

Tip Sheets

Essential Elements of Infant & Toddler Environments: #2 Comfort and Convenience

Essential Elements to Promote in Infant & Toddler Environments

1. Health and Safety
- 2. Comfort and Convenience**
3. Child-initiated Exploration and Respect
4. Opportunities for Safe and Natural Movement
5. Choice
6. Flexibility and Responsiveness

Comfort

A comfortable environment invites children and adults to relax, build relationships, and explore. An early childhood setting that is designed with comfort in mind sends a message to children, families, and staff that they are welcome and valued.

Different people find different things comfortable or comforting, so observation is an important way to gather information about the needs and preferences of the individuals actively using the environment.

Environmental elements for comfort might include:

- Furnishings that promote snuggling and cuddling between adults and children.
- Quiet areas.
- Soft elements such as pillows, soft climbing equipment, soft toys, blankets, etc.
- Pictures of the children and their families.
- Items that remind children of home such as lamps, family photos, etc.

Convenience

A well-planned, convenient environment makes it easier to supervise and care for children, access needed materials, and interact with families.

Environmental elements for convenience:

- Diapering supplies should be located within reach of the diapering area so caregivers spend less time collecting supplies and children spend less time waiting.
- Children should have independent access to toys and materials to support self-initiated exploration and social emotional development.
- Help family members feel like important members of the community rather than guests in someone else's space.
 - Children's belongings are stored and organized in areas clearly identified.
 - Pens are readily available for parents to label items brought from home.

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