

Intentionally Designed ENVIRONMENTS for Pre-K to support exploration, discovery and construction of knowledge:

Eight key ideas for environments:

Focal Point and Room Arrangement

Storage and Arrangement of Materials

Aesthetics (Colors, Lighting, Cozy Spaces, etc.)

Use of Walls

Natural Elements

Documentation of Learning Process

Authentic Materials

Honoring the Children and their Lives

Reflective thoughts from Reflecting Young Lives of Children
by Curtis and Carter:

- ✚ *“Our environments have a great influence on how we feel and how we behave.”*
- ✚ *“Early childhood environments should be inviting and cultivate children’s curiosity, wonder and imagination.”*

NAEYC Recommendations:

- Teachers organize space and select materials in all content and developmental areas to stimulate exploration, experimentation, discovery and conceptual learning.
- Teachers work to prevent challenging behaviors through
 - environmental design
 - schedules that meet the needs and abilities of children
 - effective transitions and
 - engaging activities.
- Teachers create classroom displays that help children reflect on and extend their learning.
- Teachers reorganize the environment when necessary to help children explore new concepts and topics, sustain their activities, and extend their learning.



Big, Deep Questions to Ponder:

- ✚ When you walk into the space- what values and ideas regarding the learning process for young children does the environment reflect?
- ✚ When standing in the doorway on-your-knees (child's perspective)- what welcomes the children to the space as an invitation to explore, linger, engage and learn?
- ✚ Does the space reflect that it belongs to the children and is their space in which to live and grow?



Great References for Inspiration:

Consider the Walls by Patricia Tarr (Beyond the Journal, Young Children on the Web, May 2004)

Inspiring Spaces for Young Children by Deviney, Duncan, Harris, Rody and Rosenberry Published by Gryphon House, 2010

NAEYC Standards for Designing Enriching Environments.<http://www.state.ia.us/earlychildhood/professiona/development/docs/Standard%203%20-%20Teaching.pdf>

Key Aesthetic Considerations for Early Childhood Environment,
<http://www.educate.ece.govt.nz/learning/curriculumAndLearning/Learningenvironments>

Pre-K Spaces Design for a Quality Classroom by Community Playthings
www.communityplaythings.com

Promoting Creativity for Life Using Open-Ended Materials by Walter F. Drew and Baji Rankin (Young Children, July 2004)

Reflecting Children's Lives: A Handbook for Planning Your Child Centered Curriculum by Deb Curtis and Margie Carter, Published by Redleaf Press, 2011

Young Investigators: The Project Approach in the Early Years by Judy Harris Helm and Lilian Katz, Published by Teachers College, Columbia University, 2011



Further inspiration for intentionally designed environments can be found on these websites:

<http://thethirdteacher.wordpress.com/2011/11/02/using-found-materials/>

<http://thethirdteacher.wordpress.com/2010/07/23/changing-the-space/>

<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=Reggio+Curriculum&view=detail&id=FF10AF54D1DFF6B4C994239D6EDE58B9B5A13046&first=181&FORM=IDFRIR>

<http://progressiveearlychildhoodeducation.blogspot.com/2010/05/beautiful-learning-spaces-in-reggio.html>

http://myclassroomtransformation.blogspot.com.au/2011_09_01_archive.html

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/15899428/PreK-Spaces-Design-for-a-Quality-Classroom>

<http://pinterest.com/dhone4/inspiring-environments-for-prek-and-k/>

<http://reggioinspired.ning.com/photo>

http://www.boulderjourneyschool.com/Pages/Home/Virtual_Tour.htm

<http://pinterest.com/dhone4/art-center-open-ended-art-experiences/>

