

OVERVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD) MODULE

Use this as your Overview template. The following provides the required format for the Overview, along with instructions of what should be included in this part of the Professional Development Module.

NO PERSONAL INFORMATION, replace name with 'Instructor'. If you have your contact information listed, replace it with 'Instructor Contact Information'.

<u>Course Title</u>
Sample Title

<u>Course Hours</u>
Enter the hours of the course. Your sample module must be at least 2 hours, but no longer than 4 clock hours, excluding breaks.
Hours: 2

<u>Level of Training Select</u>
the course level that best aligns with the course.
<p>C1: Knowledge Acquisition: At this level course participants understand the content and can describe how it relates to daily practice. Courses should align to learning objectives/competencies indicated at the C1 level below.</p> <p>C2: Knowledge Application: At this level course participants are expected to not only understand content but also apply newly learned competencies within the allotted course time and implement within their daily practice once the course is completed. Courses should align to learning objectives/competencies indicated at the C2 level below.</p> <p>C3: Critically Examine/Evaluate At this level course participants are expected to reflect upon daily practice to assess what is working, to analyze what may need to be adapted for better outcomes, and to explore the reasons impacting the outcomes. Participants at this level become competent in evaluating policy and practice to make positive change (or continuous quality improvement (CQI)) within their settings. Courses should align to learning objectives/competencies indicated at the C3 level below.</p>



Course Description

Add a descriptive overview of the course as a preview in the course catalog. (75-100 words) The course description focuses on content, is clear, easy-to-read, and presents information in a detailed organized way.

This course will discuss the importance of defining learning centers and having age-appropriate materials available for the students to create a safe and intentional learning environment. Learners will be able to analyze their current space in which they teach to be able to decide whether it is an area that meets the needs of the children they work with. They will be able to then apply what they have learned to create or modify their classroom to create a safe and intentional learning environment.

Course Category

Select the group that best represents the information presented in your course.

- Infant
- Toddler
- Preschool-PreK**
- School-Age
- Business

Target Audience Select the Target Audience.

- Early Intervention
- Parent Educators**
- Home Visitors
- Early Child Mental Health
- Pre-K Counts**
- Trainers
- Coaches/Mentors**

Ages Addressed Select the Ages Addressed.

- Infants
- Toddlers
- Preschool**
- Pre-Kindergarten**
- Kindergarten
- School-Age
- Adult

Professional Standard Area

Enter the number of hours for each Professional Standard Area that best represents the overall content area of the course. You may multi-select. The number of hours that you enter must equal the Course Instruction Time above

PSA 1: Child Development and Learning in Context

PSA 2: Family–Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections

PSA 3: Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment

1 hour PSA 4: Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices

1 hour PSA 5: Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content in the Early Childhood Curric.

PSA 6: Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

PSA 7: Health and Safety

K8: Program Organization and Administration

Professional Standard Area Learning Objectives

Using the selected Professional Standard Area(s) above, copy and paste the corresponding learning objective(s) from the [Course Level and Learning Objectives/ Competency Alignment](#) document. The objectives chosen for a course must align with the chosen course level. One to two learning objectives must be entered per hour of course instruction. If multiple objectives are chosen with different aligned course levels, choose the highest course level aligned.

Example: {PSAs 1 and 4 and course level C1 were selected for this 2-hour module.}

- ✓ PSA 1a – Describe how social interaction, relationships and play are central to children’s development and learning (C 1)
- ✓ PSA 1c - Know that quality early childhood education influences children’s lives (C 1)

PSA 4a-Establish positive and supportive relationships and interactions with young children (C 1)

PSA 4b - Use teaching practices that incorporate the various types and stages of play that support young children’s development (C2)

PSA 4c - Guide and supervise implementing effective teaching practices and learning environments (C3)

PSA 5b - Describe how young children learn across core content areas and use this understanding of pedagogical content knowledge to make instructional decisions (C2)

Participant Learning Outcomes

List participant learning outcomes. Participant learning outcomes are a detailed description of what the participants must be able to do at the conclusion of a course. They will include verbs that are measurable OR that describe an observable action. Examples of action verbs can be found in [Bloom's Taxonomy](#).

Participants will be able to recognize the concept of learning centers and explain how to select appropriate centers for their classrooms.

Participants will evaluate the intentionality of their learning center setups to ensure they meet the developmental and educational needs of the children they serve.

Participants will guide best practices to their teaching methods and classroom environments to foster positive learning experiences and maximize student engagement and knowledge acquisition.

Prerequisites

List and prerequisites or advanced preparation required for participants of this training. Only required if there are prerequisites for the course.

none

Diversity/Inclusion

Briefly explain how cultural diversity and inclusion will be addressed within this training. (Optional-strongly encouraged.)

Because we receive children from various backgrounds and that speak different languages, we must take that into consideration when setting up classrooms. We create environments for the purpose of children's development. Ways that we can incorporate diversity and inclusion are in, but not limited to:

- The materials (toys/clothing)
- The displays (pictures/posters of different cultures and differing abilities)
- Labels (materials should be labeled in 2 languages for dual-language learners)

Outline of Training Content, Training Methods, and Training Timeline

How will you evaluate what participants have gained from your session? Please provide an example that relates to your learning objectives. Examples include Pre/post-test, asking questions, debriefing, culminating projects, and opportunities for participants to follow up with fellow participants of the training.

Conscious Classrooms

- Welcome (icebreaker question)
- Objectives
- Quote (objective 1) (read & reflect)
- The layout: choosing learning centers for your space.
- Activity handout (evaluating space)
- Learning centers
- Choosing learning centers (activity: PA PreK learning standards)
- Accommodation
- Differentiating learning centers
- The Set-Up
- Quote (objective 2) (read & reflect)
- Art center
- Dramatic play center
- Library center
- Does your set-up promote...
- The Application
- Quote (objective 3) (read)
- Effective practice framework
- Effective teaching and learning environment (reflection question) (discussion activity)
- Are you meeting their developmental needs with the learning centers?
- Closing Activity
- Thank you!

Resources and Supports for Learners

List the resources provided to the learners that support the topic. This may include web links, articles, books, etc.

- PowerPoint slides handout
- learning centers consideration handout
- assessing your space handouts

Training Materials List

Provide a list of materials (flip chart, video, books, etc.) needed for the training.

- 1 PowerPoint slide handouts
- 2 Sign in sheet
- 3 "ASSESSING YOUR PHYSICAL SPACES AND STRATEGIZING CHANGES" handout
- 4 Learning Centers Considerations Handout
- 5 Projector to present slides
- 6 PA Prek learning standards

Handouts

List and attach any handouts for participants. Handouts must be labeled with handout # and title. You will need to include copies of handouts, PowerPoint, and all printed materials with reference and copyright information when uploading your PD Overview. Please ensure that the uploaded handout title matches what it uploaded to the PD Registry.

- 1 PowerPoint Handout
- 2 Sign in sheet
- 3 "ASSESSING YOUR PHYSICAL SPACES AND STRATEGIZING CHANGES" handout
- 4 Learning Centers Considerations Handout
- 5 Business card with my contact information

References

List the references that reflect current knowledge and support evidence-based practice, including diversity and inclusion. Provide titles, authors, and sources. References should be current, within a 10-year period.

Harry Wong: *A master teacher of teachers* (no date) *Teachers.Net*. Available at: <https://www.teachers.net/wong/NOV13/> (Accessed: 26 February 2024).

(No date) *ED344675.pdf*. Available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED344675.pdf> (Accessed: 27 February 2024).

AbilityPath, A. (2020) *Children's learning styles, AbilityPath*. Available at: <https://abilitypath.org/ap-resources/childrens-learning-styles/> (Accessed: 18 February 2024).

(No date a) *Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood*. Available at: <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Early Learning/Early Learning Standards/Early Learning Standards Kindergarten 2016.pdf> (Accessed: 12 February 2024).

Childcare (2019) *Keys to planning successful learning centers in child care, eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care*. Available at: <https://childcare.extension.org/keys-to-planning-successful-learning-centers-in-child-care/> (Accessed: 26 February 2024).

Courtney (2023) *What are the 6 stages of play?*, *Pathways.org*. Available at: <https://pathways.org/watch/stages-of-play/> (Accessed: 26 February 2024).

By et al. (2024) *Piaget's stages: 4 stages of Cognitive Development & Theory, Simply Psychology*. Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/8iaget.html> (Accessed: 26 February 2024).

Childcare (2019b) *Planning a successful Art Center in Child Care, eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care*. Available at: <https://childcare.extension.org/planning-a-successful-art-center-in-child-care/> (Accessed: 26 February 2024).

(No date a) *Virtual Lab School*. Available at: <https://www.virtuallabschool.org/preschool/learning-environments/lesson-1> (Accessed: 26 February 2024).

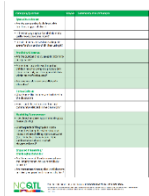
Childcare (2019c) *Planning a successful dramatic play center in child care, eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care*. Available at: [https://childcare.extension.org/planning-a-successful-dramatic-play-center-in-child-care/#:~:text=Setting%20Up%20a%20Dramatic%20Play,etc.\)%2C%20or%20walls.](https://childcare.extension.org/planning-a-successful-dramatic-play-center-in-child-care/#:~:text=Setting%20Up%20a%20Dramatic%20Play,etc.)%2C%20or%20walls.) (Accessed: 26 February 2024).

Classroom culture and environment (no date) *Learn*. Available at: <https://learn.cli.org/best-practices/classroom-culture-and-environment/overview> (Accessed: 26 February 2024).

Framework for Effective Practice (2024) *ECLKC*. Available at: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/teaching-practices/framework-effective-practice/framework-effective-practice> (Accessed: 26 February 2024)

Title of Course: Conscious Classrooms

Time	Content Outline and Description	Presentation Methods	Handouts/ Materials
15mins	<p style="text-align: center;">Introduction</p> <p>The instructor will begin by introducing themselves, including experience and years in the field. The instructor will then allow participants to introduce themselves by stating their name and the age group they work with and the answer to the icebreaker question: <i>“a word/phrase that describes a functional early childhood classroom.”</i></p>	<p>Slide 1 and then when it is the participants turn slide 2 (icebreaker)</p>	<p>Sign in sheet/presentation slides handout/Name tags/pens</p>
2mins	<p style="text-align: center;">Agenda</p> <p>This will be our agenda for today. We will be going over our objectives so we can set the tone of the workshop. It will be broken down into 3 segments that will be tied together to bring the workshop to a full circle. The first segment is the layout, discuss what are learning centers and how to choose them for our classrooms. Then we will move into the set-up, where we will discuss how to ensure that our learning centers are intentional and meeting the needs of the children we serve. Lastly, the application, where we will examine our teaching practices and the learning environment to ensure that they are sending a positive message to the students, so they are able to gain as much knowledge from the environment. We will end with answering questions/comments.</p>	<p>Slide 3</p>	
5mins	<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives</p> <p>Each segment will focus on one of the objectives listed. At the end of the workshop each participant will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that there are different ways that young children learn across content areas. • Use teaching practices that incorporate the various types and stages of play that support young children’s development. • Guide and supervise implementing effective teaching practices and learning environments. 	<p>Slide 4 Lecture</p>	
10mins	<p style="text-align: center;">Quote #1</p> <p>I would like it if you could read this quote and discuss your thoughts about it amongst your group. Let us take a few minutes to read and reflect.</p> <p>Allow participants to share.</p> <p>Let us break down this quote by looking at classroom management first as the end goal. What is classroom management vs. what it is NOT. What it is: -Being able to provide a space where children can learn</p>	<p>Slide 5 Pair/share</p> <p>The participants will be given 5-7 minutes to read, reflect on and share about what classroom management is and what is the classroom environment.</p>	

<p>5mins</p>	<p>-Being able to cultivate routines, space, and expectations where children can thrive -Giving each child the opportunity to succeed while meeting their needs.</p> <p>What it is NOT: -Strict and perfect environment for children -Behavior intervention -Total control over the classroom</p> <p>Looking at the environment, why do we have learning centers? -Provides multiple ways of learning opportunities for children -allows children to learn as they play -develops social skills, independence, language skills, etc. -provides a sense of belongingness -Allows teachers to meet individual needs of children</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The layout</p> <p>The classroom is the third teacher according to the Reggio Emilia approach. From the furniture pieces to the routine of the day, students should be able to develop appropriately as they engage in the classroom. The objective we will discuss with this first part is recognizing that there are different learning styles. According to research there are 4 main learning styles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual (learn through seeing) • Auditory (learn through hearing) • Tactile (learn through touch) • Kinesthetic (learn through doing and moving) <p>Each of these learning styles can and should be represented in your classroom. Having learning centers allows these learning styles to be acknowledged, developed, and implemented.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Slide 6 Lecture</p>	
<p>10mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Activity: Assessing your space</p> <p>The instructor will hand out the first handout for this activity. The instructor will explain that all participants should answer all questions honestly using their current classroom or a classroom they have worked in before.</p> <p>Once the questionnaire is completed the presenter will let the participants know that each question will be touched on as we go through the training.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Slide 7 Activity</p> 	<p>Assessing your space handout page 1</p>
<p>5mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Learning Centers</p> <p>The instructor will state that we will be focusing on these 3 questions to help us gather information to make educated decisions that will best serve the students. Each question will focus on a category</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Slide 8 Lecture</p>	

<p>20mins</p>	<p>from our activity handout so make sure they have it handy.</p> <p>With the 1st question, we will look at learning centers that are usually used in a preschool classroom. This will help us with (handout) SB1, SB2, SB3, and PD3.,</p> <p>With the 2nd question, we will look at the importance of surveying the area to ensure that we are placing the centers where they can be used to the best of their ability. This will help us with (handout) PD2, FP1 and FP2.</p> <p>With the 3rd question we will look at the intentionality of the learning centers to ensure that the children are able to focus and learn at their own pace. This will help us with (handout) PD1.</p> <p>As we continue through the workshop, we will discuss HC 1 and 2 and EC 1 &2</p> <p><i>**Abbreviation meaning: SB (Space/boundaries) PD (Proximity/distance) HC (Home/Culture) FP (Flexibility/permanence) EC (Engaged in learning/challenging behavior)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Choosing Learning Centers</p> <p>When outsiders that are not in the education field come into our classrooms, they may look at everything as if it were a toy store where they can leave their children to be cared for. Some do not understand the learning that happens in each of these learning centers. Let us look at each learning center and the standards that can be met in them.</p> <p>Instructor will Explain the purpose of some centers using the PA standards.</p> <p>Art: creative expression Math: number recognition Dramatic Play: social skills Blocks: critical thinking/shapes</p> <p>Let us do an activity. I am going to give you a learning center and I would like for you to look for a PA PreK learning standard that can be taught/learned in that center. For example: the PA PreK learning standard, <i>3.3 PK.A.1 Sort different types of earth materials</i>, can be implemented in the science center by adding rocks, stones and pebbles to the sand and allowing children to describe them, discuss size, color, shape, weight. Etc.</p> <p>The instructor will separate participants into groups of 3 by counting them off. Each participant will then receive a</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Slide 9 Lecture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Slide 9 Small group exercise</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PA PreK Learning Standards</p>
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<p>5mins</p>	<p>learning center and be given 10 minutes to come up with an activity. At least 2 groups should share out loud.</p> <p>As you can see each learning center can meet the developmental needs of the children in many ways, educators must be intentional when creating the learning environments to meet the needs of their students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When choosing the learning centers for your classroom, think through a plan for each center. For each center that is chosen, determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much space is needed? • How many children can the area and activity accommodate at one time? • What appropriate materials are currently available? • What needs to be added to furnish and equip the area? <p style="text-align: center;">Accommodations</p> <p>The instructor will read some accommodations to consider from the slide.</p> <p>By making these accommodations you are implementing best practice to meet the developmental needs of the children. You are creating an organized space with purpose. When there is a predictable flow in your classroom there is a sense of safety for the children, they can move independently and whoever comes into your classroom will also be able to move about with ease. An example of this is when setting up your classroom furniture pieces, put yourself in the shoes of the children. As you walk in the door, the closest thing that should be near are the cubbies, so they can hang up their belongings and move into the activity that you have for them (breakfast/tabletop toys). Having a trash can near the sink, to dispose of their paper towel when they are done, near the art center to throw away any excess materials they do not need is another example. These are just some accommodations you can implement in your classroom.</p> <p>When you walk into a retail or grocery store, how do you find what you need? If you are looking for grapes, you probably feel confident you can find them with other fresh fruits. If you want a new pair of socks, you probably have a good idea about where to look in a retail store. Many retail establishments use simple design principles: objects with similar uses are stored near each other, and there are signs to guide you.</p> <p>Now think about a child in your classroom. How does the child know where to find toys and materials or use the environment to make decisions? There are many differences between retail establishments and classrooms, but organizing materials by their purpose</p>	<p>Slide 10 Lecture</p>	
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<p>5mins</p>	<p>makes sense in both environments. In stores, we might call these groups of similar items “departments.” In environments for young children, we use the terms “interest areas” or “learning centers” to describe spaces designed for certain purposes or that hold materials with similar uses.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Differentiating Learning Centers</p> <p>When choosing and placing our learning centers, ensuring the children can focus should be the focal point. We want to make sure that the learning centers we choose to implement and the places we set them up in all work together to meet the developmental needs of the children, from social needs to academic needs.</p> <p>Here you can see all the learning centers discussed broken down into 3 noise levels, loud, in-between, and quiet. When placing the learning centers in your classroom you want to establish a boundary between the loud and quiet centers. You can do this by placing a moderate noise level center in between, placing the large group meeting area in between and/or using furniture to establish those boundaries as well.</p> <p>As children are working in their learning centers you want to give them the freedom to play in an appropriate way with little to no interruptions to those that would prefer more of a calmer environment, this also allows little to no adult intervention as they play with one another.</p>	<p>Slide 11 Lecture</p>	
<p>5mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Set-Up</p> <p>Now that we have a clear understanding of learning centers and why they are important, let us implement what we learned and make it come to life. We want to ensure that as we set up the learning centers, we are using teaching practices that incorporate the various types and stages of play that support the children’s development, which is our 2nd objective.</p> <p>The stages of play for this age group (preschoolers) are:</p> <p>Associate play (3-4 years old): Starts to interact with others during play; use a toy that two can play with at once (ex: kitchen set or cars), they may talk to each other while playing.</p> <p>Cooperative play (4+ years old): Plays with others; try playing a game with some instructions so both children can play with each other.</p> <p>These fall under Jean Piaget’s preoperational stage (2-7years old). As this stage develops, egocentrism declines, and children begin to enjoy the participation of another child in their games, and let’s pretend play becomes more</p>	<p>Slide 12 Lecture</p>	


	<p>important. As they play with one another and explore their environment it is important that we as educators ensure that everything in the learning environment is intentional and has a positive impact on the children. At times you may receive parents/caregivers that view the learning environment like a toy store. It is our job to explain that when they see two children using wooden blocks to build a castle, there is critical thinking happening, a process in which the children must think thoroughly how to make their vision come alive with the materials accessible to them, experimenting with the blocks to make them fit to create what they have envisioned. They are developing their social skills by interacting with one another, negotiating, and working with each other to meet a goal. Mathematical thinking is also being developed as they fit different shaped blocks together to create the building.</p> <p>Ensuring that we are setting up our learning centers with intentionality and the child in mind is essential to help facilitate their development.</p>		
2mins	<p style="text-align: center;">Quote 2</p> <p>The instructor will ask a participant to read the quote. The instructor will then transition into the 2nd objective. Here we will begin to look at the whole classroom, instead of pieces as we did in the previous slides. Now that all your centers are mapped out, it is now time to put it into action.</p> <p>Once the centers are placed with the appropriate accommodations, we can begin to add detail to each center. Let us look at three main centers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Art center -Dramatic play center -Library center <p>Here we have one center to describe the “in between” noise level, the “high” noise level, and the “low” noise level.</p> <p>We will analyze and discuss materials and how to use teaching practices to cultivate the environment, so it meets the developmental needs of the children.</p>	Slide 13 Lecture	
5mins	<p style="text-align: center;">Art Center</p> <p>Art: The art area provides opportunities for children to express themselves and develop fine motor skills. Visual art can include painting, drawing, and sculpturing. This is a space for inspiration and creativity. Well-developed art areas include a variety of materials for children to use and explore, such as: construction paper, white paper, grid paper, crayons, markers, glue, scissors, paint, play dough, stencils, dot markers, tape, paper shapes, paper/foam letters, feathers, tissue paper and trays. Some of the materials that may be rotated are watercolors, paint sticks, various collage materials, items from nature (ex: leaves,</p>	Slide 14 Lecture	

<p>5mins</p>	<p>pine cones, shells, rocks, flowers, sticks), buttons, crepe paper beads, yarn, ribbon, recycled items (ex: bottle caps, cardboard, newspapers), wood pieces, pom poms, stamps, <u>playdoh tools</u>, <u>playdoh scissors</u>, <u>playdoh manipulatives</u>, and painting tools (ex: marbles, cotton swabs, tooth brushes). Adding books to each center will also help them as they play, socialize, and learn.</p> <p>The location of your art center will depend on the space available in your classroom. Some accommodations to keep in mind are to have it near a sink: Placing the art center near a sink allows for easy clean-up and on a floor that is easily cleaned: Art supplies will inevitably end up on the floor, so a tile floor that can be kept clean or wiped easily is key.</p> <p>Once you have established all your materials it is important to make sure they are organized and stored in the appropriate storage bin that fits the item. You can use a file sorter or a dish rack to organize paper. You can use clear shoe box containers to store loose items like playdoh tools, crayons, markers, collage materials.</p> <p>Once items are organized and stored, you can label them. I suggest labelling the bin and the spot that the item will be stored in, this will make cleaning time a lot easier for the children. This also helps with exposing children to a print-rich environment as well as provides organization so students know where everything belongs promoting independence while enhancing literacy.</p> <p>Your materials are placed in their corresponding spots, now for the finishing touches. Making sure you have an "Art Center" sign is also a part of labeling your classroom center. This sign should have the number of students permitted in the center at one time (this can be done with a visual sign that says the number by tally marks or Velcro dots). This will allow children to know whether there is space or not in the center to enter.</p> <p>Having a designated spot near the art center (an empty wall space) where you can display children's artwork is also recommended. We want children to feel a sense of belongingness, comfort and love and seeing their creation posted in their classroom is a way to reach this goal.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dramatic Play Center</p> <p>Dramatic Play: The dramatic play area allows children to take on roles and try out new ideas. Children use their imaginations as they cooperate with one another and practice their self-care skills as they try on dress-up clothes. A great dramatic play area offers children a chance to act out their own home and family themes with props like a kitchen, table, clothes, food, and dolls. Children may use props to create a bakery, doctor's office, flower shop, or nearly any other scenario. It is important to offer additional props or dress-up items according to children's current</p>	<p>Slide 15 Lecture</p>	
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<p>5mins</p>	<p>interests, or ideas you are currently exploring (e.g., community helpers such as firefighters or police officers). This is a great learning center to make the lesson come alive. Teachers can get as creative as they would like to bring depth into the lesson and make it more inviting. Transforming your center to resemble the current theme and/or having diverse props are two ways that you can engage each learner and their level.</p> <p>When setting up the center an accommodation you want to consider is location. Good places for a dramatic play center might be near a block center or another area where children’s play tends to be noisy. Ideally, the center should be bordered by shelves and/or other furniture (e.g., table and chairs, play refrigerator, etc.), or walls. Avoid placing the dramatic play center too close to the book area or other centers that require quiet concentration.</p> <p>This center may have more open, loose materials than the other learning centers. This center also may have special furniture such as a refrigerator, stove, sink and/or closet. Use these furniture pieces to store their corresponding materials. For example, you can create a bin that is just for fruit and store that in the refrigerator. Also having hangers, or bins to store the dress up clothes is also helpful. There is a lot of pretend play here, so it is important to incorporate literacy with labeled items and books. Books such as a recipe book, like “soup day” or a book that resembles home life like, “llama llama home with mama” are just some books you may have in this learning center.</p> <p>This center is also a great center to post a family tree where the children can really feel a sense of belongingness. In this learning center children are learning and demonstrating their self-help skills, social skills and what their environment looks like. Having pictures of their families, pictures of different cultures and abilities are a great way to foster these positive identity factors.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Library Center</p> <p>Library: The library is a quiet space where children can relax and enjoy reading. A great library includes a variety of books that are age appropriate. It typically includes soft furniture, rugs, and pillows, you can add some displays such as pictures they have drawn of their favorite book, add a book they made in the library. Pictures of the families can also go in this center. Classroom libraries are usually the place where students who just want quiet time, alone time, time to relax go to. Ensuring that this center is inviting, yet calm is essential. Books can be displayed on shelves or in baskets for easy access. The library can also include a listening station, felt board, literacy activities, or other materials that introduce children to language and print.</p>	<p>Slide 16 Lecture</p>	
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<p>5mins</p>	<p>When choosing a place to set up your library center an accommodation to consider is once again, location. The library center should be in a quiet area separate from noisier activities such as block building and dramatic play. Including writing and drawing materials can help children build off what they have looked at and create their own books.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Does your set-up promote...</p> <p>When you set up your learning centers you want to ensure that it promotes learning, independence, and familiarity.</p> <p>The instructor will then go over every indicator on the slide.</p> <p>Ensuring that the learning centers meet a variety of developmental needs for the children will allow them to move through the stages of play with success. With the accommodations made in the learning centers, the materials provided and the space that is needed these will all work hand in hand to foster a child's stage of play, whether it is interacting with one or two other peers, playing near another peer, or playing and cooperating with two or more peers in a game.</p>	<p>Slide 17 Lecture</p>	
<p>3mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Application</p> <p>Now that the learning environment is set up and we have gained an understanding that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Young children learn differently across content area and we as educators make instructional decisions that are responsive to how they learn and that - Our teaching practices must incorporate the various stages and types of learning to support young children's behaviors, <p>We can move to our last objective which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -guiding and supervise implementing effective teaching practices and learning environments 	<p>Slide 18 Lecture</p>	
<p>2mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Quote #3</p> <p>Children need safe and predictable classrooms to try out new skills in the many areas of their development. They need organized spaces that are equipped with intentional materials to learn independently and with each other. They need rich print to make their learning visible, and rich conversations to explore new ideas. Most importantly, they need caring communities that promote social emotional skills that lead to joyful learning. We can design our classroom culture and environment to support children's growth and development and meet the needs of all the children. Our classrooms send powerful messages to children about what it means to learn, their role/place in the classroom and their capabilities.</p>	<p>Slide 19</p>	

<p>5mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Effective practice framework</p> <p>Instructor will ask participants to respond to the photo; what do they see? (allow 2-3 minutes to share)</p> <p><i>“Quality teaching and learning uses children’s and their families’ lived experiences, home languages, perspectives, and cultural ways of knowing and being to make learning more meaningful and engaging. It creates equitable environments where all children feel a sense of belonging, and that promotes their social and emotional development and school readiness.”</i></p> <p>https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/teaching-practices/framework-effective-practice/framework-effective-practice</p> <p>As you can see interactions and environments are the foundation of effective teaching and learning. Once the environment is designed to be intentional and meet the developmental needs of the children, interactions amongst the children and staff can be developed. To create those effective teaching practices, we can take the learning styles of the children and the stages of play that they are in to create meaningful experiences where the children can learn in a safe place.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Slide 20 Reflection</p>	
<p>5mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Effective teaching practices and learning environment.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BEFORE TRANSITIONING TO SLIDE 21</p> <p>What does it mean to be an effective teacher? What comes to mind when you hear that phrase? (give time for participants to share)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TRANSITION TO SLIDE 21</p> <p>Educators use effective teaching practices to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and establish strong relationships with children and the families. • Create content-rich learning environments and activities that foster children’s curiosity and extend their learning based upon their interests and development. • Support and extend children’s learning in culturally and linguistically responsive ways. <p>In this application process we are focusing on guiding and implementing teaching practices in the learning environments. Do not feel as though there is only one right answer, one right way. As your students grow you can also begin to adapt the environment to meet the changing needs of the children. For example, some items you may change are the materials. Materials should be rotated out as the children begin to develop new skills. As you begin to teach new concepts, adding “lesson themed” materials is a</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Slide 21 Lecture/small group discussion.</p>	

<p>3mins</p>	<p>way to capture their attention and allow them to explore in different ways. Let us take a closer look at this: DISCUSSION: Your theme is trees. Name an activity or something you can add to your learning centers that have to do with the theme but that is age appropriate and adds to the learning of the children. Use your learning centers to create that environment where the children feel safe to share, speak, create, develop, grow, etc.</p> <p>Are you meeting their developmental needs with the learning centers?</p> <p>Now in closing let us reflect on all we have discussed. Are you able to see that you are meeting the developmental needs of the children by your teaching practices and the learning environment? Ensuring that you have a variety of materials and activities in your learning center can prompt children to explore, experiment, talk and interact in different ways.</p> <p>Let us review: <i>What happens in learning centers? What developmental needs are being met? (allow participants to share)</i></p> <p>Take time to ensure your learning centers are designed to offer children valuable learning experiences. Your learning centers should be organized, stocked neatly with a variety of materials, promote independence, learning and familiarity and be able to facilitate age-appropriate experiences that foster the child's development. Our role as educators is to ensure that we are making decisions and well-planned activities based off the children's interests and needs.</p>	<p>Slide 22 Lecture/Reflection</p>	<p>Assessing your space handout part 2 and learning centers considerations handout</p>
<p>10mins</p>	<p>Closing Activity</p> <p>The instructor will give out the "assessing your space" handout with the drawing space included. Participants are to draw to the best of their ability the changes they would like to make to their classrooms, now that they have completed the workshop. They can be as simple or elaborate as time gives. Give them about 10 minutes to do so. Once finished, at least two people should share.</p> <p>As participants wrap up the instructor will give out the final handout "learning centers considerations" which will have a reflective question for them to answer to jot down anything they would like to change/implement in their classrooms.</p> <p>Thank you!</p>	<p>Slide 23 Activity/Reflection</p> 	

Category/Question	Yes/No	Comments/Ideas/Changes
Space/Boundaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the centers clearly defined with furniture, rugs, or shelves? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there enough space for all children to easily move about the room? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In each defined area, is there adequate space for the number of children using it? 		
Proximity/Distance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the quiet and noisy areas in proximity or separated? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are centers located near things that children need to complete projects (art center near sink, puzzle or game shelves within reach of tables, etc.)? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are teachers able to view children in all centers? 		
Home/Culture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What home-like features are included in the classroom? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is(are) the culture(s) of the local community reflected in the classroom? 		
Flexibility/Permanence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the space accommodate gross motor activity? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What aspects of the physical space cannot be changed (cost or structural issues) and are challenging to overcome (e.g., limited access to natural light, cumbersome cubbies, asphalt playground, etc.)? 		
Engaged in Learning/ Challenging Behavior: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there areas of the classroom where challenging behaviors are more likely to occur? • Are there areas where typically children are positively engaged in classroom activities? 		



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON

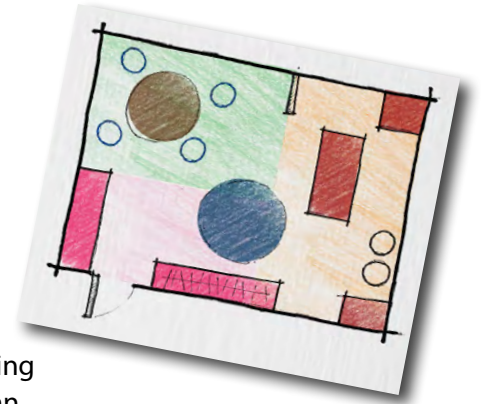
Quality Teaching
and Learning

LEARNING ACTIVITY DESIGNING ENVIRONMENTS

ASSESSING YOUR PHYSICAL SPACES AND STRATEGIZING CHANGES

Activity overview: Participants examine the classroom's physical spaces to assess strengths and limitations.

Directions: Draw the floor plan/layout of your classroom below. Then discuss with your teaching team the questions in the first column. Based on your discussion, what changes can be made to increase children's participation in learning activities? Brainstorm a list of possible changes and record results in the last column.

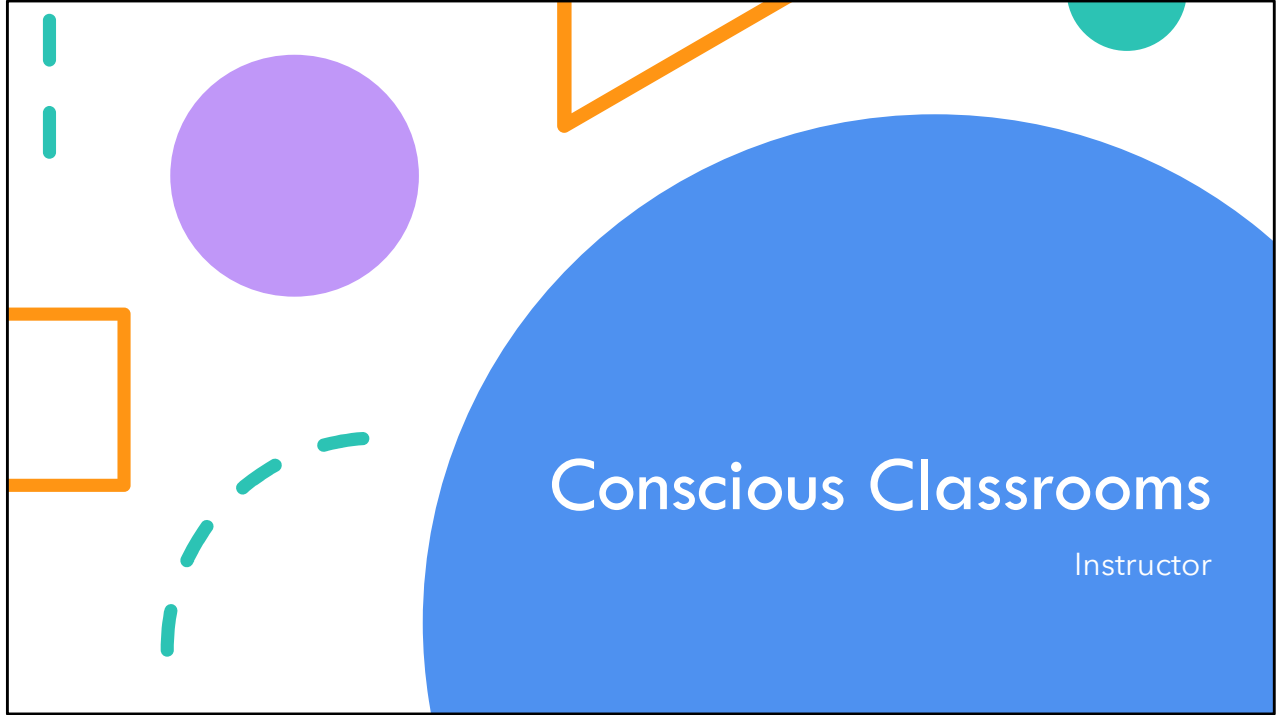


Draw a layout of your classroom in this space. Use your layout to answer the questions on the following page.

Learning Centers Considerations

There are many ways and thoughts on how to arrange preschool classrooms. Some important elements found in every effective room design include:

- **Clear Boundaries:** Use shelves, furniture, or other barriers to help children focus and understand the intended use of a space. Large, open areas encourage running and roughhousing. Arrange your furniture and interest areas to break up large, open spaces.
- **Clear Ways to Enter and Exit:** Help children know how and where to come into an interest area. If you use a center management system—a system of tags, pictures, or symbols to limit the number of children who play in an interest area—make sure children know how to use it and are able to meet their needs and interests throughout the day.
- **Sufficient Materials:** Have duplicates of favorite toys. Also, make sure there are enough materials so that several children can play in social areas, like dramatic play and blocks. Children are more likely to have meaningful play interactions if there are enough materials to use together.
- **Engaging Materials that Spark Children's Interests:** Consider what children in your class enjoy. Add materials or rotate materials regularly so children have new experiences. Think about the pictures, displays, prints, or writing materials that support children's learning and engagement in each area.
- **Appropriate accommodations:** Sand and water, discovery, and art spaces should have easy access to sinks. Music and movement, technology, and cooking areas might need access to electrical outlets. Soft carpeting in the library and block area can make it easier for children to sit and comfortably interact with materials on the floor. Ensure that loud and quiet centers are separate so children can focus on their learning.
- **Learning Objectives:** Align materials and interest areas to learning objectives.
- **Keep Safety in Mind:** Make sure you can always see and supervise all children.



Welcome everyone to this PD named, conscious classrooms where we will discuss the importance of classroom environment, focusing on learning centers. Please place your name in the chat, where you reside and your role in the education field.

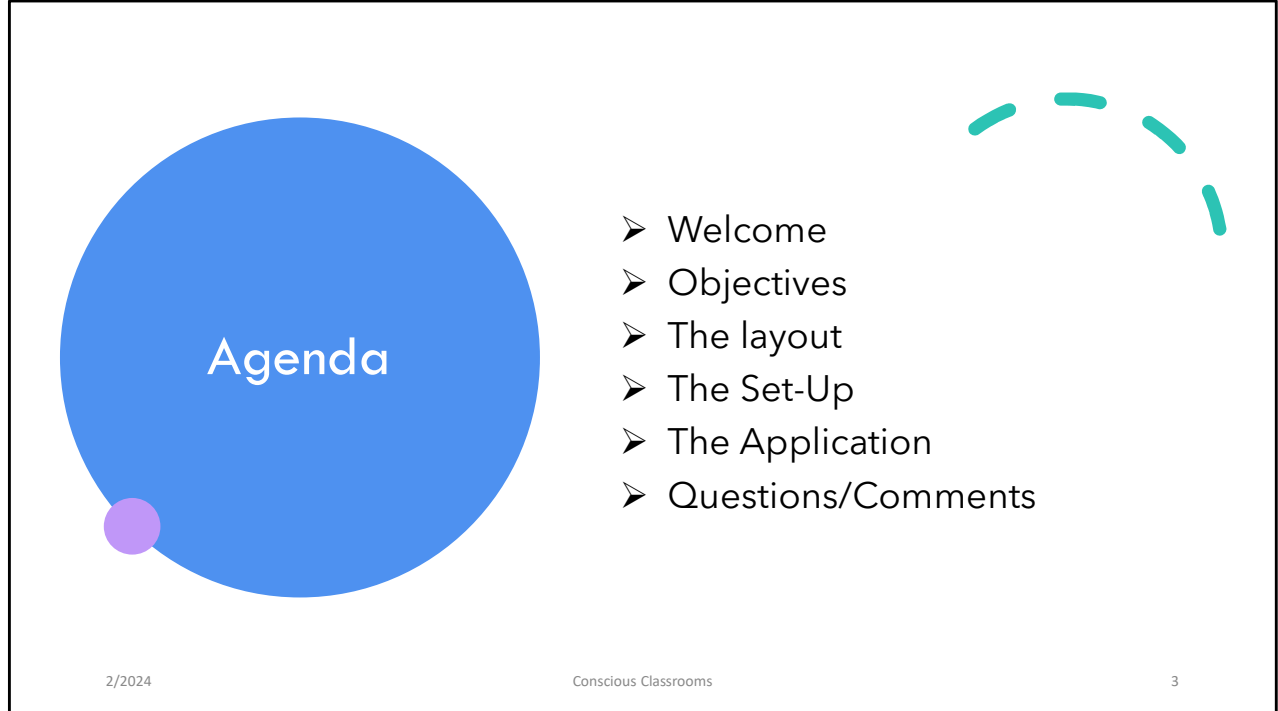
Welcome

Please share the following:

- Your name
- Age(s) you work with
- Years in the field
- A word/phrase that describes a functional early childhood classroom



We will now go around the room to give or input on this icebreaker



Agenda

- Welcome
- Objectives
- The layout
- The Set-Up
- The Application
- Questions/Comments

2/2024 Conscious Classrooms 3

This will be our agenda for today. We will be going over our objectives so we can set the tone of the pd, we will take a look at the flow of the training as it will be broken down into 3 segments that will tie together to bring the pd to a full circle. The first segment is the layout, discuss what are learning centers and how to choose them for our classrooms. Then we will move into the set up, where we will discuss how to ensure that our learning centers are intentional and meeting the needs of the children we serve. Lastly, the application, where we will examine our teaching practices and the learning environment to ensure that they are sending a positive message to the students, so they are able to gain as much knowledge from the environment.

We will end with answering a few questions/comment if any. I thank you again for joining us for this pd.

Objectives



Objective 1

Recognize that there are different ways that young children learn across content area.



Objective 2

Use teaching practices that incorporate the various types and stages of play that support young children's development.



Objective 3

Guide and supervise implementing effective teaching practices and learning environments.

Thank you so much for sharing. Here are our objectives. Please keep in mind these objectives as we move through this pd. Each segment (the layout, the set up and the application) will focus on one of the following objectives.

“Supporting and developing orderly and productive classroom environments is the foundation of good classroom management”

-Dr. Carolyn Evertson

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Conscious Classrooms

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Explain what classroom management IS and is NOT.

What it is:

- Being able to provide a space where children can learn
- Being able to cultivate routines, space and expectations where children can thrive
- Giving each child the opportunity to succeed while meeting their needs

What it is NOT:

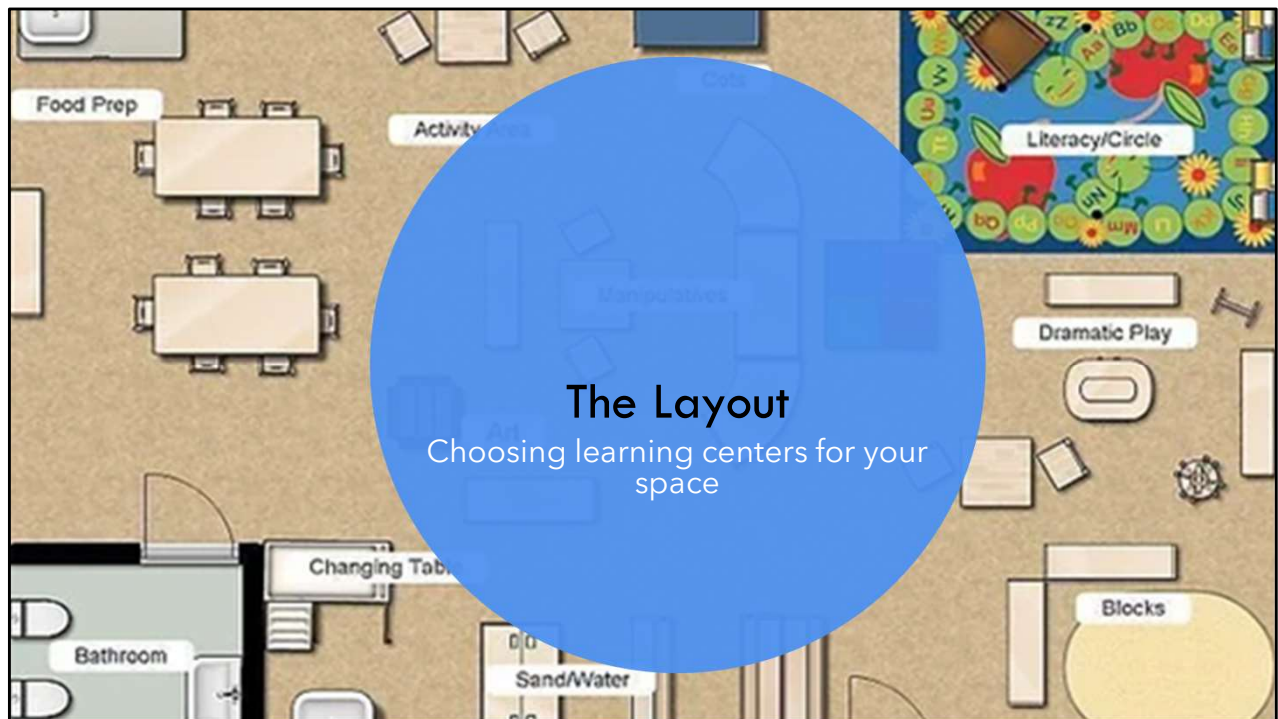
- Strict and perfect environment for children
- Behavior intervention
- Total control over the classroom

<https://www.teachers.net/wong/NOV13/>

Why do we have learning centers?

- Provides multiple ways of learning opportunities for children
- Allows children to learn as they play
- Develops social skills, independence, language skills, etc.
- Provides a sense of belongingness
- Allows teachers to meet individual needs of children
- Allows teachers to observe children's skills and difficulties closely

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED344675.pdf>

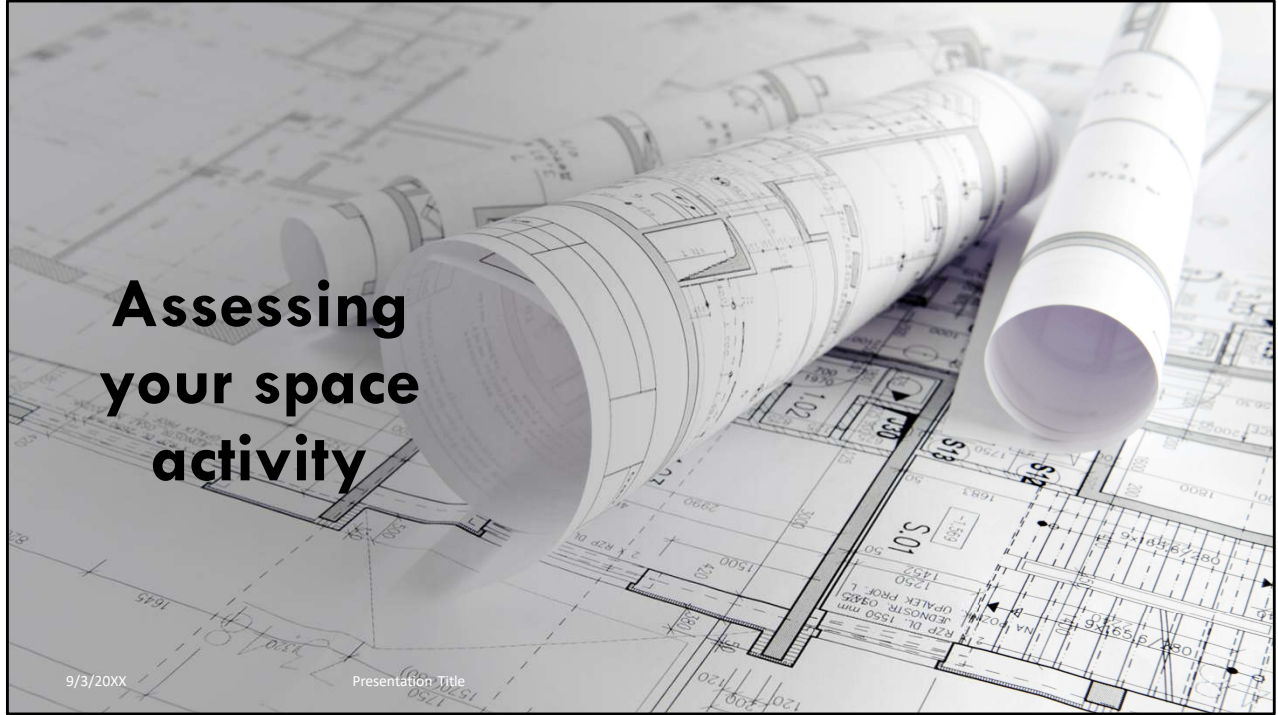


The classroom is the third teacher according to the Reggio Emilia approach. From the furniture pieces to the routine of the day, students should be able to develop appropriately as they engage in the classroom.

The objective we will discuss with this first part is recognizing that there are different learning styles. According to research there are 4 main learning styles ([Children's Learning Styles – AbilityPath](#))

- Visual** (learn through seeing)
- Auditory** (learn through hearing)
- Tactile** (learn through touch)
- Kinesthetic** (learn through doing and moving)

Each of these learning styles can and should be represented in your classroom. Having learning centers allows these learning styles to be acknowledged, developed, and implemented.



Presenter passes out handout to assess room ([design-activities-physical-spaces.pdf](#))
I want you to take a few minutes and think about your current classroom. If you are currently not in a classroom, think of a classroom you have been in before. Let's draw our current floor plan, if you are not an artist, no worries, just imagine it. Then read over these questions and I want you to be honest and answer yes/no to each one.

Review handout

If you did not know the answer to any of these, it is okay, that is why we are here, to support, teach and clarify so we are able to implement best practices. Let us take a deeper look at learning centers.

Learning Centers

1

How many learning centers can I fit comfortably in my space?

2

What accommodations do I need to consider when establishing the centers?

3

How should learning centers be placed so children can focus on their learning?

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Here are three questions we will look at to help us gather information to make educated decisions that will best serve our students.

With the 1st question, we will look at learning centers that are usually used in a preschool classroom. This will help us with (handout) SB1,SB2,SB3, and PD3.,

1. List the name of centers and what centers can be combined

With the 2nd question, we will look at the importance of surveying the area to ensure that we are placing the centers where they can be used to the best of their ability. This will help us with (handout) PD2, FP1 and FP2.

1. Mention art and science being next to the sink, ensuring dramatic play and blocks are open and spacious

With the 3rd question we will look at the intentionality of the learning centers to ensure that the children are able to focus and learn at their own pace. This will help us with (handout) PD1

1. Focus on quiet vs. loud areas

Choosing learning centers

Art	Dramatic Play
Writing	Music
Science	Computer
Math	Sand/water
Manipulatives	Library
Puzzles	Cozy
Sensory	
Fine Motor	
Blocks	



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When outsiders that are not in the education field come into our classrooms, they may look at everything as if it were a toy store where they can leave their children to be cared for. Some do not understand the learning that happens in each of these learning centers. Let us look at each learning center and the standards that can be met in them.

Explain the purpose of each center using the PA standards (posters at the end of the book)

Let us do an activity. I am going to give you a learning center and I would like for you to look for a PA PreK learning standard that can be taught/learned in that center. For example: the PA PreK learning standard, *3.3 PK.A.1 Sort different types of earth materials*, can be implemented in this center by adding rocks, stones and pebbles to the sand and allowing children to describe them, discuss size, color, shape, weight. Etc.

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Early%20Learning/Early%20Learning%20Standards/Early%20Learning%20Standards%20-%20Prekindergarten%202014.pdf>

As you can see each learning center can meet the developmental needs of the children in many ways, educators must be intentional when creating the learning environments to meet the needs of their students.

•When choosing the learning centers for your classroom, think through a plan for each center. For each center that is chosen, determine:

- How much space is needed?
- How many children can the area and activity accommodate at one time?
- What appropriate materials are currently available?
- What needs to be added to furnish and equip the area?

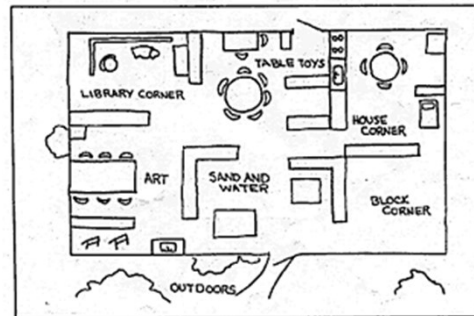
[Keys to Planning Successful Learning Centers in Child Care – eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care](#)

Picture link: <https://bookinitat50.blogspot.com/2014/05/preschool-classroom-designs.html>

Accommodations

After choosing what centers you would like to have in the classroom, it is important to place them in locations that will be beneficial to the children. You also want to ensure you have what is needed near the centers, for example:

- Art, sand and science should be near a sink for easy handwashing.
- Blocks and dramatic play should be spacious to accommodate the furniture and materials needed.
- Classrooms should have enough space to move around freely while also minimizing running space.
- There should be an organized flow so the children and staff that come in can move around with little to no help.



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<https://bookinitat50.blogspot.com/2014/05/preschool-classroom-designs.html>

With making these accommodations you are implementing best practice to meet the developmental needs of the children. You are creating an organized space with purpose. When there is a predictable flow in your classroom there is a sense of safety for the children, they can move independently and who ever comes into your classroom will also be able to move about with ease. An example of this is when setting up your classroom furniture pieces, put yourself in the shoes of the children. As you walk in the door, the closest thing that should be near are the cubbies, so they can hang up their belongings and move into the activity that you have for them (breakfast/tabletop toys). Having a trash can near the sink, to dispose their paper towel when they are done, near the art center to throw away any excess materials they do not need is another example. These are just some accommodations you can implement in your classroom.

When you walk into a retail or grocery store, how do you find what you need? If you are looking for grapes, you probably feel confident you can find them with other fresh fruits. If you want a new pair of socks, you probably have a good idea about where to look in a retail store. Many retail establishments use simple design principles: objects with similar uses are stored near each other,

and there are signs to guide you.

Now think about a child in your classroom. How does the child know where to find toys and materials or use the environment to make decisions? There are many differences between retail establishments and classrooms, but organizing materials by their purpose makes sense in both environments. In stores, we might call these groups of similar items “departments.” In environments for young children, we use the terms “interest areas” or “learning centers” to describe spaces designed for certain purposes or that hold materials with similar uses.

<https://www.virtuallabschool.org/preschool/learning-environments/lesson-1>

Differentiating learning centers

Active (loud)

- Dramatic Play
- Blocks
- Music

Moderate (in-between)

- Art
- Writing
- Science
- Math
- Puzzles
- Manipulatives
- Sensory
- Fine Motor

Relaxed (quiet)

- Library
- Cozy
- Calm Corner

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Conscious Classrooms

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When choosing and placing our learning centers, ensuring the children are able to focus should be the focal point. We want to make sure that the learning centers we choose to implement and the places we set them up in all work together to meet the developmental needs of the children, from social needs to academic needs.

Here you can see all the learning centers discussed broken down into 3 noise levels, loud, in-between, and quiet. When placing the learning centers in your classroom you want to establish a boundary between the loud and quiet centers. You can do this by placing a moderate noise level center in between, placing the large group meeting area in between and/or using furniture to establish those boundaries as well.

As children are working in their learning centers you want to give them the freedom to play in an appropriate way with little to no interruptions to those that would prefer more of a calmer environment, this also allows little to no adult intervention as they play with one another.



Now that we have a clear understanding of learning centers and why they are important, let us implement what we learned and make it come to life. We want to ensure that as we set up the learning centers, we are using teaching practices that incorporate the various types and stages of play that support the children’s development, which is our 2nd objective.

The stages of play for this age group (preschoolers) are:

Associate play (3-4 years old): Starts to interact with others during play; use a toy that two can play with at once (ex: kitchen set or cars), they may talk to each other while playing.

Cooperative play (4+ years old): Plays with other; try playing a game with some instructions so both children can play with each other.

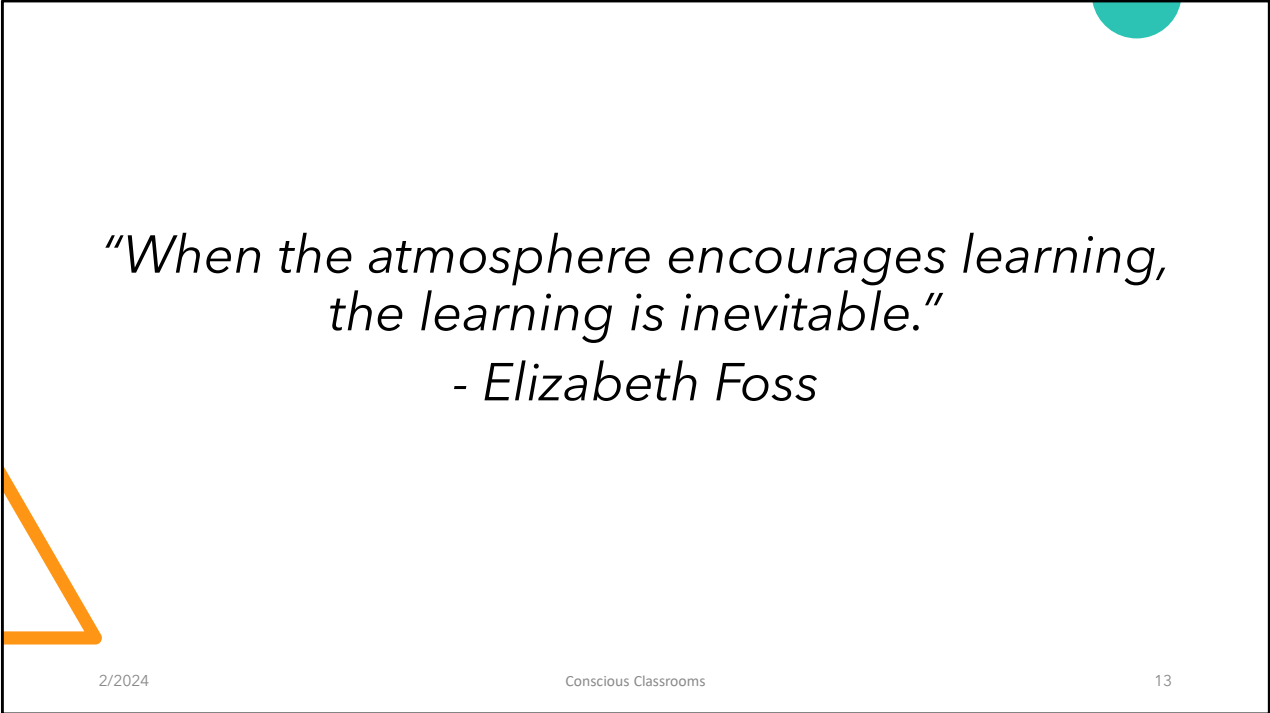
[What Are the 6 Stages of Play? | Pathways.org](https://www.pathways.org/what-are-the-6-stages-of-play/)

These fall under Jean Piaget’s preoperational stage (2-7years old). As this stage develops, egocentrism declines, and children begin to enjoy the participation of another child in their games, and let’s pretend play becomes more important. As they play with one another and explore their environment it is important that we as educators ensure that everything in the learning environment is intentional and has a positive impact on the children.

[Piaget’s Stages: 4 Stages of Cognitive Development & Theory \(simplypsychology.org\)](https://www.simplypsychology.org/piagets-stages-4-stages-of-cognitive-development-theory/)

At times you may receive parents/caregivers that view the learning environment like a toy store. It is our job to explain that when they see two children using wooden blocks to build a castle, there is critical thinking happening, a process in which the children must think thoroughly how to make their vision come alive with the materials accessible to them, experimenting with the blocks to make them fit to create what they have envisioned. They are developing their social skills by interacting with one another, negotiating and working with each other to meet a goal. Mathematical thinking is also being developed as they fit different shaped blocks together to create the building.

Ensuring that we are setting up our learning centers with intentionality and the children in mind is essential to help facilitate their development.



*“When the atmosphere encourages learning,
the learning is inevitable.”
- Elizabeth Foss*

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Conscious Classrooms

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Big picture view

Here we will begin to look at the whole classroom, instead of pieces as we did in the previous slides. Now that all your centers are mapped out, it is now time to put it into action.

Once the centers are placed with the appropriate accommodations, we can begin to add detail to each center. Let us look at three main centers:

- Art center
- Dramatic play center
- Library center

Here we have one center to describe the “in between” noise level, the “high” noise level and the “low” noise level.

We will analyze and discuss materials and how to use teaching practices to cultivate the environment, so it meets the developmental needs of the children.

Art center



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Art: The art area provides opportunities for children to express themselves and develop fine motor skills. Visual art can include painting, drawing, and sculpting. This is a space for inspiration and creativity. Well-developed art areas include a variety of materials for children to use and explore, such as: construction paper, white paper, grid paper, crayons, markers, glue, scissors, paint, play dough, stencils, dot markers, tape, paper shapes, paper/foam letters, feathers, tissue paper and trays. Some of the materials that may be rotated are watercolors, paint sticks, various collage materials, items from nature (ex: leaves, pine cones, shells, rocks, flowers, sticks), buttons, crepe paper beads, yarn, ribbon, recycled items (ex: bottle caps, cardboard, newspapers), wood pieces, pom poms, stamps, [playdoh tools](#), [playdoh scissors](#), [playdoh manipulatives](#), and painting tools (ex: marbles, cotton swabs, tooth brushes). Adding books to each center will also help them as they play, socialize and learn.

The location of your art center will depend on the space available in your classroom. Some accommodations to keep in mind are to have it near a sink: Placing the art center near a sink allows for easy clean-up and on a floor that is easily cleaned: Art supplies will inevitably end up on the floor, so a tile floor that can be kept clean or wiped easily is key.

[Planning a Successful Art Center in Child Care – eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care](#)

Once you have established all your materials it is important to make sure they are organized and stored in the appropriate storage bin that fits the item. You can use a file sorter or a dish rack to organize paper. You can use clear shoe box containers to store loose items like playdoh tools, crayons, markers, collage materials.

Once items are organized and stored, you can label them. I suggest labeling the bin and the spot that the item will be stored in, this will make clean up time a lot easier for the children. This also helps with exposing children to a print-rich environment as well as provides organization so students know where everything belongs promoting independency while enhancing literacy.

Your materials are placed in their corresponding spots, now for the finishing touches. Making sure you have an

“Art Center” sign is also a part of labeling your classroom center. This sign should have the number of students permitted in the center at one time (this can be done with a visual sign that says the number by tally marks or Velcro dots). This will allow children to know whether there is space or not in the center to enter.

Having a designated spot near the art center (an empty wall space) where you can display children’s artwork is also recommended. We want children to feel a sense of belongingness, comfort and loved and seeing their creation posted in their classroom is a way to reach this goal.

<https://www.virtuallabschool.org/preschool/learning-environments/lesson-1>

Picture links:

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/540150549057730100/>

https://thelearningexpresspreschool.com/preschool-classrooms/p-k_freeart/

<https://pocketofpreschool.com/how-to-set-up-and-plan-for-your-art-center/>

Dramatic Play Center



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Pic links:

<https://storables.com/garden/what-should-be-in-the-dramatic-play-area/>

Dramatic Play: The dramatic play area allows children to take on roles and try out new ideas. Children use their imaginations as they cooperate with one another and practice their self-care skills as they try on dress-up clothes. A great dramatic play area offers children a chance to act out their own home and family themes with props like a kitchen, table, clothes, food, and dolls. Children may use props to create a bakery, doctor's office, flower shop, or nearly any other scenario. It is important to offer additional props or dress-up items according to children's current interests, or ideas you are currently exploring (e.g., community helpers such as firefighters or police officers). This is a great learning center to make the lesson come alive. Teachers can get as creative as they would like to bring depth into the lesson and make it more inviting. Transforming your center to resemble the current theme and/or having diverse props are two ways that you can engage each learner and their level.

When setting up this center an accommodation you want to consider is location. Good places for a dramatic play center might be near a block center or another area where children's play tends to be noisy. Ideally, the center should

be bordered by shelves and/or other furniture (e.g., table and chairs, play refrigerator, etc.), or walls. Avoid placing the dramatic play center too close to the book area or other centers that require quiet concentration.

[Planning a Successful Dramatic Play Center in Child Care – eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care](#)

This center may have more open, loose materials than the other learning centers. This center also may have special furniture such as a refrigerator, stove, sink and/or closet. Use these furniture pieces to store their corresponding materials. For example, you can create a bin that is just for fruit and store that in the refrigerator. Also having hangers, or bins to store the dress up clothes is also helpful. There is a lot on pretend play here, so it is important to incorporate literacy with labeled items and books. Books such as a recipe book, like “soup day” or a book that resembles home life like, “llama llama home with mama” are just some books you may have in this learning center.

This center is also a great center to post a family tree where the children can really feel a sense of belongingness. In this learning center children are learning and demonstrating their self-help skills, social skills and what their environment looks like. Having pictures of their families, pictures of different cultures and abilities are a great way to foster these positive identity factors.

<https://www.virtuallabschool.org/preschool/learning-environments/lesson-1>

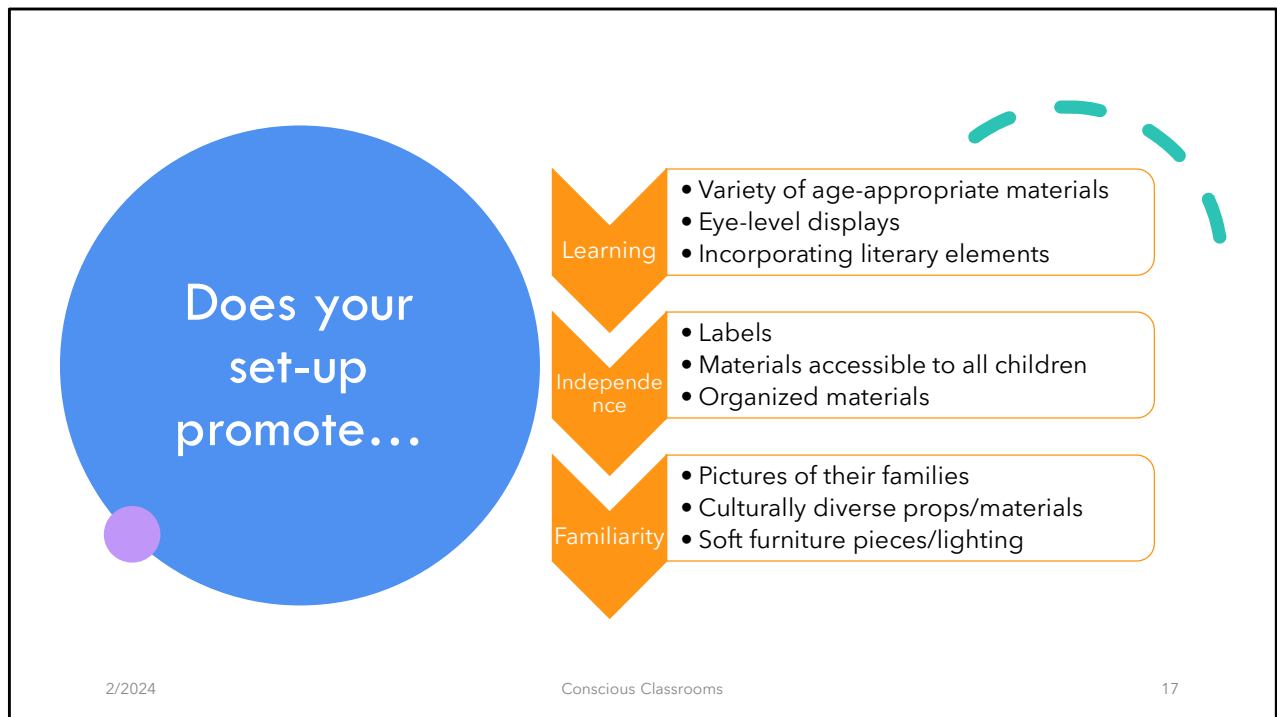
Library Center



Library: The library is a quiet space where children can relax and enjoy reading. A great library includes a variety of books that are age appropriate. It typically includes soft furniture, rug and pillows, you can add some displays such as pictures they have drawn of their favorite book, add a book they made in the library. Pictures of the families can also go in this center. Classroom libraries are usually the place where students who just want quiet time, alone time, time to relax go to. Ensuring that this center is inviting, yet calm is essential. Books can be displayed on shelves or in baskets for easy access. The library can also include a listening station, felt board, literacy activities, or other materials that introduce children to language and print.

<https://www.virtuallabschool.org/preschool/learning-environments/lesson-1>

When choosing a place to set up your library center an accommodation to consider is once again, location. The library center should be in a quiet area separate from noisier activities such as block building and dramatic play. Including writing and drawing materials can help children build off what they have looked at and create their own books.



When you set up your learning centers you want to ensure that it promotes learning, independence, and familiarity.

How can we promote learning?

-Having age-appropriate materials; ensuring that the materials in the centers go hand in hand with the intent of the center. Before the children enter the room, you want to ensure that the children have what they need to meet the individualized goals you have created based on observations and their interests. Placing tape measures, pencils, paper and a magazine of buildings in a block area is a way to promote a variety of learning experiences. These materials in the block area will allow the children further explore this concept. This is done by thoughtful planning so children may encounter meaningful learning opportunities.

-Eye level displays play an important role in how the children learn. You can use displays to provoke thoughts and engagement in learning. For example, if you are discussing trees, having pictures on their eye-level of different types of trees and leaves can provoke thoughts and questions to help develop their minds. Displays in the classroom should reflect diversity, children’s knowledge and interest to spark further exploration.

-Each learning center should have a literary piece in the center to promote literacy skills and an appreciation for books. This allows children to be exposed to a variety of books. For

example, the book, “the purple crayon” can be added to the art center. The book, “My five senses” can be placed in the science center.

How can we promote independence?

-Labeling the items with written words and pictures helps children during clean up time and exposes them to a print-rich environment.

-Having materials in low, open shelves allows the children to be able to use the materials on their own. This allows the children to see the materials available, make a choice and return the item without adult support.

-Organizing materials in suitable containers allows the materials to be contained and therefore easy to find and use.

How can we promote familiarity?

-When a child walks into the classroom there should be a sense of belongingness, of familiarity. Having pictures of their families in the library or the cozy area or even the dramatic play area all play a huge role in creating this safe space. When the children create artwork, displaying it on the wall, on a shelf, in the centers also develop their sense of belongingness.

-Having culturally diverse materials such as diverse books in the library, clothing and food from other countries in the dramatic play center, different musical instruments and craft supplies allow children to feel a connection with the learning environment.

-Having pillows, soft furniture and adequate lighting in the centers allow children to feel relaxed and gives them a place of calmness if they are overstimulated and/or need a minute away.

Ensuring that the learning centers meet a variety of developmental needs for the children will allow them to move through the stages of play with success. With the accommodations made in the learning centers, the materials provided and the space that is needed these will all work hand in hand to foster a child’s stage of play, whether it is interacting with one or two other peers, playing near another peer or playing and cooperating with two or more peers in a game.




Now that the learning environment is set up and we have gained an understanding that:

- Young children learn differently across content area and we as educators make instructional decisions that are responsive to how they learn and that
- Our teaching practices must incorporate the various stages and types of learning to support young children’s behaviors,

We can move to our last objective which is:

- guiding and supervise implementing effective teaching practices and learning environments.



*“The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child’s own natural desire to learn.”
-Maria Montessori*

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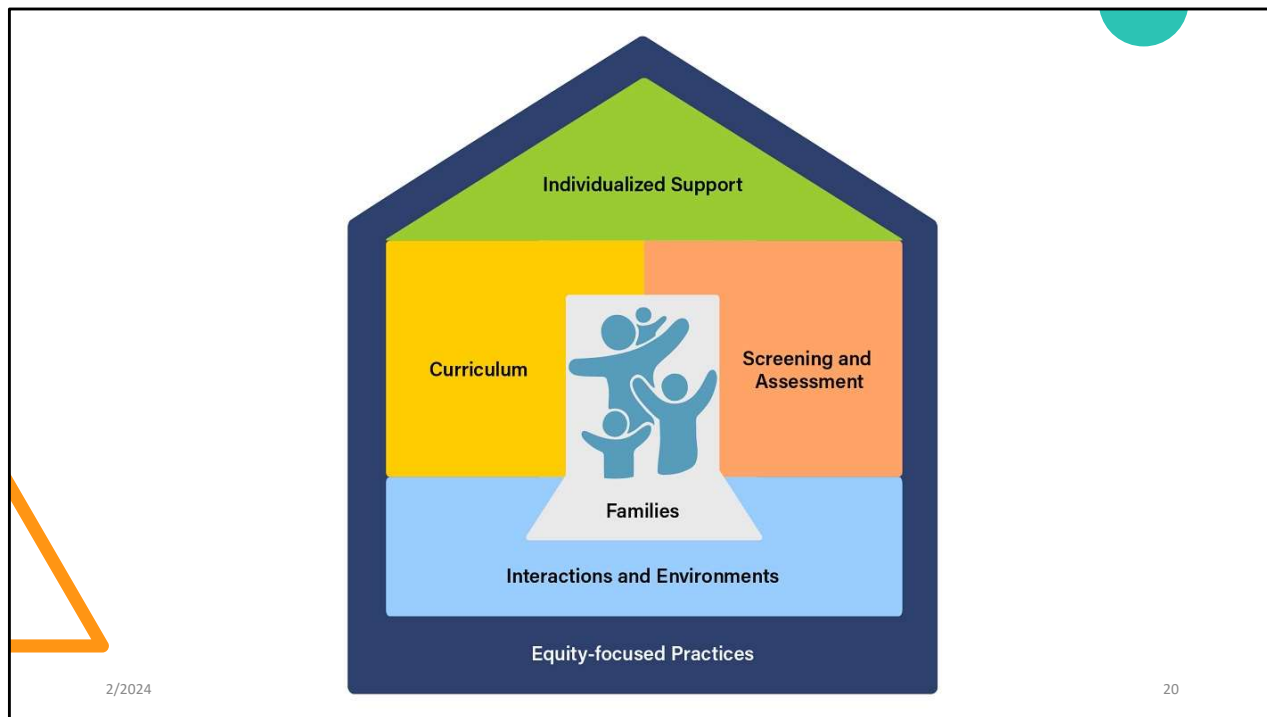
Conscious Classrooms

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Children need safe and predictable classrooms to try out new skills in the many areas of their development. They need organized spaces that are equipped with intentional materials to learn independently and with each other. They need rich print to make their learning visible, and rich conversations to explore new ideas. Most importantly, they need caring communities that promote social emotional skills that lead to joyful learning.

We can design our classroom culture and environment to support children’s growth and development and meet the needs of all the children. Our classrooms send powerful messages to children about what it means to learn, their role/place in the classroom and their capabilities.

<https://learn.cli.org/best-practices/classroom-culture-and-environment/overview>



“Quality teaching and learning uses children’s and their families’ lived experiences, home languages, perspectives, and cultural ways of knowing and being to make learning more meaningful and engaging. It creates equitable environments where all children feel a sense of belonging, and that promotes their social and emotional development and school readiness.”

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/teaching-practices/framework-effective-practice/framework-effective-practice>

As you can see interactions and environments are the foundation of effective teaching and learning. Once the environment is designed to be intentional and meet the developmental needs of the children, interactions amongst the children and staff can be developed. To create those effective teaching practices, we can take the learning styles of the children and the stages of play that they are in to create meaningful experiences where the children can learn in a safe place.

Effective teaching practices and learning environment

- Create and establish strong relationships with children and the families

- Create content-rich learning environments and activities that foster children's curiosity and extends their learning based upon their interests and development

- Support and extend children's learning in culturally and linguistically responsive ways



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Conscious Classrooms

What does it mean to be an effective teacher? What comes to mind when you hear that phrase? (give time for responses)

Educators use effective teaching practices to:

- Create and establish strong relationships with children and the families
- Create content-rich learning environments and activities that foster children's curiosity and extends their learning based upon their interests and development
- Support and extend children's learning in culturally and linguistically responsive ways

In this application process we are focusing on guiding and implementing teaching practices in the learning environments. Do not feel as though there is only one right answer, one right way. As your students grow you can begin to also adapt the environment to meet the changing needs of the children. For example, some items you may change are the materials. Materials should be rotated out as the children begin to develop new skills. As you begin to teach new concepts, adding "lesson themed" materials is a way to capture their attention and allow them to explore in different ways. Let us take a closer look at this:

DISCUSSION: Your theme is trees. Name an activity or something you can add to

your learning centers that have to do with the theme but that is age appropriate and adds to the learning of the children.

Use your learning centers to create that environment where the children feel safe to share, speak, create, develop, grow, etc.

Are you meeting their developmental needs with the learning centers?



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Let us now reflect on all that we have discussed in the lay-out, the set-up and the application. Are you able to see that you are meeting the developmental needs of the children by your teaching practices and the learning environment?

Ensuring that you have a variety of materials and activities in your learning center can prompt children to explore, experiment, talk and interact in different ways.

Let us review:

What happens in learning centers? What developmental needs are being met?

- Physical skills are being met (fine motor)
- Social development (playing with others)
- Emotional development (understanding feelings of other and their feelings)
- Language and literacy development (understand and communicate through listening, talking, reading, and writing)
- Cognitive development (make decisions/solve problem/complex thinking)

Take time to ensure your learning centers are designed to offer children valuable learning experiences. Your learning centers should be organized, stocked neatly with

a variety of materials, promote independence, learning and familiarity and be able to facilitate age-appropriate experiences that foster the child's development. Our role as educators is to ensure that we are making decisions and well-planned activities based off the children's interests and needs.

Closing Activity

- What is 1 take away you have gained from this training?
- What are you looking forward to change/implement in your classroom?



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The instructor will give out the “assessing your space” handout with the drawing space included. Participants are to draw to the best of their ability the changes they would like to make to their classrooms, now that they have completed the workshop. They can be as simple or elaborate as time gives. Give them about 10 minutes to do so. Once finished, at least two people should share.

As participants wrap up the instructor will give out the final handout “learning centers considerations” which will have a reflective question for them to answer to jot down anything they would like to change/implement in their classrooms.



Thank you

Instructor Info

Conscious Classrooms