**THE EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

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| **We believe: The physical environment sends messages about behavior and learning. A classroom environment should meet the social, emotional, physical and cognitive needs of the developing child.** | | |
|  | **✔** | **NOTES** |
| The learning environment offers choices. |  |  |
| Spaces provide multiple opportunities for problem solving. |  |  |
| There are social spaces for social interaction, communication, conflict and its resolution and language development. |  |  |
| There are quiet spaces that may include library, listening centers, private spaces. |  |  |
| There are noisy spaces that may include music and movement, construction, and project work spaces. |  |  |
| There is a stage/theatre for dramatic play and storytelling, fantasy. |  |  |
| Spaces have been designed for sensorimotor, hands-on, minds-on experiences. (Typical messy play areas may include water/sensory tables, painting easel. |  |  |
| There are daily outside experiences planned daily. |  |  |
| There are adequate spaces to maximize choice and minimize conflict. Rule of thumb- one-third more work spaces than the number of children. |  |  |
| Spaces offer children choices to be with others  or to be on their own. |  |  |
| **A balance of real and open-ended materials and novel vs familiar objects promotes cognitive development. Natural objects in the environment help children learn the value of nature and appreciate it. The way materials are presented to children will determine how creatively they can use them. The way a space is aesthetically organized can assist concentration and can increase motivation to work in creative ways.** | | |
| There is a balance between real object versus open-ended materials. |  |  |
| Some objects are a part of the environment on a regular basis and some are brought in to spark interest or in response to student interests. |  |  |
| Tools are real. i.e child sized shovels for digging |  |  |
| There is a wide range of materials to see, touch and engage with. |  |  |
| Natural objects and neutral colours are used to create a more peaceful setting for learning. |  |  |
| **The primary goal is that children become independent, self-regulated learners.** | | |
| Modifications allow children to access items/facilities and to use them independently. |  |  |
| The environment prompts children to take responsibility for the organization and safety of their learning environment. i.e child size broom and dustpan, classroom is clearly organized. The organization of the classroom tells children where things go. |  |  |
| **Children thrive in a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.** | | |
| Objects in the classroom are displayed in an aesthetically pleasing way. |  |  |
| A space has been created to parallel a calm, comforting home environment, creating a sense of security at school. (i.e. a rocking chair, sofa, soft lighting) |  |  |
| There is a balance between an environment that promotes exploration and experimentation and one where children are safe. |  |  |
| Spaces are hygienically clean. |  |  |
| **A rich learning environment has built-in learning opportunities.** | | |
| The environment provides opportunity for children to learn from other children as well as the educators in the room. |  |  |
| The environment encourages constructive collaboration. |  |  |
| There is a large gathering space for whole-group work and discussion located near white boards, easels and interactive board. |  |  |
| There are flexible re-configurative spaces for small group collaborative work and inquiry. |  |  |
| There are spaces where children can talk, listen, read or write. |  |  |
| The environment provides resources and time for investigative play, manipulation of objects and materials and experimentation. |  |  |
| The environment nurtures concentration, creativity and motivation to independently learn and explore. |  |  |
| **The environment should promote each child’s sense of agency as an active contributor to their own experience.** | | |
| Displays of children’s work involve children in what is displayed and how it is displayed. |  |  |
| Displays of children’s work acknowledge and honor and the efforts of all children. |  |  |
| The environment is flexible and responsive. Changes are made as children’s needs and interests change. |  |  |
| **Clear boundaries offer children a sense of order.** | | |
| Areas of activity are defined for the children. There are visible boundaries indicating where the area begins and ends |  |  |
| **The way spaces and materials are arranged provides clues as to appropriate behaviors.** | | |
| There is relationship and flow between activity areas. Quiet areas are located together and away from noisy areas. Pathways allow children to move freely between areas |  |  |
| **Clutter communicates something to children- what is implicitly communicated plays out in student engagement and behavior.** | | |
| There is purpose behind the choices. Clutter has been removed. |  |  |