

# High Quality Classroom Environments

## A classroom space that is clearly divided

- 7 work areas with boundaries clearly defined:  
Reading, Writing, Science, Art, Blocks, House, Small Toys
- A quiet place for children to be alone

## Quality learning materials that are organized

- Quality materials that are attractively displayed: “less is more”
- A balance of materials and containers that are natural versus plastic
- Materials organized logically
- Materials labeled as needed with pictures, outlines, symbols, or words

## A sense of aesthetics

- The classroom is clean with children participating in cleaning tasks.
- Clutter has been eliminated.
- An accent color is used throughout the classroom.
- Baskets, wood boxes, glass jars, and mirrors are used.
- Plants and flowers are present.
- Natural materials are available:
  - flowers petals, twigs, leaves used for collage in the Art Area
  - small branches used for building in the Block Area
  - bones, polished rocks used for sorting in the Small Toy Area.
- Fabric is used throughout the classroom: curtains on windows, a canopy over the Book Area, a cloth tablecloth in the House Area.
- Pillows are in the Book Area and in a private “getaway” space.
- A floor lamp or table lamp is available in the Book and House Areas.

## **A classroom identity and a “sense of place”**

- A specific identify or “sense of place” that reflects where the classroom is, who uses the classroom, and what our interests are.
- Photos of children, families, and staff on display.
- Instead of bulletin board displays, documentation is displayed, including:
  - children’s work
  - quotes from children about their work
  - an explanation from the teacher about what was learned.
- Display of notices and commercial posters is minimized.

## **Curriculum and I.E.P. goals are embedded in the environment**

- Literacy:
  - books in Art, Block, House, and Science Areas
  - writing kit in Block Area
  - writing materials with phone in House Area
- Math:
  - numbered parking spaces for cars in Block Area
  - measuring cups/pans displayed sequentially in House Area
- Diversity- framed family photos on display
  - dramatic play props actually used by the families in the program
- I.E.P. goals: a variety of props throughout the classroom support the child’s investigations using a strengths-based approach

## **Environmental considerations that minimize behavior problems**

- Popular work areas are large enough to accommodate groups of children.
- Materials are in sufficient quantity to minimize competition. Provide at least 2.5 play options per child.
- Provide options to define play spaces: placemats, felt squares, hula hoops

## **Intentionally teach children how to use materials**

- Stage 1 - Show and Tell: introduce and explain, model
- Stage 2 - Practice: practice, foreshadow
- Stage 3 - You Got It: acknowledge and maintain