*TIPS FOR TEACHERS*

DESIGNING ENVIRONMENTS

**Design the Space**

*Assess the Spaces*

* Complementary areas in proximity while noisy/quiet areas are separated.
* Visual display cues for children.
* Adequate room to move, yet not too much open space.
* Clearly defined boundaries and pathways.
* Elements that reflect children’s cultures and home life in a respectful and authentic way.
* Warm, home-like features (pillows, curtains, plants, student photos, etc.).

*Strategize Possibilities*

* Brainstorm possible ways to address challenges and limitations.
* Discuss ideas to fully utilize the strengths of the space.
* Experiment, move things around, try out ideas.

*Arrange and Modify as Needed*

* Small changes, like lowering a shelf or using stop signs on closed centers, can assist children struggling with an aspect of the room.

**Design the Classroom Contents**

*Relevance to Learning*

* The items (games, books, art supplies, etc.) give children opportunities to develop skills they are currently working on.
* The items are selected because children’s interests will increase participation in specific learning activities.
* The items relate to current classroom themes or teaching concepts.

*Variety and Quantity*

* Address different developmental levels in your selections.
* Supply the classroom with novel, complementary materials.
* Ensure that there are enough duplicates of the most valued toys.

*Integration and Individualizing*

* Put related books and writing materials in every center and dolls or puppets in the blocks and library areas.
* The items are chosen because they motivate and engage specific children and match their interests.

**Design the Groupings**

*Decide on the Purpose*

* Introduce a concept or teach a skill. Relate it to children’s goals or a specific classroom theme.
* Will this activity benefit from lots of back and forth interactions, or is it about building the classroom community?
* Something fun, based on children’s interests.

*Determine the Composition*

* Number of children.
* Matching skilled children with less proficient ones or clumping similar skill levels.

*Develop a Plan*

* Designate how the children will be grouped and what activity each group will do with which adult.
* Assess