

## **Learning Environment Project**

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ECE 211: Curriculum for Young Children

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March 1, 2021

The environment of a classroom plays an essential role in fostering children's development. Children learn better when the classroom environment is positive and supportive. Although teachers play a huge part in promoting positive development for children, the classroom's physical environment and resources play an equally important role. A classroom with broad and diverse resources and materials helps create and support a comfortable and accepting environment for children to learn in. In my learning environment project, I made a classroom that fosters children's creativity and artistic expression by providing a wide range of learning materials and toys in each of the learning areas. There are twelve areas in the classroom, and some areas are close in the distance because of classroom space and similar materials.

I made the meeting, block, and pretend area space bigger and closer to each other. These are areas where the noise level is usually louder than other areas. The meeting area is where the teacher does their group meeting, so the space needs to be bigger so that children can sit comfortably together in a group. I also put the music area close to the meeting area to be easily accessible, and teachers can do music and movement during their meeting time. The musical instruments in the music area are culturally diverse to support a culturally responsive classroom. Some of the culturally diverse instruments are Djembe, maracas, and cymbals.

The blocks area is in the same location as the meeting because it is big enough for children to build blocks. The block area's shelf is mobile and can be folded to store various blocks and save space in that area. I placed different shapes of blocks, block plays, and animals in the block area to help support divergent thinking. There is also a

dollhouse with dollhouse furniture and a train set in the block area so that children are not limited to only building with blocks.

There are various housekeeping furniture, a market, and a dress-up space for children to play within the pretend area. The materials in the dramatic area are also culturally diverse and inclusive. There are multicultural food, babies, and clothing so that children are aware that there are different people and cultures in their community. There is a telephone, community workers' dress-up props, and toy sets in the pretend area to support divergent thinking. The block, meeting, music, and pretend area help support children's cognitive, social-emotional, language, and physical development.

On the bottom right side of the classroom are the library and quiet area. I put those two areas together because they correlate to one another as those are the area where children go for peaceful and calming times. I put a bean bag chair, soft couch, and cushions in that area with a canopy so that children can feel comfortable and relax in that area if they want their quiet time. I also put soft dolls and puppets in the area so that children can act out the story in the books they read. There is also a feeling basket with books and a stress ball inside so that when children are feeling angry or stressed, they can look inside the basket to regulate their feelings. The books in the area are multicultural, diverse, inclusive, and empathetic. Some of the books in the library are "*Name Jar*" by Yangsook Choi, "*We're Different, We're the Same*" by Bobbie Jane Kates, and "*Be Kind*" by Pat Zietlow Miller. The library support children's social-emotional, language, and cognitive development.

The art and writing area is close to another because materials in the writing area can also be used in the art area. The writing area has pencils, papers, and wipe and

write boards for children to practice their fine motor skills. There are poster boards of alphabets, numbers, and shapes in the writing area for children to help guide children in drawing figures and writing numbers and letters. The art area has many different craft materials to help support children's creativity and divergent thinking. Materials such as pom poms, craft sticks, sequins, felt, and tissue papers help support children in creating art collages. Playdough and foam modeling in the art allows children's imaginative creation. The easel next to the art area has washable tempera, watercolor, and finger paint with paintbrushes. The different types of paints give children more options for how they want to create their art. The sensory table is near the sink, and there are four different types of sensory materials in that table such as water, sand, sensory beads, and slime. The art, writing, and sensory area help support children's cognitive, social-emotional, language, and physical development.

The math and science area toys and materials are put together on a double-sided shelf. There are many divergent thinking toys such as unifix cubes, shape links, and geoboards on the shelf's math side. I also put convergent toys in the math area, such as Unlock and number match keys and puzzle number match. There are acorns, pinecones, seeds, seashells, leaves, and tree branches for children to acknowledge nature in their community on the shelf's science side. Insects and reptile figures help children learn about the different types of animals that exist in this world. The science area animal and insect figures can help support divergent thinking because children can use those figures for play and storytelling. The math and science area help support cognitive, social-emotional, language, and physical development in children.

The table toys area is by the door of the classroom. This area helps support cognitive, social-emotional, language, and physical development in children. There are divergent toys in this area, such as Lego Duplo, Magnatiles, and Playstix, that can support cognitive development. Placing Jenga in this area can promote social-emotional interactions between peers. I also put convergent toys such as multicultural and differing abilities puzzles in this area for children to help support their cognitive skills. Toys such as create and drill kits can help children's fine motor skills.

In conclusion, the twelve areas in the classroom help support all the domains in development. The materials and toys teachers put in each area are essential in supporting children's creativity and artistic expression. The materials teachers buy should also be multicultural and inclusive so that children are aware of and acknowledge their community's diversity. It is also important to remember that the toys and materials teachers pick are age-appropriate as well. Children are in school for an extended period, and teachers should create a fun and comfortable environment so that children will feel happy being in school.