

Slide Handouts: Environment – Gathering the Information



Recommended Practices Modules

Module 3

Module 3: Lesson 2

Environment: Gathering the Information

The image shows four silhouettes of children at different stages of development: a crawling baby, a sitting baby, a standing toddler holding a ball, and a walking toddler holding a ball. The silhouettes are arranged in a line from left to right, showing the progression of motor skills.

Welcome to Module 3: Lesson 2. Environment: Gathering the Information

Lesson Objectives

- List the components of the child's environment.
- Describe how the environment can serve as an intervention strategy to promote access and participation of all children, especially children with disabilities.

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In this lesson, you will gain an understanding of components of the child's environment and how changes to the environment can serve as an intervention strategy to promote access and participation of all children, especially children with disabilities.

DEC Recommended Practices

E1-
E6

E1. Practitioners provide services and supports in natural and inclusive environments during daily routines and activities to promote the child's access to and participation in learning experiences.

E2. Practitioners consider Universal Design for Learning principles to create accessible environments.

E3. Practitioners work with the family and other adults to modify and adapt the physical, social, and temporal environments to promote each child's access to and participation in learning experiences.

E4. Practitioners work with families and other adults to identify each child's needs for assistive technology to promote access to and participation in learning experiences.

E5. Practitioners work with families and other adults to acquire or create appropriate assistive technology to promote each child's access to and participation in learning experiences.

E6. Practitioners create environments that provide opportunities for movement and regular physical activity to maintain or improve fitness, wellness, and development across domains.

[Practices](#)[Continue](#)

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The 2014 DEC Recommended Practices have recommended the following practices to support environment. You may download a list of the practices by clicking the download button. The document will open in a new window. Continue when you have finished your review.

Components of the Environment

- Physical: Space/Setting, Equipment, Materials
- Temporal: Scheduling or sequencing of everyday activities and routines
- Social: Peers, Family Members, Caregivers, and Other Adults



Physical, temporal, and social features are the three components of children's natural environments.

Components of the Environment

Physical: Space/Setting, Equipment, Materials



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Physical environment features include the space and setting where children are spending their time, and the materials they use in those spaces.

Components of the Environment

Temporal: Scheduling or sequencing of everyday activities and routines in children's natural environments with attention to elements relating to time (e.g., transitions, length of activities)



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Temporal environment features are defined by DEC as: the scheduling or sequencing of daily routines and activities.

Components of the Environment

Social: Peers, Family Members, Caregivers, and Other Adults



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Social environment features are those that support children's social interactions and relationship development with peers and adults.

Components of the Environment

- Pay close attention during daily activities to how the arrangement of furniture, toys, and materials affects children's participation and learning.
- Adequate amount of space is provided for large-body play and exercise to occur.
- Both indoor and outdoor spaces are designed to promote access for **all children**.
- Adults may need to adapt the physical space in order to be certain that all children can fully participate and engage within their environment.



Continue



Let's start with the arrangement of physical spaces for children. Review the information on the slide, then click continue when you are ready to move forward.

Physical Space: Access



One key element to physical space is access. The Division for Early Childhood defines access as "providing a wide range of activities and environments (adults, peers, materials) for every child by removing physical barriers, making adaptations, and offering multiple ways to promote engagement for learning and development." In this photo, you can see how a teacher arranged classroom space so that each child can fully participate in the environment, including a child who uses a walker.

Components of the Environment

[Download](#)[Continue](#)[10](#)

It's important to routinely assess the ways in which the classroom or home environment is accessible to children. Practitioners and families do this by observing children during everyday routines and activities. This helps the adult determine whether each child is able to access play areas and materials in a way that allows the child to fully participate. If the child is not fully participating and access is a barrier, the adult considers how modifying the space or a material may increase access. These barriers may be such things as a child's difficulty in reaching a paper towel to dry their hands, or difficulty in opening a favorite toy box.

It's equally important that the adult routinely observe the child once a modification has been provided to ensure access has improved for the child and participation has increased. If not, different or additional modifications may be necessary. For additional information download the handouts on environmental arrangements and adaptations. Click continue when you are ready to move forward.

Components of the Environment: Physical Activity



Physical activity is an important part of children's development. Therefore, providing children many opportunities to explore their environment through physical activity is a priority. Too often, children with disabilities are provided minimal opportunity to participate in physical activity.

Toddlers on the Move

Recommended Practice Topic Area: ENVIRONMENT Practice or Practice Guide: Environment

Toddlers on the Move!

Active toddlers are busy, discovering that their bodies move and do interesting things—climbing, tumbling, crawling, kicking, and jumping. They are full of energy, and their bodies are full of potential. They are also full of curiosity, and they are full of questions. They are full of wonder, and they are full of joy.


See a link to this Learning Guide

Learning Guide: Environmental Arrangements for the Toddler Class

- To encourage active toddler play, consider whether your classroom space allows toddlers to crawl, walk, climb, crouch, and jump. Are there open areas for play? Have you provided play mats or play mats? Are there any other materials in the room that could be used as play mats?
- During outdoor play, do you see toddlers walking, running, climbing, throwing balls, pushing, or using other toys to move around? Are there any other toys or equipment in the room that could be used to encourage active play?
- Consider the ways that you can encourage active play in your classroom. Are there any toys or equipment that you can use to encourage active play? Are there any toys or equipment that you can use to encourage active play?
- Consider the ways that you can encourage active play in your classroom. Are there any toys or equipment that you can use to encourage active play? Are there any toys or equipment that you can use to encourage active play?

A Quick Peek

Use the Ready, Set, Go! app with the toddler group as an easy way to help them learn about active play. The app is free and available on the App Store and Google Play. It has a number of features that are useful for creating an active play environment in the classroom. It also has a number of features that are useful for creating an active play environment in the classroom. It also has a number of features that are useful for creating an active play environment in the classroom.



How the practice is

Download

Continue

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Download and read the practice guide, *Toddlers on the Move*, to learn about strategies that support children's physical activity and how you know the strategies are working. You can download it via the button on the screen. Once you've finished reading, click the continue button to answer a question.

Physical Space: Consistency



- Consistency helps children navigate their environment and is particularly helpful for children with disabilities.
- When toys, materials, and furniture are placed in a consistent location and order, predictability occurs. This supports and encourages child independence.
- For example, consistently placing toys and materials in the same place, on a particular shelf in the classroom, or in a particular room in the house, is especially important for a child with visual impairment.
- When new materials or environmental arrangements are necessary, be sure to introduce and orient children to those changes.



Continue

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Consistency is another important feature of optimal physical spaces for young children. Review the information here, then click continue to move forward.

Physical Space: Materials

- It's important that children have access to an ample and varied amount of materials to explore within the environment - such as a comb or brush for grooming one's hair, a doll for pretend play, pots and pans for making music, a ball for throwing, etc.
- Consider the child's abilities and strengths. Are there adequate materials available to support the child's engagement in those behaviors?
- Adapting or modifying a material may increase the child's ability to use the material within a routine or activity.



E3, 5

Continue

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Another element of children's physical space is materials. Review the information here, then click continue to move forward.

Materials



Adapted Markers



Clipboard Support



Modified Book Pages

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Let's look at some photo examples of ways materials have been adapted in order to support a child in fully participating. In the first photo you see that the markers have been adapted by adding a sponge hair curler so that the marker is thicker and easier to grip. In the second photo you see that a clipboard has been added to support the child in a writing activity. The clip board provides a sturdy slanted surface that makes the activity of writing more accessible for the child.

In the third photo you see that the book has been modified by gluing craft sticks to the pages. This modification increases the opportunity for the child to turn the pages by himself. Notice in all of these examples that everyday materials are used as an adaptation. No expensive purchases or equipment are necessary in these examples.



Watch the video: Lunch Gadgets. See if you can identify the material adaptation that has been made so that the child can eat his lunch independently.

Continue

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Notice: Watch the video and see if you can identify the material adaptation that has been made so that the child can eat his lunch independently. When you have finished, click Continue to answer a question about the video.

Did You Notice?

You may have noticed the following material modifications:

- a child-sized table and chairs,
- a child-sized plate with sectional dividers supports the child in scooping the food on to the utensil,
- the use of a shelf-liner underneath the plate prevents it from sliding out of the child's reach,
- the child has been given a cup with a lid that supports his ability to hold the cup and drink independently.



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You may have noticed the following material modifications: a child-sized table and chairs, a child-sized plate with sectional dividers supports the child in scooping the food on to the utensil, the use of a shelf-liner underneath the plate prevents it from sliding out of the child's reach, the child has been given a cup with a lid that supports his ability to hold the cup and drink independently.

Environment and Assistive Technology



Image source:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/easystand/4857692785>

“Assistive Technology is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.”

IDEA 2004

Download

Continue

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In some cases, when an adaptation or modification is not enough to fully increase a child’s participation, assistive technology may be beneficial. Read IDEA’s definition of assistive technology, then explore more about low-tech and high-tech assistive technology by downloading and reading the practice guide, *Supporting Children’s Everyday Learning*. When you’re finished reading click continue to answer some questions about considerations for selecting assistive technology.

Additional Considerations

Some additional considerations you may have thought about are:

- Cost- Can the AT be purchased or made with existing materials?
- Accessibility- Is the AT easily accessible to the child? Does it require a significant amount of time in setting up for the child's use? Does it require an adult's assistance for use?



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What did you think? Some additional considerations you may have thought about are:

Cost- Can the AT be purchased or made with existing materials?

Accessibility- Is the AT easily accessible to the child? Does it require a significant amount of time in setting up for the child's use? Does it require an adult's assistance for use?

The Temporal Environment

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Next, let's look at the temporal environment. The temporal environment is about the everyday activities and routines that a child experiences. This includes the sequence or scheduling of daily activities and the transitions within those routines.

Temporal Environment

- Everyday activities are events that happen or could happen throughout the child's day, such as meal times, diapering, play time, or bath time.
- These activities can be formal—intentionally planned and led by a teacher/parent. The activities also can be informal—spontaneous, child-led moments in which the adult responds to a child's interest or follows a child's lead.
- Activities and routines may need to be adapted to ensure that children with disabilities are able to participate and be integral members.

Continue

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Read the descriptions of the temporal environment, then click continue.

Temporal Environment: Everyday Activities and Routines

- Everyday activities that are re-occurring become routines. These are consistent opportunities for children to practice existing and new skills within the context of their environment.
- Everyday activities provide adults multiple opportunities to interact with a child and support child learning.



E1, 3

Continue

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Read the following statements to understand why everyday routines and activities are important to child learning- then click continue.

Supporting Child Participation in Everyday Activities and Routines

An adult should modify or adjust their instruction and requirements based on the individual child so the child can participate in the activity as completely and independently as possible.

A few ways adults support a child's participation within everyday activities and routines are:

- Reducing the amount of steps required for an activity
- Wait time, which is extending the amount of time available for children to participate or allowing a child an adequate amount of time to respond and use a behavior. For example, instead of asking an assistant teacher to stay behind and walk Javier to the playground without his peers, you schedule more time for the class to transition to the playground in order for Javier to independently line up and move to the playground with his classmates using his walker.

Continue

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The ways in which an adult supports a child during everyday activities plays a role in the child's level of participation. Review the information here, then click continue to move forward.

Supporting Child Participation in Everyday Activities and Routines

- Providing both visual and auditory instructions for an activity
- Providing adequate time and support for children to transition from one activity or routine to another



Refer to [Module 1-Interaction](#) for more information on adult-child interactions, and the role an adult plays during everyday routines and activities.

Continue

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Review the information here, then click continue to move forward. For more information on adult-child interactions, and the role an adult plays during everyday activities and routines, see Module 1: Interaction. A link is provided.

Temporal Environment: Scheduling

Predictable schedules and routines create a sense of security, help young children to learn about their world, help them adjust to new situations, and prevent challenging behaviors.

IRIS, 2016



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Another element of the temporal environment that affects children is the scheduling or sequencing of daily routines and activities. Predictable schedules and routines create a sense of security, help young children to learn about their world, help them to adjust to new situations, and prevent challenging behaviors.

Temporal Environment: Transitions

Begin by planning when and how the transition will occur. As a teacher review the daily schedule for these transition times. If you are supporting families, together you may write down a list of routines and activities that do or could occur daily.



Image source: Head Start Center for Inclusion Module: Curriculum Modifications and Adaptations

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Children often experience difficulty moving from one activity to another. Therefore, adults must consider transitions when scheduling daily activities. The adult begins by planning when and how a transition will occur. A teacher can do this by reviewing the transitions designated on the classroom daily schedule. A home visitor can work together with the family to identify and write down what a typical day looks like and when transitions are likely to occur.

Temporal Environments: Transitions

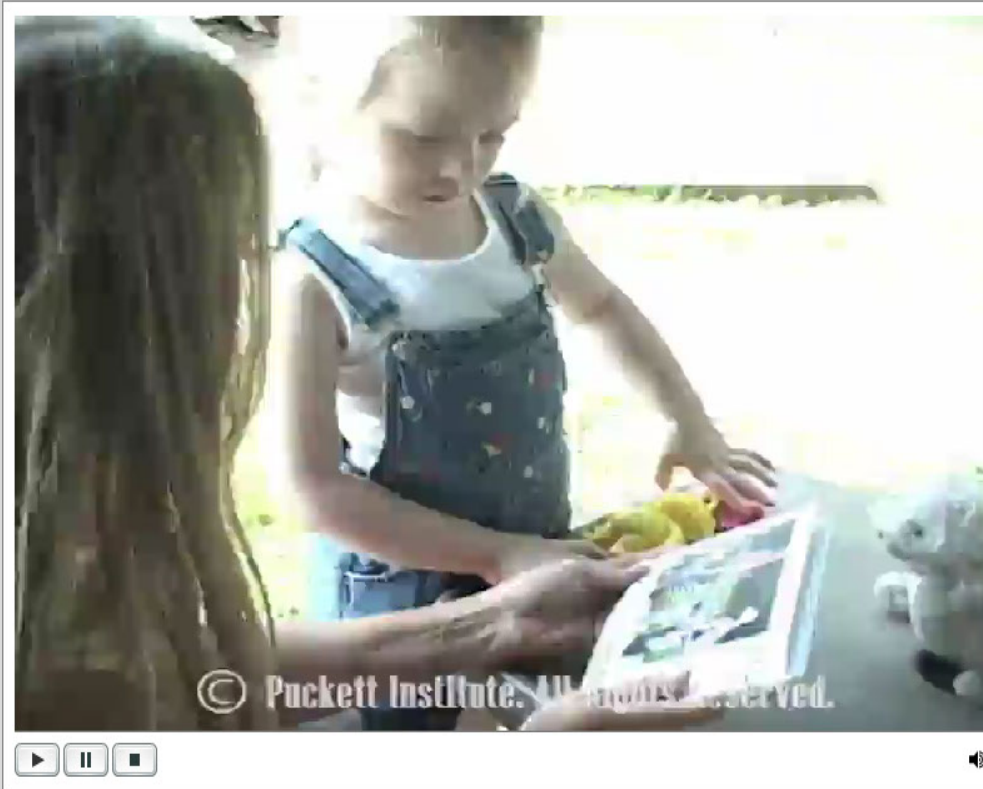
Next, think about how you will tell or prepare a child for the transition. Consider the ways to communicate this with the child.

- Another example may include the use of the same song to indicate each time the child needs to clean up and move to another activity.
- You may do a search online for additional examples, or have conversations with colleagues for ideas. Just remember to consider the individual child being supported and whether the transition strategy will address his/her needs.
- Observe children during transitions to determine if modifications or adaptations are necessary in order for each child to fully participate.

Continue

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Next, the adult considers what strategies may be used to support the child during a transition. One example is playing the same song every day when it is time to clean up. This helps create predictability for the child. There are many ideas and strategies available by searching online or talking with colleagues. Just be sure to consider the individual child being supported when planning. Finally, observe children during transitions to determine if modifications or adaptations are necessary in order for each child to fully participate.



Watch how the teacher uses an individual picture schedule to support the child in the activity of transitioning from outdoor play to lining up with her peers.

Continue

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Here is a video example of a teacher using individualized instruction to support a child in the activity of transitioning. Watch how the teacher uses an individual picture schedule to support the child in the activity of transitioning from outdoor play to lining up with her peers. The teacher has created a personal schedule for the child using photos of her participating in the daily activities. This adaptation provides both visual and auditory support in helping the child prepare for and participate in transitioning from outside play time to lining up, to meal time indoors.

Click the play button to watch the video. When you are done, press continue to move forward.

Check Your Knowledge



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Now let's check your knowledge on what we have covered so far.

Social Environment

Interacting with Peers, Family Members, and Other Adults



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Next, the social environment provides children with the opportunity to interact with peers, family members, and other adults.

Peers and Siblings

It is critical that children with disabilities be included in the environments where social-emotional needs are met. It is important that the social environment be a place where all children experience positive interactions, where they feel like they belong, and where their well-being is a top priority.



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It is critical that children with disabilities be included in environments where their social-emotional needs are met. It's important that the social environment be a place where all children experience positive interactions, where they feel like they belong, and where their well-being is a top priority.

Peers and Siblings

- Children often use more complex behaviors during interactions with peers and/or siblings.
- Numerous studies show that positive interactions are linked to learning for children with disabilities.



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Children often use more complex behaviors during interactions with peers and/or siblings. Numerous studies show that positive interactions are linked to learning for children with disabilities.

Peers and Siblings

One especially important goal of the environment is to encourage and support positive interactions for children within an inclusive environment. Children with disabilities need to feel like full members of their environment, whether it's in the classroom, community, or home.



Refer to [Module 1-Interaction](#) for more information on supporting positive interactions.

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One especially important goal of the environment is to encourage and support positive interactions for children within an inclusive environment. Children with disabilities need to feel like full members of their environment, whether it's in the classroom, community, or home. For more information on supporting positive interactions, see RPM Module 1: Interaction.

Peers and Siblings

Children learn new skills by observing and interacting with other children during everyday activities and routines. Therefore, it is particularly important to provide as many opportunities as possible for a child with a disability to interact with peers.

Peer interactions are important to children's learning and development. A peer may include siblings in the home, classmates at school, or any children within the community (e.g., a park, library, religious community, or other settings).



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Peers and Siblings

By paying close attention and responding to what children are doing while playing and interacting with others, adults can support and enhance their interactions.



Download

Continue

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By paying close attention and responding to what children are doing while playing and interacting with others, adults can support and enhance their interactions. For more information about enhancing children's interactions download the Peer Interaction for Practitioners Practice Guide.

Summary

- Components of the child's environment: physical, temporal, and social
- Changes to the environment can promote access and participation of all children



In this lesson you gained an understanding of components of a child's environment and how changes to the environment can serve as an intervention strategy to promote access and participation of all children, especially children with disabilities.

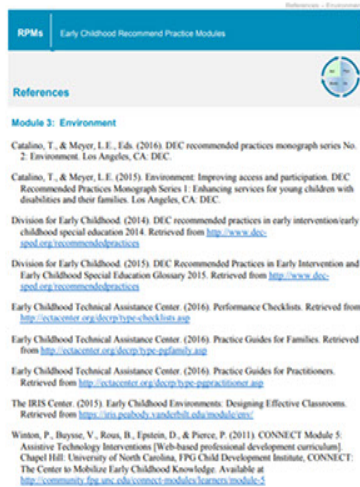
Check Your Knowledge



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Before we conclude the lesson, let's do one more knowledge check.

References and Resources



RPMs Early Childhood Recommended Practice Modules

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References

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This concludes Module 3, Lesson 2. Thank you for participating. To learn more, see the resources here. After downloading, you can close this window.