about the way children build bridges and how educators support them to build bridges?

Possible Responses

- Children explore building bridges using blocks in the block center.
- Children lead the experience and make decisions on how to build their structure.
- Children test solutions by arranging the blocks in different ways and then driving their cars on the structures.
- The educator uses the book, "This Car Needs a Bridge," to support children's building process.
- The educator supports children in their bridge building by playing alongside them.
- The educator uses positional words (for example, up, up, up, and down, down, down) to describe how cars move over a bridge.
- The educator supports children to compare the structures in the book to the structures they are building.
- The educator follows a child's lead while building, allowing them to build in different ways.

Slide 31: Discuss: Supporting Children to Use Engineering Skills

Mutual Learning

In what ways is the educator responsive to children's abilities, interests, or lived experiences?

Possible Responses

- The educator observes and responds to the ways children interact with the blocks. For example, she notices that the children are integrating pretend play into their engineering process—a child pretends the car is sleeping when it is under the bridge.

Meaningful Investigations

In what ways does the educator offer meaningful investigations?

Possible Responses

- The educator supports children to explore and stack the blocks in playful ways. She provides children with opportunities to build in different ways and to incorporate play and imagination in their building.
- The experience is also meaningful because it is related to a book they are reading.

Materials and Learning Environment

In what ways does the educator provide materials and a learning environment that supports children to engage in engineering?

Possible Responses

- The educator provides blocks for children to build bridges with and cars to test their bridge.
- The educator might offer other types of blocks or different materials for children to build bridges with. For example, the educator might use cardboard boxes, foam blocks, or recycled materials (such as empty cereal boxes).

Mindful Vocabulary and Discourse

In what ways does the educator support children's science vocabulary related to their bridge-building experience?

Possible Responses

- The educator uses open-ended questions to encourage children to engage in engineering. For example, the educator asks, "Where can we put this one?"
- The educator supports the child's language by repeating what the child says—"up, up, up, and down."
- The educator models language that is relevant to the child's experience (for example, "Corbin is making the bridge longer.").

Multiple Representations

In what ways does the educator provide different ways for children to build bridges?

Possible Responses

- The children explore building bridges using wooden blocks. Here are some examples of other ways the educator might provide multiple representations of building bridges:
  - Explore building with different objects such as cylinders, cardboard boxes, natural materials (such as sticks or rocks), paper, or other craft materials.
  - Explore different types of bridges children might find in the community by exploring photos or other books featuring bridges.

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