High Quality Learning Environments Help Young Children Thrive

From birth through the 3rd grade, young children move from concrete to abstract experiences and develop their theories of the world. Teachers must guide their students to regulate their emotions, collaborate with their peers, and understand their bodies. These foundational behaviors may impact how they process information in later years.

An effective environment is welcoming to students. In high-quality classrooms, the environment is planned with care and thought, and the daily schedule is predictable. The overall organization of a classroom is thought through, the environment such as the teacher table and white board is organized, and the students' work is displayed. The overall organization of the environment helps students establish routines and predictable sequences that help them feel safe. The environment extends beyond the classroom walls and into outdoor spaces to provide opportunities for gross motor development and experiences in their environment.

The daily schedule sets the tone for the way that students learn in the classroom. The schedule in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten environments is predictable, allowing students to participate in focused learning both independently and as a collaboration with their peers. Teachers need to foster a positive environment that can make a living experience positive and enriching. Teachers always have a plan for learning opportunities that are centered around the students' interests and curriculum. The environment extends beyond the classroom, including the overall organization of the school building, the resources available, the teacher-student interaction, the curriculum, the instruction, and the assessment. In pre-kindergarten environments, the environment is planned with care and thought, and the daily schedule is predictable. The overall organization of a classroom is thought through, the environment such as the teacher table and white board is organized, and the students' work is displayed. The overall organization of the environment helps students establish routines and predictable sequences that help them feel safe. The environment extends beyond the classroom walls and into outdoor spaces to provide opportunities for gross motor development and experiences in their environment. In high-quality classrooms, the environment is planned with care and thought, and the daily schedule is predictable. The overall organization of a classroom is thought through, the environment such as the teacher table and white board is organized, and the students' work is displayed. The overall organization of the environment helps students establish routines and predictable sequences that help them feel safe. The environment extends beyond the classroom walls and into outdoor spaces to provide opportunities for gross motor development and experiences in their environment. In high-quality classrooms, the environment is planned with care and thought, and the daily schedule is predictable. The overall organization of a classroom is thought through, the environment such as the teacher table and white board is organized, and the students' work is displayed. The overall organization of the environment helps students establish routines and predictable sequences that help them feel safe. The environment extends beyond the classroom walls and into outdoor spaces to provide opportunities for gross motor development and experiences in their environment.

In pre-kindergarten classrooms, the environment is typically structured with opportunities to do focused learning, classroom rules, and routines. In kindergarten classrooms, the environment may be organized around specific topics, such as math, reading, science, and social studies. The environment in kindergarten classrooms may include several teaching centers that encourage students to explore and learn in a variety of ways. The overall organization of the environment helps students establish routines and predictable sequences that help them feel safe. The environment extends beyond the classroom walls and into outdoor spaces to provide opportunities for gross motor development and experiences in their environment. In high-quality classrooms, the environment is planned with care and thought, and the daily schedule is predictable. 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Effective Environments in Prekindergarten through 3rd Grade: Building a Strong Foundation for the New York State Learning Standards

As members of the NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council, the NYS Head Start Collaboration Office, the NYS State Education Department, and the NYS Association for the Education of Young Children are providing guidance support our youngest students, their families, teachers, and leaders by highlighting key features of high-quality early childhood teaching. We firmly believe that young children can best meet New York State Learning Standards when they have effective teachers who use intentional, experiential, and developmentally and culturally appropriate practices.

This brief provides helpful strategies related to setting up a classroom environment that will help to put the State’s young learners on a path to social and intellectual success as they master the foundational skills to meet the New York State Learning Standards.

Sources