Planning for Invention
Student Worksheet

Use this tool when children are ready to
develop a project or invention.

◖ Step 1 ▶

Present the *Planning for Invention Student Worksheet* when introducing a new project to the whole group (see).

◖ Step 2 ▶

Review the questions with the children. Invite children's questions and clarifications.

◖ Step 3 ▶

Set up a time for individual or small groups of children to discuss their plans with you.
Provide constructive feedback.

◖ Step 4 ▶

Provide time for children to revise their plans.

◖ Step 5 ▶

Ask children to share their ideas and plans with one another for feedback throughout the process.

Children benefit from tools to support their planning and organization of big ideas.

Young children are capable of identifying problems in their personal lives, their communities, their classrooms, and the wider world. They have opinions and concerns about these problems and deserve the opportunity to work on solutions. Adults can help children take action based on their ideas by asking questions that support the development of children's plans and by offering them tools to help organize their thinking.
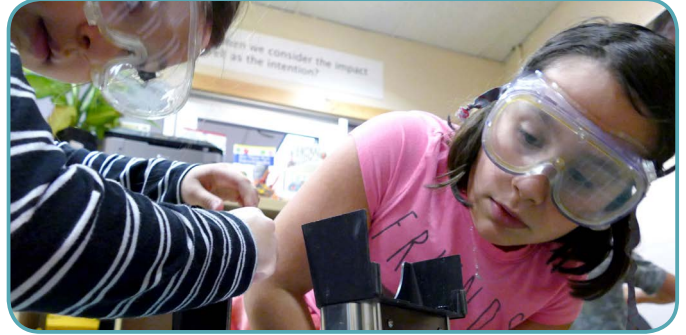
Suggested Time Frame

Responding to the questions on the worksheet will likely take several class sessions or workshops. Ask children to revise their responses after conferencing.

When and How

Use this tool when children are ready to take on — and you are ready to support — independent project work.

Tips and Variations

- Review and discuss the worksheet as a whole group the first time you use it, especially when working with younger children.
- Invite small groups to collaborate on one worksheet.
- Invite older children to use the Internet to search for similar work being carried out by others.
- Encourage children to contact groups with similar ideas or missions in order to ask questions, seek advice, or consider joining forces. For example, if children want to work on a project to help refugees, an online search will turn up a variety of organizations already working on this issue. Children may want to organize in support of those organizations, or use them as resources for developing their own plans.
- Feel free to revise the worksheet to include questions that are particularly relevant for your context.
- If children are feeling stuck or uninspired, invite them to contribute to another child's or group's project. The project should be one children are genuinely interested in, and the child(ren) leading the project should genuinely want help.

For video examples and reflections on practices that inspire inventiveness, become an Opal School Online Sustaining Member at learning.opalschool.org.

Name: _____   Date: _____

The problem in the _____ (world, classroom, community)
I want to solve is _____ .
The _____ (world, classroom, community)
needs my idea because _____ .

◀ **Whom are you trying to help?** ▶

◀ **How do you know your idea is wanted or needed by those you are trying to help?** ▶

◀ **Who else in the world is thinking about this problem or has tried something like this already?** ▶

◀ **What makes your project unique?** ▶

Describe your idea in as much detail as you can.
What steps will you take to bring it to life?

◀ What challenges do you predict? ▶

◀ What kinds of help will you need? ▶

◀ Who are potential community partners and allies? ▶

◀ What questions do you need to ask? To whom? ▶

◀ What materials do you need? ▶

◀ Who is on your project team? What roles will they each play? ▶

When you have thought through and taken notes on these questions, please set up a conference with your teacher to determine the next steps.