



# Tips For Early Innovators



# The Early Childhood Innovation Prize



## Tip #1

# Explore Before Innovating

By exploring existing initiatives, tools, campaigns, methods, business models, human-centered insights, or community perspectives that have previously been applied to this topic, we gain a collective understanding of the scope of the challenge. It's easy to rush in and start proposing ideas without taking the time to discuss and understand the issues. Through exploring widely and collaboratively, we gain diverse perspectives – which are more likely to lead to truly innovative and impactful solutions! [Check out IDEO.org's examples of different activities for exploration and innovation around a given topic.](#)

# Real insights start with real people.

At IDEO, we're all about designing for real people. Where possible, we encourage our community to explore a topic by including end users - those affected by this issue, or those who make up the support systems around affected people. Further, you might try reaching out to gain multiple local or global perspectives on the same issue. Think about to whom you could reach out in order to bring valuable human-centered insights to your early-stage concept. As an exercise, consider creating a user journey. This might help you understand who you're designing for and how your target audience will experience what you're proposing during key moments of your idea. [Check out this User Experience Template as a starting point.](#)

## Tip #2

# Try a New Lens

Bringing new innovation to the early childhood development space presents an opportunity to look at the Prize topic through a number of fresh lenses. Sometimes, when thinking about a problem, we might focus so hard that we get paralyzed by indecision. Stepping away from that context and looking to other aligned solutions can lead to unexpected insights. *Try it yourself:*

First, pick an analagous context. A good analogy will involve as many of these things as possible. For example, if you are exploring project management for formalized child-care centers, you might interview a wedding planner to unearth insights on co-ordinating people towards a common goal. Next, list out all the activities that take place in that given context or the emotions involved in the situation. After this, note what surprising ideas might emerge from this kind of sideways exploration.

## Tip #3

# Turn Observation Into Insight

As we explore the Prize, many of us may observe or be positively triggered by creativity and collaboration within the OpenIDEO community. To engage others in conversation, here are a few tips:

- Rather than just posting a link or video – see if you can turn that observation into an insight. Let the community know why you think the topic matters, how you think your concept relates to the Prize, and share relevant details to spark discussion.
- Asking questions which may trigger conversations about your insight at the end of your proposal helps too - [check out an example of this from a past OpenIDEO Prize here](#).
- And, if using text copied directly from another source or website, use quotation marks and give a link to the original source.

## Tip #4

# Focus, focus, focus

With so many varying perspectives and lenses on a topic, it sometimes proves challenging to focus and clearly explain your concept in a brief proposal. Consider breaking your idea down in digestible segments, using the following questions as north stars: What is the problem your idea aims to solve? What is unique about the way your idea aims to solve this problem? What have you observed, in your research or experience, that indicates the need to solve this problem is urgent? How do you hope, or imagine, your idea will influence end users?

More information is not always better. Strive to communicate the most important aspects of your concept clearly.

# And here's a friendly tip:

Update your OpenIDEO profile so others can learn more about who they're collaborating with. Add skills, experience, passions and more.



Submit to the Prize

**Good Luck!**

