

Module 5: Curriculum and Learning Environments

Handout 3

Creating an Environment that Promotes Children's Positive Behavior

Much of managing children's behaviors in the classroom is from the behind-the-scenes work that a caregiver does before the children arrive to create an environment that promotes positive behavior. What is placed in an area and how it is arranged often determines the atmosphere for promoting social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth. It also determines the behaviors, both positive and negative, that happen in that space.

The following checklist can help you create an environment that promotes children's positive behavior in your center.

	The classroom has a variety of learning and activity centers to encourage choice and independence.
	Age-appropriate materials and toys are displayed on low, open shelves allowing children to get the toys and put them away by themselves.
	There are enough materials and toys available so that children can choose what they want to play with and have the ability to play with them for long periods of time. This will decrease children's fight over toys.
	Learning and activity centers are set up for several children (up to 4 or 5) to play together. This allows them to cooperate, share and problem solve together.
	A large space for whole group activities is provided to allow for group activities, discussion, and problem solving.
	There are small, quiet, private areas (within adult supervision) so that children can be alone or play with just one or two other children.
	The room is un-crowded and has space for children to work and play at the tables. And on the floor. Congestion is avoided and children can move about and explore.
	Centers and activity areas are well defined and placed so activities are not interrupted. Children know what not do in each area. Toys are in bins that are clearly labeled.
	Low dividers are used to separate areas so that caregivers can easily observe the children and supervise their activities.
	Individual cubbies are available so that children can be responsible for their own belongings.
	Placement of furniture discourages rough play or running.

Modify the environment throughout the day to meet the emerging needs of children in your care. You can add props to the dramatic play or playground areas to promote social interaction or broaden play that is already in progress. Modifying the environment is the first step in helping children to behave appropriately.

Source: *Child Care Center Licensing Guidebook*