

Quick Tips



Designing High-Quality, Supportive Environments

Environmental Arrangement

- Remove physical obstacles that could make it difficult for children to access areas and materials in the room.
- Eliminate wide open spaces.
- Design learning centers/interest areas so that each one is inviting and FUN!
- Provide a variety of materials in each learning center and rotate materials frequently to maintain interest.
- Consider children's interests when placing or rotating materials in learning centers. Are the materials fun? Are they culturally relevant? Are there materials appropriate for a range in development (easier to more difficult).

Planning for Engagement

- Plan large group with specific goals in mind.
- Change it up! Vary the topics of large group activities from day to day.
- Incorporate puppets, props, and jobs during group to encourage active participation.
- Monitor children's engagement. If children lose interest, make a change! Have a back-up plan.
- Limit large and small group activities to no more than 5-7 minutes for toddlers, and 10-20 minutes for 3-4 year old's. Start small and increase the length of group over time.



Our VISION is for all young children in Georgia to have strong social-emotional foundations for lifelong learning and enhanced academic success that are strengthened through a network of professionals, families, and community members.

Key terms in this issue:

- **Learning Centers/ Interest Areas:** various areas in your classroom or program that include materials linked to a particular interest/domain of learning (ex. Science, reading, dramatic play).
- **Environmental Cues:** cues around a person that inform them as to what is happening and how to respond.
- **Engagement:** the degree of attention curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that children show when they are participating in and learning from an experience activity.
- **Large Group:** a group that consists of more than 4 toddlers or 8 PS/PK children participating in a teacher-directed activity.
- **Small Group:** a group that consists of 2-8 children participating in a teacher-directed activity.

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Zooming in for a closer look...

Building Community

- Consider the “feel” of your classroom or program. Is it inviting? Does it affirm that each child is welcome and valued?
- Include pictures of children, their families, and their artwork in the classroom to promote a sense of belonging.
- Maintain a predictable schedule and routine to support children’s feelings of security.
- Create meaningful jobs for children. Rotate them weekly and give every child an opportunity to participate

Environmental Cues

- Label shelves and materials with pictures and words that support children’s independent use.
- Use visuals to help children understand what to do. For example, feet on the floor to help with spacing when lining up.
- Use auditory cues. Songs, timers, and bells are great ways to provide warnings to the class that a change is going to happen (ex: transition).



**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**

BRIGHT FROM THE START

Environment Self-Assessment

Use this brief self-assessment as you create and reflect on your own early learning environment.

Components	YES	NO	What do I need to make this happen?	Who can support me?
Obstacles are removed that make it difficult for children to move around the room				
Learning centers/interest areas have clear boundaries				
There are a variety of materials in all learning centers/interest areas				
Materials are arranged so they are accessible and there are duplicates of favorite toys				
The environment allows for quiet, active, private (a place a child can go alone), and semi-private spaces.				
There is a protected and safe place for young infants to have rummy time, if applicable				