Indoor Physical Environment

Helping Hands Tip Sheet

Did You Know?

- When the environment fits the needs of children, incidents requiring discipline and guidance drop dramatically.
- When children explore and play on their own, they are learning about the world around them and how they fit in to the world.

Points to consider:

- The materials and furniture should be age appropriate.
- The room should include areas for quiet play and areas for active play as well as space for “alone time.”
- Think about the shapes and boundaries of the different areas.
- There should be furniture and places where staff will feel comfortable interacting with children at their level, such as a low stool or a pillow on the floor.

The indoor physical environment should:

- Maximize possibilities for play.
- Encourage active exploration.
- Make it easy to supervise children in each area.
- Be safe.
- Have enough space for the number of children using the space.

High Quality Indoor Environments for children should:

- Contain a variety of durable equipment and materials.
- Include materials that offer choices for children.
- Have spaces for large group and small group activities.
- Provide opportunities for relationship building between caregivers and children.

Remember:

- Well planned and thoughtfully arranged indoor environments will support children's interest and increasing skills.
- Children learn what is important to “know” from interacting with the adults around them.
- The most important element in a high quality environment is the staff!
- A well planned indoor environment will be safe, clean, and odor free, as well as warm and welcoming to adults and children.

Something to think about:
Hands on activities stimulate brain growth. This is important because 90% of brain growth occurs by age 5.