Enhancing Your Physical Environment

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Physical Environment

When creating a safe and educational physical environment, keep the following criteria in mind.
Physical Environment

• The indoor and outdoor environments are safe, clean, attractive, and spacious.
• Activity areas are defined clearly by spatial arrangement.
• Space is arranged so that children can work individually, together in small groups, or in a large group.
• Space is arranged to provide clear pathways for children to move from one area to another and to minimize distractions.
Physical Environment

• The space for toddlers and preschool children is arranged to facilitate a variety of small group and/or individual activities, including block building, social, dramatic play, art, music, science, math, manipulative, and quiet book reading.
• Other activities such as sand/water play and woodworking also are available on occasion.
• Carpeted space as well as hard surfaces such as wood floors and ample crawling/toddling areas are provided for infants and non-walkers.
• Sturdy furniture is provided so non-walkers can pull themselves up or balance themselves while walking.
• School-age children are provided separate space arranged to facilitate a variety of age-appropriate activities and permit sustained work on projects.
Physical Environment

• Age-appropriate materials and equipment of sufficient quantity, variety, and durability are readily accessible to children and arranged on low, open shelves to promote independent use by children.

• Materials are rotated and adapted to maintain children's interest.

• Individual spaces for children to hang their clothing and store their personal belongings are provided.

• Private areas are available indoors and outdoors for children to have solitude.

• The environment includes soft elements such as rugs, cushions, or rocking chairs.
Physical Environment

• Sound-absorbing materials are used to cut down on excessive noise.
• The outdoor area includes a variety of surfaces, such as soil, sand, grass, hills, flat sections, and hard areas for wheel toys.
• The outdoor area includes shade; open space; digging space; and a variety of equipment for riding, climbing, balancing, and individual play.
• The outdoor area is protected by fences or natural barriers from access to streets or other dangers.
Block Center

• a complete set of unit blocks. You can choose wooden, cardboard, plastic, or foam blocks. Each set has pros and cons. Choose what is best for your group of children
• large and small vehicles;
• animals, people and traffic signs;
• recyclables such as cardboard boxes, paper towel tubes and oatmeal containers.
• Design plans that can be donated by a parent who is a architect or engineer.
Dramatic Play Center

- dramatic play furniture (materials available depend on the current theme),
- dishes, utensils, place mats, pots, pans, food sets,
- telephones, computer keyboards, old typewriters,
- Dress up clothes, purses, wallets, shoes,
- menus, a cash register,
- paper, and pencils.
Writing Center

- children's journals;
- pens, pencils,
- colored pencils,
- crayons, markers;
- various paper supplies,
- index cards;
- recycled magazines (that have been reviewed), menus, books, newspapers,
- clipboards and notebooks;
- magnetic letters; and examples of print, including sentence strips with the children's names on them, properly labeled items and alphabet strips.
Creativity and Art Center

• painting supplies, pencils, crayons, markers and easels;
• recyclables such as wallpaper samples, fabric pieces and collage materials;
• glue and scissors;
• and various paper supplies.
Reading and Listening Center

• children's literature (with the current theme-related literature),
• magazines, newspapers,
• song and poem charts;
• an audiocassette or CD player, headphones, stories recorded on tape and/or other tape-recorded songs;
• stories and poems;
• and soft elements such as rugs, pillows and beanbags.
Math and Manipulative Center

• calendar, weather and number charts;
• magnetic numbers, puzzles, games and flash cards;
• safe manipulative for sorting (large buttons, stamps, stickers, etc.);
• paper, pencils, notebooks, index cards;
• measuring cups and spoons, cookie cutters in varying shapes and other materials used to weigh and measure.
Science and Sensory Center

- sand and/or water table;
- Wonder Bottles (recycled water bottles with water and oil mixed together with small shells, rocks, sand, food coloring, etc.);
- magnets and magnetic items;
- feathers, leaves and other items from nature;
- magnifying glasses and mirrors.
Circle Time Wall

• Morning Message - models handwriting
• How Are You Today? - real photographs of children that show five different emotions
• Weather Wear - dress magnetic photographs of children using a variety of weather appropriate items
• Daily Schedule - hands-on charting experience that describes what's planned for the day
• Kids of Character - features the character trait of the month