

**Designing Engaging Early
Childhood Environments
Using Principles of ECE
Program Pedagogical
Approaches**



Introduction



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Objectives

- Use your understanding of pedagogy to make informed decisions about environmental design and materials to support young children's learning.
- Leverage your understanding of children's racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds to create an environment that fosters a sense of belonging.
- Use your understanding of developmentally appropriate practice and the unique needs of children in your care to implement principles of universal design for learning in the physical environment.

What are environments?

Dictionary
Definitions from Oxford Languages · Learn more

en·vi·ron·ment
ˌɛnˈvaɪrənˌmeɪnt

noun
plural noun: **environments**

1. the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates.
"survival in an often hostile environment"

Similar: [habitat](#) [territory](#) [domain](#) [home](#) [abode](#)

- the setting or conditions in which a particular activity is carried on.
"a good learning environment"

Similar: [situation](#) [setting](#) [milieu](#) [medium](#)

- computer:**
the overall structure within which a user, computer, or program operates.
"a desktop development environment"

2. the natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity.
"the impact of pesticides on the environment"

Similar: [the natural world](#) [nature](#) [the living world](#) [the world](#)

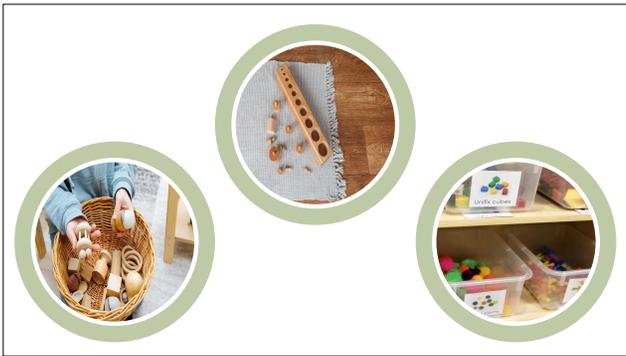
What do we mean when we say "environments"?



Physical Space Materials Arrangement Design Strategy



Children should have a sense of choice and independence





Teachers are the intentional designers of the environment



Environment is the "Third Teacher"

Environments and Materials



What do I know?

ENVIRONMENTS & MATERIALS



Materials should evoke a sense of curiosity, investigation, and play!



Environments and Materials

- Think of an area that is typically found in a classroom (art, dramatic play, library, etc.). Reflect on the materials found in that area.
- How do the materials in that area invoke a sense of curiosity, investigation, and play?
- How do the materials found in the area serve as the "third teacher?"

Type your responses in the chat.



Summing up Environments and Materials

"It is the child's way of doing things which gives meaning to the materials." – Maria Montessori

How can you build in time to observe and notice children using materials in unexpected ways? What might that reveal about how the environment supports (or limits) their curiosity and literacy development?

Up next: **Culturally Responsive Environments** >>>





Culturally Responsive Environments



What do I know?

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENTS



Mirrors and Windows



Incorporate family within the environment



Summing up

Culturally Responsive Environments

"When children see themselves and their families reflected in the classroom, they feel seen. When they see others reflected, they learn to see."
— Adapted from Rudine Sims Bishop, PhD

How can you partner with members of your school community (families, staff, children, businesses) to help co-create any changes to your school environment inspired by this section?

Up next: **Universal Design for Learning** >>



Universal Design for Learning



What do I know?

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Universal design is the design of buildings, products or environments to make them accessible to people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors. It emerged as a rights-based, anti-discrimination measure, which seeks to create design for all abilities.



Family

Doctors & Specialists



Materials within Reach

Health & Safety

Freedom of Movement

Individualized Considerations





early childhood by design



blueprints
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