

Assess Sensory Motor Elements in your Environment

Draw a floor plan of your indoor environment. Label the following elements using the identifying number. Leave space on your floor plan to make lists where suggested.

What can children see?

- Put a 1 to identify specific areas where there are soft colors, natural materials and orderly arrangements where children feel calm, soothed and focused.
- Put a 2 in all the places in the environment where the children see natural light, shadows, pools of light, different textures and patterns, magic and wonder. Places and objects that invite their curiosity and engage their desire to explore.
- Put a 3 where there are walls filled with lots of primary color and unorganized displays, shelves full/cluttered with toys that could be overstimulating to children.

What can children feel?

- Put a 4 in all the places where there are different terrains for children to walk, crawl and scoot on, surfaces and substances of different textures and temperatures, weights, hard/soft, squishy, stiff, bouncy, responsive, to touch with their hands, feet, faces and bodies, other.

What can children hear?

- Make a list to describe sounds that children hear in your program; birds singing, wind rustling, water flowing, animal sounds, human voices (loud/soft), music playing (loud/soft), clocks ticking, traffic, airplanes, machinery, other.

What can children smell?

- Make a list of the fragrances and aromas that children experience in your program-smells from home, clothing, blankets, stuffed toys, natural

fragrances from flowers, trees, wood, poopy diapers, human-made items such as disinfectant cleaners, bleach, artificial room deodorizers, perfume, food cooking, other.

What can children taste?

- Make a list of the tasting/mouthing experiences throughout the day available for your children. Opportunities for *alerting* foods that tend to be cold, sour/tart, spicy, minty or crunchy. *Calming* foods that are warm, smooth and sweet.
Mouthing opportunities (heavy work to the jaw) such as chew toys, fruit leather, straws, water bottle, harmonica, blowing bubbles, breathing exercises, other.

How can children move?

- Put a 5 in all the places where children use their active bodies and large muscles to climb, jump, crawl, scoot, run, walk, push, pull, slide, swing, balance, roll, lift, bounce, hide, throw, go up/down/over/in/out, etc.
- Put a 6 in all the places where children can spread out, work with an abundance of materials and pursue big ideas.
- Put a 7 in all the places where children can use their hands and fingers to grasp, bang, poke, stack, shake, squeeze, pat, fill, pour, fit something together, and take something a part, build and create designs.
- Put an 8 in all the places where children can feel powerful, independent, and competent.

Adapted from *Designs for Living and Learning*, Curtis and Carter, Redleaf Press
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