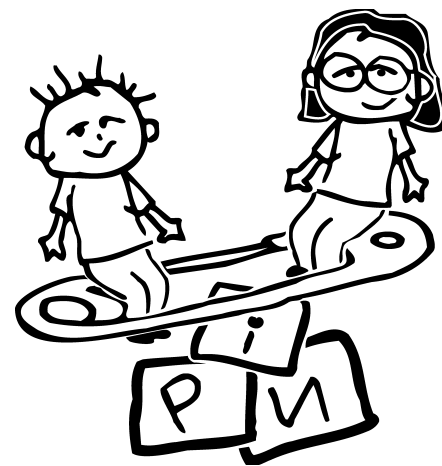


Preschool Inclusion News



Winter 01

Philadelphia Inclusion Network
Child & Family Studies Research Programs

Spaces for Learning

In order to be able to alter environments we need to know what children learn from various environments. Children learn a set of cultural values about how a space is arranged, used and shared. They learn perception of time and how to occupy time. Also they learn about the roles that people play and accepted or expected social interactions.

So what do children need from an early care and education environment?

Environments that encourage Play and Exploration: clearly defined spaces intended for specific use, areas for large and small muscle play, soft cozy areas, quiet and noisy areas separated from each other, areas to get messy.

Environments that foster Growth and Learning: hanging mobiles and children's art work, puzzles and manipulatives that are challenging but not frustrating, low open shelves, cultural and ethnic diverse picture books, "private" spaces.

Children's Needs: balance between active times and quiet times, plenty of time for one-to-one interaction during routine activities, individualized routines, time for adults to play with 1-2 children at a time.

Now that more than half of all children are in child care it is important to pay attention to the kinds of environments we provide for them. The Early Care and Education (ECE) environment is more than the physical space. It includes all conditions that can influence behavior – how time is structured, expectations of behavior, social relationships, and the physical surroundings.

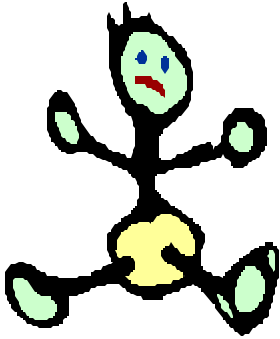
The environment plays a major role in our social and physiological lives. It influences the stress we deal with when making decisions, the nature of social interactions, and our feelings and identity of self-worth.

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Newsletter
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Environments that Respond to



BOOK NOOK

Spaces for Learning

- ♦ *Caring Spaces, Learning Places: Children's Environments That Work.* By: Jim Greenman, 1988. Exchange Press 1-800-221-2864
- ♦ *Planning Environments for Young Children, Physical Space.* By: Sybil Kritchevsky and Elizabeth Prescott, 1999. NAEYC 1-800-424-2460
- ♦ *Caring for Infants and Toddlers: Volume 1.* By: Diane Trister Dodge, Amy Dombro & Derry Koralek, 1991. Gryphon House, Inc.

When you come across a book that you think would be of interest to teachers, parents or children, please send the book title, author and brief description of the material to Preschool Inclusion News.

Spaces for Learning

Continued from page 1

Failure to recognize the impact of environments over children can confuse parents and out of home caregivers. Children respond to various environments as a result of how the environment is structured. Home and ECE environments may have varying expectations, set-up of accessible materials, and social structures. For instance, at home the child may interact with mom, dad and a sibling, however, at the ECE setting, the child may be expected to interact with up to 20 other children in addition to caregivers.

Many children are in a world of organized experiences — child care, preschool, after-school, and various classes in the community. Children are often organized, scheduled, and programmed according to the needs of the adults caring for them depending on the context of a given environment. Adults have intentions to keep children safe and give them opportunities for learning and making friends.

ECE environments need to be simplified and made understandable - making things manageable. When a child is having difficulty in a particular setting most times we attribute behavior to the personality of the child: he is hyper, she is defiant . . . We can adjust our view by asking questions such as "Why is she acting that way? Is she over stimulated? Is the pace too fast or too slow?" Although we persist in identifying the child as the problem, we begin to think about the context of the setting: changing the schedule, clarifying expectations, or making sure that our behavior is consistent, altering transitions and so on.



Environments for Infants and Toddlers:

The environment needs to be furnished, equipped, and organized to maximize the caregivers' time and ease of providing care: no sinks down the hall; no looking for bottles, training pants, or materials; no constant relaying of messages or on the spot substitution.

The play environment should be an interesting place that continually captures a child's attention and is laid out to ensure small group experiences – built in opportunities for motor and sensory experiences, range of places to be with different visual and auditory stimulation, protected spaces for young babies, problem solving opportunities for children of varying interests and skills. Opportunities to go in and out, up and over, and so on; to be alone, to be enclosed on three sides, and peer over a low wall.

*"I never let
schooling
interfere with
my
education"*

Mark Twain

What do Children Need from an Environment?

Children need an environment that is rich in childhood experiences —

collecting, hauling, dumping, painting, climbing, sorting, imagining

Children need an environment that supports childhood play — self-initiated, spontaneous, voluntary, facilitated and encouraged (not forced)

Children need an environment rich in teaching —

presenting materials and experi-

ences, provide direction with freedom, adults listen more and talk less

Children need an environment rich with caring people — listening, responsive, respectful, attentive, insightful

Children need an environment that tells them they are significant — concerns attended to, given responsibility for things that matter, ideas respected

Children need an environment



Update: Philadelphia Inclusion Network

Philadelphia Inclusion Network, a program of the Child and Family Studies Research Programs at Thomas Jefferson University, is celebrating it's 5th year of providing training for community day care and preschool programs.

- PIN completed it's first training program specifically for Home-Based Providers this past fall. The training was held at Child Care Resource Developers' new location on Delaware Avenue. Thank you to Marlene Murray for arranging the space and attending the evening training sessions.
- PIN was awarded it's second CCRD Quality Initiative Grant - to continue providing the training program - *FIRST BEGINNINGS: Working with Infants and Toddlers*. Child Care providers in South Philadelphia. attended the program this past fall and in the spring PIN will be coming to West Philadelphia.
- PIN will be at the DVAEYC/PICC conference on March 16th and 17th. Stop by our booth and see PIN's new products - we would like to see you!
- Child and Family Studies is growing! We now have six staff members who work together to coordinate and provide training: Pip Campbell, Suzanne Milbourne, Lalita Boykin, Chris Silverman, Peggy Twigg, and Elyse Rosen.

If you or your staff are interested in participating in the Philadelphia Inclusion Network center-based, family or community based training, or the infant toddler training, please contact **Suzanne A. Milbourne @ 215-503-1608**.

"Life is either
a daring
adventure or
it is nothing"

Helen Keller

I like my day care classroom because:

—I can see my teacher from any spot in the room and she can come when I need her.

—There are at least three types of play for me - I can crawl and move, play with puzzles, dress up or find a soft place to sit and watch other kids.

—There are colorful decorations, some I made all by my self, and I can see them when I wake up, have my diaper changed, play on the floor, or when my teacher holds me.

—There are many different things to crawl on — carpet, platforms, ramps, cushions, and things to pull up on so I can practice standing.

—I like my day care environment!



FYI

To learn more information about
Spaces for Learning
check out the article:

[Encouraging Creativity in Early Childhood Classrooms](http://ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/eece/reggio.html)

by Carolyn Pope Edwards and Kay Wright Springate. (1995)
<http://ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/eece/reggio.html>

If you have helpful information for child care providers,
please send it to the
Preschool Inclusion News
to be included in our next edition.

**“If you want
to do
something
good for a
child... give
him an
environment
where he can
touch things as
much as he
wants.”**

**Buckminster
Fuller**

Philadelphia Teaching & Learning Collaborative

Philadelphia Teaching & Learning Collaborative (TLC) is based in the Child & Family Studies Research Program at Thomas Jefferson University. TLC is providing training for early intervention staff (primarily birth to three) and families to promote children's learning opportunities through participation in community settings and activities. TLC also facilitates collaboration among early intervention providers to enhance consistency among services and supports for children and their families. These activities are funded by the Philadelphia Department of Health, Mental Retardation Services.

Upcoming Training

Policy and Procedure Training
Teaming

Optional Skill Building Courses

Guiding Children's Behavior

For date, time and location information call
Celeste Cobham-Portorreal at 215-503-2614





Teacher to Teacher

In this section your questions about inclusion issues will be answered by teachers that have been there before and have advice for you.

Dear Teachers,

Why do we need to read to infants? Most times they don't pay attention or they're falling asleep. Besides... if I hold one baby and read to them there are others who are crying and need attention. And what kind of books should we read to babies? I still don't know why this is important.

Mary in Center City

Dear Mary,

Remember that reading is a part of learning language and communication. Think about what infants do - they are learning to make and respond to sounds, listen to stories, smile back when someone smiles, respond to their name, take turns, and play with toys. By doing all these things infants learn that it is fun to play with another person, make eye contact, "give and take" relationship, responding to another person, and be able to gain attention from other people. These are all important skills for infants to practice in order to become good communicators when they get older. Reading is one way of communicating - through reading infants feel close to special people, can explore books on their own, can use their hands, fingers and senses to learn, and learn to do things for themselves. Reading becomes more than just looking at words and pictures - it becomes something the child learns to "love". Here are some books that you may want to read - or let the infants explore on their own. Big Fat Hen, by Keith Baker; Goodnight Moon, by Margaret Wise Brown; Rosie's Walk, by Pat

Hutchins; Corduroy, by Don Freeman; Clap Hands, by Helen Oxenbury; Peter's Chair, by Ezra Jack Keats; and Moon Bear, by Frank Asch.

Dear Teachers,

I am a family-care provider and have been asked to care for a child with a physical disability. I am worried that I'll have to spend a lot of money making my house accessible. I can't afford to do that. Can you tell me what "reasonable accommodation" means. I really would like to care for this child, I just need to know what I am required to do and where I can gather some information about any community supports or funding that is available.

Hopeful in Harrogate

Dear Hopeful in Harrogate,

Reasonable accommodations is a term associated with The Americans with Disabilities Act that protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination. It means that modifications are made to an area that will make it accessible to all individuals. This law advocates that all individuals should have access to all opportunities in the community, schools and public/private organizations. Cost can be minimal because accommodations can be achieved by setting up the environment to create space for navigation if using a walker or wheelchair, or by setting up toys in sturdy shelving units or near sturdy tables/chairs with open space that creates supporting surfaces and accessibility to the toys and play experiences. Also, ask mom how this child performs his daily routines and plays at home, and visit his

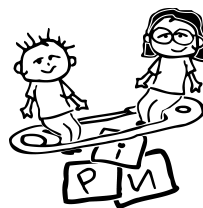
Richness of experience, not tidy perfection, is the point of the whole thing - child care"

Katherine Whitehorn



Send your questions and advice to:

Child and Family Studies
Philadelphia Inclusion Network
130 South 9th Street Suite 220
Philadelphia, PA 19107



Dear Teachers,

It seem like there is a lot of training available for child care providers. Is there any one place to get the information at one time. Every time I turn around someone is telling me about a training they are going to or all ready went to and I never got any information about it or did not hear about it. I really like going to trainings so I can get new information and meet new people who are also in child care.

Valerie, infant toddler teacher

Dear PIN,

I just heard about PIN from a friend. I would like to know more about your program and when you will be offering more training. My friend said that she attended a training last year and it gave her a lot of information she uses in her classroom now. I am a preschool teacher and have 18 children in my classroom. I am always looking for more ideas and activities to do with the children.

Caroline, Northeast Phila.

***“Babies are
NOT like
us”.***

***Jean Jacques
Rousseau***

**Please fill out the form below if you would like to be added to our mailing list.
FAX to 215-503-1640 or mail to Child & Family Studies, Thomas Jefferson University,
130 South 9th Street, Suite 220, Philadelphia, PA 19107-5233.**

Check one:

☐ Please add me to the mailing list. ☐ Please update my mailing information.

NAME _____

PROGRAM _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (_____) _____ FAX (_____) _____

E-MAIL _____

I RECEIVED AT COPY OF THIS NEWSLETTER _____ ON _____
(where) (date)





Sneak Preview

The next issue of the *Preschool Inclusion News* will
feature the

Past Present and Future of the Philadelphia Inclusion Network.

Meet the staff, see what we have done since 1995
and find out what we are planning!

See you in the spring!

Preschool Inclusion News

Philadelphia Inclusion Network
Thomas Jefferson University
Child & Family Studies
130 S. 9th Street, Suite 220
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Inside This Issue

Spaces for Learning — what early
childhood educators can do to their
child care environment.
