



## Wonder-Filled Environments

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## Introductions



Julia Luckenbill



Derry Koralek



Jacky Howell

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“Perhaps if we thought more about childhoods and less about needs, some of our programs would look less like schools and more like homes and children’s museums, or like fields and parks. We might develop varied places with a genuine sense of place—of beauty, variety, and elements of surprise and mystery; places where adults and children delight at times in simply being together, messing about, and working at the tasks that daily living requires.”

--Jim Greenman

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# POLL



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## What Are Wonder-filled Spaces?



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## What Does Wonder Mean?

noun

something that causes astonishment or admiration  
paying attention to something mysterious or new

verb

to feel surprise  
to be curious  
to be in doubt about something

adjective

amazement or admiration



**Wonder-filled early childhood environments encourage children to:**  
be curious, explore, ask questions, and learn.

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### Wonder-filled environments meet basic standards for excellence.

- The setting promotes health and safety so children are free to explore and staff can focus on interactions that build relationships and support learning.
- There is a balanced array of play materials that address all areas of development.
- Teachers display and share children's play and activities with families.



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### What does this look like in spaces for infants and toddlers?



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### Wonder-filled environments support all children, teachers, and families.

- Everyone feels included; security leads to exploration and learning.
- Every culture and language is included in the setting through images, toys, artifacts, print, and conversations.
- Every child's abilities, skills, and interests are fostered in the environment.



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"Belonging for young children is being a place where they feel comfortable enough to play without having to look over their shoulders seeking approval -or dodging disapproval- to explore without fear, to redefine their space and to use materials around them to create for themselves and to create a sense of order, pattern and structure." - Bev Bos

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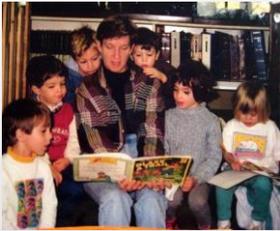
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**What does this look like in spaces for preschoolers?**



Play Empowers....courtesy Kisha Reid

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**Wonder-filled environments are dynamic.**

Teachers observe children's play and how they use the environment.

Teachers adapt, add to, remove, and rearrange items to support current skills and interests.

Teachers offer new items to provoke children's explorations and creations.



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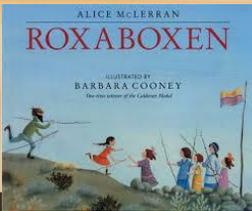
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**Think about an environment from your childhood that fills you with memories of wonder.**



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**Wonder-filled environments support positive behaviors**

They are a good match for children's developmental skills and needs.

They fit the children who live, play, and learn there.

They allow teachers to interact with and foster the development and learning of all children.



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Play Empowers....courtesy Kisha Reid

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**Wonder-filled environments are individualized.**

They reflect the group of children currently enrolled.

They include the passions of teachers.

They are home-like and aesthetically pleasing for the group in attendance.



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**What does this mean for your classroom?**



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Play Empowers....courtesy of Keisha Reid

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**"We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment. Whether we permit chance environments to do the work, or whether we design environments for the purpose makes a great difference."**

*- John Dewey (1906)*

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**Questions?**  
**Check our**  
**Resources**



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**Jacky: [azspire@gmail.com](mailto:azspire@gmail.com)**

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