

Tip Sheets

Essential Elements of Infant & Toddler Environments: #6 Flexibility and Responsiveness

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**

Infant and toddler environments should allow for flexibility and responsiveness related to the development and needs of each child.

Development

The environment should support learning and exploration in each of the following domains for all children:

- Physical
 - Gross motor skills
 - Fine motor skills
- Social-emotional
- Cognitive
- Language
 - Receptive language (understanding and comprehension of language)
 - Expressive language (putting thoughts into words)

The environment should be adaptable to meet the interests and abilities of the children as they grow.

Individual Needs

The environment should be flexible enough to meet individual children's interests and needs. The following are some examples:

- Adding more materials to the block area for a child who shows great interest in building
- Dimming some of the lights for a child who is sensitive to bright lights
- Placing sensory trays on the floor for a child who is not yet able to sit or stand at a table
- Following individualized schedules for personal care routines such as napping and eating

Additional Resources

Early Introductions to Sensory Gardens
<https://growing-minds.org/early-introductions-to-sensory-gardens-infants-and-toddlers>

For more information, visit www.inclusivechildcare.org.

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