

Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.

Section 1. Early career educator



You must know

When you become an educator, it's important to understand why we need to prepare and sometimes change indoor and outdoor spaces so we can support every child to learn and play.

What could potentially go wrong if educators didn't do this?

Lack of Engagement: Without organising and adapting the spaces to match individual interests and preferences, children may struggle to find activities that interest them, leading to boredom and disinterest. This can result in behaviours like restlessness or seeking attention through disruptive actions.

Limited Sense of Independence: If the environment doesn't allow for flexibility and rearrangement, children may feel restricted and unable to control their learning space. This can lead to frustration and a lack of initiative in exploring and taking ownership of their learning experiences.

Reduced Self-Confidence: When the environment doesn't support children's self-confidence, they may feel inadequate or fear taking risks. This can result in avoidance of new activities or seeking constant reassurance from adults.

Missed Opportunities for Exploration: Without deliberate arrangements, children may miss out on engaging with natural and built environments. This can limit their sensory experiences and hinder their cognitive, social, and emotional development. This is especially important if the children live in high rise city buildings. To support each child's interests, preferences, and participation, it's crucial to organise and adapt indoor and outdoor spaces appropriately. This nurtures active engagement and motivation in learning experiences while enhancing self-confidence and providing opportunities to explore both natural and built environments.



You must practice

It's very important to set up both inside and outside spaces in a way that all children can enjoy and take part in fun activities. This includes things made by humans like buildings, play equipment, forts and natural stuff like plants and trees, rocks and dirt.

Making Things Fun for Every Child: Try to arrange things inside and outside in a way that matches what each child likes and is interested in. This helps them feel more connected and excited about what they're doing.

Boosting Self-Belief: When children have chances to explore and play with things around them in ways they like, it helps them feel more confident. If they can choose what they want to do and follow their own interests, it makes them feel like they can do things on their own.

Playing with Man-Made and Natural Stuff: How you place furniture, toys, and other stuff can help children engage with their surroundings. By moving things around in different ways, you help them explore in different ways too. Letting them experience nature helps them understand the world and how to take care of it.

Steps to make this happen

Watch and Think: Pay attention to how children play and interact in their current space. Think about what works well and what could be better. Consider what children like, what they're good at, and how they learn.

Include Everyone in Decision Making: Ask teachers, children, and their families for their opinions. You can use something called the Mosaic Method to make sure everyone's voice is heard.

Make Special Areas: Create different zones for different activities that cater to different likes and skills. Make sure every kid can get to every area easily.

Mix Things Up: Try arranging furniture, games and toys in different ways to keep children interested. Let

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them help decide where things should go.

Balance Inside and Outside Stuff: Try to use natural items and sustainable methods in both the inside and outside spaces. This can help spark children's curiosity and creativity.

Keep Notes and Think About Changes: Write down changes you make and include pictures and feedback from the children. Think about how the changes have affected things and how well they worked.

Keep Learning: Give yourself a chance to learn more about how to create great spaces for children. Attend workshops and trainings to help you.

Keep Improving: Always be open to feedback and make changes based on it. Always try to do better at making sure every child can take part in and enjoy activities.

After reading these points, which one(s) do you think you doing well? Describe your practice in detail.

After reading these points, which one(s) do you think you need to work on? Describe how you could improve your practice.

Things to discuss with other educators.

Educator 1: "I've been noticing that some of our children are struggling to stay engaged. I see a lot of restlessness and sometimes disruptive behaviours. I wonder if we're doing enough to match their individual interests and preferences in the spaces we provide."

Educator 2: "I see what you mean. It's like they're looking for something interesting to do but can't find it. Maybe we need to rearrange or add things to our spaces that cater more to what each kid likes."

Educator 1: "That's a good point. I've also noticed that some children don't seem to feel independent. They seem frustrated and less likely to explore on their own. Do you think our setup is too rigid?"

Educator 2: "I can see that. Maybe we need more flexibility. Children should be able to move things around, to create their own learning spaces. That might make them feel more in control and motivate them to take charge of their own learning."

Educator 1: "Yes, flexibility could certainly help. And what about self-confidence? I'm worried some of our kids feel scared to try new things. They seem to need a lot of reassurance."

Educator 2: "It's concerning. If they don't feel safe and supported in their environment, they won't take risks or try new activities. We should aim for an atmosphere that boosts their self-belief and encourages them to push their boundaries."

Educator 1: "I agree. Another concern I have is that some children seem to be missing out on exploring both man-made and natural environments. Do you think our current setup is limiting their experiences?"

Educator 2: "I think you're onto something. Our kids need diverse experiences for their cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Especially for those living in high-rise buildings, they don't get to interact with nature often. So, it's even more crucial that we bring natural elements into our indoor and outdoor spaces."

Educator 1: "Great points. So we need to adapt our spaces to match kids' interests and boost their independence and self-confidence. We should also encourage exploration of both built and natural environments."

Educator 2: "Absolutely. If we make these changes, I believe we'll see a real difference in their engagement and enjoyment."

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