Creating Meaningful Indoor and Outdoor Spaces

The ages, developmental stages, and interests of the children will influence their choice of activity, as will the quality of the play space and the available equipment and materials. The following considerations may support your planning:

1. Establish and mark space boundaries, especially in open outdoor spaces. Teach children where they can and   cannot go when playing and help them understand why (a busy road, a marshy area, the big kids' play space).

2. Arrange space to support the experiences that children may engage in. For example, free up inside space by moving furniture to the walls; cluster spaces by bringing two or more interest centres together, leaving smaller spaces in various parts of the room; or place interest centres in the centre of the room.

3. Select a flat portion of ground to allow children to explore fixed and portable active play structures. For example, a climber set, wall attachments, or other types of gross motor structures sturdy enough to withstand the changing seasons. Be sure to include a balance of materials that are familiar to the children as well as novel items.

4. Scan the area around your centre to assess what opportunities the outdoor environment currently offers for active play. For example, natural elements such as hedges and small trees, large rocks or tree stumps, piles of leaves or hills of snow can offer wonderful experiences.

5. Develop activities that follow a developmental sequence; start with skills that the children have already acquired and then gradually increase the complexity. Include the children in the planning and implementation of the activities and follow their lead.

6. Observe children to determine their present level of development and design follow-up experiences that will challenge and intrigue them.

7. Modify the types of materials and equipment to provide variety, spark curiosity, and maintain safety, and ensure inclusive practices.

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