



★ Early Essentials ★

Quick Start Guide for Environments that Support Learning

Know the Essentials

- Environments impact all of us – children, families, staff, and the community.
- Children need safe and nurturing environments in which to explore and develop.
- The environment should support both the physical and social aspects of development.
- The environment should feel welcoming and comfortable for all children, families, staff, and the community.

Take a Deeper Look

- What makes me feel welcome in an environment?
- How do you make the environment safe for the children you care for?
- What strategies and materials do you use to create a welcoming environment for the children, families, and staff?
- How do you use indoor and outdoor space to support children's learning and development in all domains?
- What role do you play in your environment?
- How do you learn about how children and families feel about your environment?
- How do you create a homelike environment?

Explore Resources

- **View *Caring Connections Podcast 4: Let's Talk About Environments*** at: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/cde/curriculum/caringconnection.html>
- Read ***News You Can Use: Outdoor Spaces!*** at: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/nycu-outdoorspaces.pdf> and ***Take it Inside!*** at: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/nycu-take-it-inside.pdf>
- Review ***Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning Resources: Infant/Toddler Training Module 1, Handout 1.6: Inventory of Practices Tool II*** at: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/inftodd/mod1/1.6-2.pdf> and ***Infant/Toddler Training Module 2, Handout 2.9: Infant and Toddler Environments Planning Document*** at: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/inftodd/mod2/2.9.pdf> to assess your own practice and design an action plan.



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Practice Moment, Environments

Practice

Record your notes from watching the Practice Moment here and then consider the questions below to guide reflection on your environments for infants, young children, and families. If you are a Home Visitor, you can apply the questions to your socialization environments or use them to help families think about their home environments.

The space in this family child care environment is flexible; providing infants and young children opportunities to play in large groups, small groups, and alone.

- How does your environment support group and alone time for young children?
- What else might you do to support the flexible use of spaces in your environment?

The space in this environment provides a variety of materials that children can engage with independently.

- How does your environment support independence and choice for young children?
- How else could you support independence in your space?

The Family Child Care Provider and assistant are key elements in this nurturing environment, providing the young children with both physical and social emotional support.

- How do adults in your program create a nurturing space for young children and families?
- Can you think of other ways adults could support children and families in your spaces?

In addition to being a safe, planned space for children and families, this physical space also supports their social emotional needs.

- What about your physical environment supports the social emotional needs of the young children and families?
- Are there any other strategies you would use to support the social emotional needs of children and families in your spaces?