High Quality Learning Environments Help Young Children Thrive

From birth through the 3rd grade, young children move from concrete to abstract thinking, acquiring the knowledge and skills they need to regulate their emotions, collaborate with their peers, and understand the rules and routines that help them become more proficient learners. The classroom environment is an essential part of this development, which can be enhanced by responsive teaching practices, a supportive atmosphere, and a curriculum that integrates diverse learning opportunities.

The environment also extends beyond the classroom to include community and family involvement. Children’s time in this area should be monitored because young students may approach learning and vocabulary. For example, if students are interested in transportation, materials that are clearly labeled, which enable students to pursue their interests.

To learn more and view the other briefs in this series that address instruction and interactions, the New York State Department of Education provides additional learning resources, including the Office of Early Childhood Education. To learn more about the series, visit www.nysecac.org or contact Patty Persell at ecac@ccf.ny.gov.
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.

Resources
- Environmental Rating Scales
  Environmental Rating Scales Institute
  www.ersi.info/ecers.html
- Tips for Teachers: Schedules and Routines
  Head Start National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL)
- Tips for Teachers: Designing Environments
  Head Start National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL)
  www.eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/docs/design-teacher-tips.pdf
- New York State Education Department
  www.nysed.gov

Sources

Guidance from
New York State Head Start Collaboration Office
New York State Association for the Education of Young Children
New York State Education Department

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When young children are active, they are physically, emotionally, and cognitively at an advantage.

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To learn more and view the other briefs in this series that address curriculum, the classroom environment, instruction and interactions, assessment and family engagement, behavior and play, please visit the New York ECAC website at www.nysecac.org or contact us at ecac@ccf.ny.gov.