

High Quality Supportive Environments

Our goal is to promote the engagement of every child

Physical Classroom Design

Your classroom set-up, traffic patterns, and materials all contribute to the success of promoting positive behaviors and preventing challenging ones

- Are there clear boundaries?
- Can you see all children?
- Are there an adequate number of centers available?
- Are these centers the appropriate size for your classroom needs?
- Are your centers organized and presented in a way that encourages children to explore with materials (materials rotated regularly, a variety available and relevant to children's lives)?
- Do the children know how many can play in each center?
- Does your room consider the needs of children with physical and sensory disabilities?

Environmental and Visual Cues

Visuals can provide choices for activities during outdoor play, can help children select centers, and can support play in different areas. Use the questions below as a guide to help children be successful in your classroom.

- What does your environment tell children to do?
- Do children know what to do in your centers?
- Do they know where to go in the classroom?
- Do they know how to transition to other activities?
- Do children know how many can play in a center?
- Do you have tools for children to help them select materials to play with?

Schedules and Routines

Our schedule is designed to promote child engagement. When children are engaged with materials, peers, and/or adults, they are less likely to engage in challenging behavior.

- Are your activities balanced with a mix of small groups and large groups?
- Is there a mix of teacher-directed and child-directed activities?
- Do you have a visual schedule that you use to teach children what is coming next?
- Do you prepare children is there is a change in your schedule?

Transitions

Challenging behaviors often occur during transitions. Children spend a lot of their time at school making transitions between activities. Use the following questions as a guide to prepare children for transitions in the classroom.

- How many transitions do you facilitate in a day?
- Are there any transitions you can combine or eliminate?
- How can you ensure children are engaged during transitions?
- Do you provide a warning to children before the transition will begin?
- How do you recognize children who are successful during a transition?

- Can you break up transitions so all children are not doing the same thing at the same time?
- Do you teach children the expectations for transitions?

Promoting Engagement during Group Activities-Small and Large

Adults should plan both small and large group activities to promote children's engagement.

When thinking about large group activities:

- Do you have a purpose to your group?
- Do you vary your activities during large group?
- Do you take time to teach children social skills during your large group?
- Do all children have opportunities to be involved in the group?
- Do you recognize when children are successful during group times?
- Are you engaging and interesting when you are doing your groups?

When thinking about small group activities:

- Do you give children the opportunity to use peers as models?
- Do you plan your group so that children are engaged and it is meaningful to the child?
- Do you give positive specific feedback to children who are showing you appropriate behavior?

Rules and Expectations

Preschool children have high rates of not following teacher directions. This could be the way teachers give directions (Directions that are stated negatively: "Why haven't you picked up the toys?" or stated as questions: "Can you go wash your hands?"). They can confuse children. The questions below can help you create rules and expectations.

- Are your rules short in length? Minimize the number of rules(3-6)
- Were you able to create them with children if possible?
- Do you give children lots of time to practice?
- Are you clear about what you want the child to do?
- Do you keep them positive (avoid words like "no" and "don't" as much as possible)?
- Do you reinforce positive behavior?
- If there is a change in your schedule, do you prepare children ahead of time?

Ongoing Monitoring and Positive Attention

This is the idea of "catching children being good." Some teachers use the loss of activities or rewards to motivate children. This is not appropriate for younger children. They are more applicable and appropriate for students who have learned social rules and the consequences of rule violations. The questions below can help guide you in monitoring your own behavior to make sure you are spending more time using positive, descriptive language.

- Do you remember to use nonverbal forms of positive feedback and encouragement (Hi-Five's for example)
- Do you individualize use of positive feedback and encouragement based on children's needs and preferences?

- Do you encourage other adults and peers to use positive feedback and encouragement?
- Is your feedback contingent on appropriate behavior?
- Is your feedback descriptive?
- Is it conveyed with enthusiasm?