

Moving forward with designing your learning environment

Overview

In a HighScope preschool program, teachers ignite children's interest in learning by creating an environment that encourages them to explore learning materials and interact with adults and peers. To create a predictable and active learning environment, teachers arrange and equip the classroom with diverse, open-ended materials that reflect children's home, culture, and language. The room is organized and labeled to promote independence and encourage children to carry out their intentions.

Goals for moving forward

1. Examine room arrangement for adequate space in each area, easy access between areas, and compatible activities in adjacent areas.
2. Consider the word 'systematically' as it pertains to the way your classroom areas and materials are arranged, labeled, and accessible to children.
3. Take a look at the materials in your classroom, ensuring that you have plentiful diversity and supply.
4. Step back and take a new look at displays of children's work. Are they beautiful? Do they reflect the children's interests, ideas, and experiences?
5. Be intentional about making the outdoor learning environment an extension of your classroom.

Implementation plan

1. Explore helpful resources: [Request to borrow](#) the Indoor & Outdoor Learning Environment DVD from our lending library, visit [our pinterest page](#), review the PQA, go visit other ECAP classrooms ([request a list](#))
2. Gain a new perspective; sit on the floor in one of the interest areas or stand on a chair to draw a map of your classroom— use the PQA (I-A, I-B, I-C, I-E) as a guide.

3. Label all interest areas and materials. (PQA I-E) [Area labels- Eng](#), [Area labels-Eng/Span](#), [material labels](#)
4. Find 'real' materials you could add to your space in place of toy replicas. (PQA I-F)
5. Examine what you know about each child and their family. Is that reflected in the materials you have in the classroom? How can you learn more about each family? What material might you add to help them all feel like they belong in this space? Is your family reflected? (PQA I-H)
6. Comb through your materials to ensure they do not perpetuate cultural or gender stereotypes. [Scholastic article](#) (PQA I-H)
7. Integrate multicultural materials into the classroom, in addition to the cultures your classlist represent- what others could you include? Start by thinking of our local community then grow outward. (PQA I-H)
8. Do the math- think about percentages used for store bought postings vs handmade postings. (less is more) Critically question why something may be posted- does it need to be? Would it be more meaningful if I made it? Or if the children did? (PQA I-I)
9. Create a list/chart of materials that could be brought outside to extend the classroom. (PQA I-D)