

# Environment: DEC Recommended Practices



## Environment

Young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays/disabilities learn, play, and engage with adults and peers within a multitude of environments such as home, school, child care, and the neighborhood. Environmental practices refer to aspects of the space, materials (toys, books, etc.), equipment, routines, and activities that practitioners and families can intentionally alter to support each child's learning across developmental domains. The environmental practices we address in this section encompass the physical environment (e.g., space, equipment, and materials), the social environment (e.g., interactions with peers, siblings, family members), and the temporal environment (e.g., sequence and length of routines and activities). They relate not only to supporting the child's access to learning opportunities but also ensuring their safety. It is important for practitioners to remember that these environmental dimensions are inextricably intertwined for young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays/disabilities and their families. Through implementation of the environmental practices, practitioners and families can promote nurturing and responsive caregiving and learning environments that can foster each child's overall health and development.

We recommend the following practices associated with the child's environment:

- E1.** Practitioners provide services and supports in natural and inclusive environments during daily routines and activities to promote the child's access to and participation in learning experiences.
- E2.** Practitioners consider Universal Design for Learning principles to create accessible environments.
- E3.** Practitioners work with the family and other adults to modify and adapt the physical, social, and temporal environments to promote each child's access to and participation in learning experiences.
- E4.** Practitioners work with families and other adults to identify each child's needs for assistive technology to promote access to and participation in learning experiences.
- E5.** Practitioners work with families and other adults to acquire or create appropriate assistive technology to promote each child's access to and participation in learning experiences.
- E6.** Practitioners create environments that provide opportunities for movement and regular physical activity to maintain or improve fitness, wellness, and development across domains.

### Source:

Division for Early Childhood. (2014). DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.decspec.org/recommendedpractices>