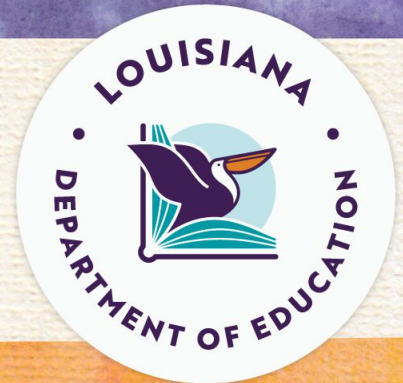




EARLY CHILDHOOD
CONFERENCE 2024
SHAPING LOUISIANA'S FUTURE



**High-Quality Early Childhood
Classroom Environments**



Purpose and Objectives

Purpose:

This session will provide participants with an understanding of safe spaces and furnishings that are essential in classrooms to build quality environments that foster relationships, interactions, and learning.

Objectives:

During this session, participants will:

- Gain an understanding of how to build a safe high-quality environment for young children
- Acquire knowledge on how high-quality environments encourage child engagement and interactions

Agenda

- I. Session Purpose and Objectives
- II. Agenda
- III. Activity 1: Evaluate the Classroom Space
- IV. Space and Furnishings
- V. Activity 2: Creating A Safe and Healthy Environment
- VI. Engaging Interactions in High-Quality Learning Environments
- VII. Activity 3: Engaging Interactions
- VIII. Conclusion



Activity 1 - Evaluate the Classroom Space

Activity 1: Evaluate the Classroom Space

A classroom should be organized with clearly defined areas of variable groupings, including small, quiet spaces and larger spaces for the teacher to be able to interact within group care.

What do you notice in this picture that clearly defines a safe and healthy environment for infants and toddlers?



Activity 1: Evaluate the Classroom Space

Let's take a closer look here at this play area.

What do you see that exemplifies an appropriate play area?





Space and Furnishings

Space and Furnishings

The Child Development Associate® Infant-Toddler Competency Standard I states that a safe, healthy learning environment is

Safe - Provides an environment designed to prevent and reduce injuries

Healthy - Promotes good health and nutrition and contributes to the prevention of illness

Learning Environment - Uses space, relationships, materials, and routines as resources for building interesting, secure, and fun environments that encourages trust, play, exploration, interactions, and learning

Space and Furnishings - Safe

Child care classrooms for infants and toddlers are vastly different from traditional preschool settings and should accommodate the different eating, playing, and sleeping cycles of young children.

- Examples of safe materials, equipment and environments
 - Play areas are in good repair, free of debris and structural hazards, and cushioned with pads or other materials, such as rugs, thick enough to prevent injuries
 - Toys and equipment are unbreakable, too large to swallow and meet current safety standards
 - All children's materials are non-toxic and non-flammable
 - Rugs, and all carpets, lie flat and secure to avoid skidding or moving

Space and Furnishings - Safe

- Well-planned and well-organized emergency procedures and supplies
 - Procedures for fires and other emergencies are posted
 - First-aid supplies and medicines are stored appropriately and accessible to adults only
- Ensure children's safety
 - Do not leave children unattended
 - Model and teach appropriate safety practices
 - Provide active supervision at all times
 - Make sure foods that are known choking hazards are not served

Space and Furnishings - Safe

High-quality infant and toddlers classroom environments have common elements

- Adequate lighting, temperature control, and sound-absorbing materials
- Good ventilation
- Space is clean and well-maintained
 - Space is accessible to children and adults
- Ample indoor space for children, adults, and furnishings
 - A separate space, which can be easily monitored, for individual napping is recommended for young infants so that their individual schedules can be maintained
 - Consideration given when young infants share space with mobile infants, to ensure safety first, and the individual child development needs when providing materials for use

Space and Furnishings - Healthy

Good health and nutrition provide an environment that contributes to the prevent of illness.

- Children's settings promote good health
 - Materials, equipment, and environments are clean and biohazards, such as used tissues and diapers are placed in a covered, plastic-lined container
 - Disinfecting and sanitizing solutions are present and stored appropriately
 - Relevant health information from families of children are maintained and posted

Space and Furnishings - Healthy



- Appropriate hygiene practices minimize the spread of infectious diseases.
 - Clean and sanitize materials and equipment
 - Utilize correct hand washing procedures before and after serving food, diapering, toileting and whenever needed
 - Implements sanitary diapering and toileting procedures

Space and Furnishings - Healthy

Children's environments support the development of healthy, positive self-concepts.

- Spaces and activities help each child develop a sense of self-identify and worth
 - Photos of children and families are displayed
 - Mirrors are hung at children's eye level
 - Children's names are displayed





**Activity 2:
Creating A Safe
and Healthy Environment**

Creating a Safe, Healthy Classroom Environment

- What are some elements of the classroom environment that support a safe and healthy classroom environment?
- How does this classroom design support teachers to keep the youngest infants safe and secure while allowing the more mobile infants to explore in the classroom?
- Share how this classroom design supports quality teacher-child interactions.





**Engaging Interactions in
High-Quality Learning Environments**

Engaging Interactions In High-Quality Learning Environments

Young children learn through responsive interactions within their environments and teachers can encourage this by

- Loving and playful experiences help infants and toddlers learn through focused interactions
- Offering interesting objects for the child to look at
- Placing the child so that they can kick or hit a toy, such as a mobile or rattle to make noise
- Making everyday routines playful
- Sharing books together
- Offering interesting objects to touch so children can learn about how different objects feel - sensory activities

Engaging Interactions In High-Quality Learning Environments

Responsive interactions are the back-and-forth exchanges among teachers and children.

Interactions should include

- Teachers and children
- Children and peers

These interactions occur in every moment of the classroom day and teachers can use these to encourage positive relationships.



Engaging Interactions In High-Quality Learning Environments

- Interactions within the environment help children develop positive self-concepts and teachers should
 - Know and use each child's preferred name
 - Create a personal relationship with each infant knowing how they prefer to be cuddled
 - Talking and playing together brings comfort and positive feelings
- Interactions within the environment promotes a child's sense of belonging
 - Infants have an opportunity to observe social interactions
 - Infants and toddlers learn how to interact and play with each other

Activity 3: Engaging Interactions



Engaging Interactions

What are elements of this environment that support engaging interactions among children and adults?



Engaging Interactions

How does this environment support interactions?
How is the teacher encouraging this experience for children?



Engaging Interactions

Discuss how the teacher can facilitate potential positive interactions for children within this environment.





Conclusion

Conclusion

The well-designed classroom environment is the foundation for

- Promoting learning through safe space and furnishings
- Supporting positive interactions between children
- Improving classroom experiences that promote learning and development
- Encouraging children's development of self-concepts



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