# LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Learning environments influence what learners notice, attempt, revisit and share. They include physical spaces, materials, relationships, routines and the time available to explore.

## DESIGNING CONDITIONS FOR PLAY

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| **SPACE** | Can learners move, gather, work alone and collaborate in ways that suit the experience? |
| **MATERIALS** | Are resources accessible, adaptable and open to more than one possible use? |
| **TIME** | Can learners sustain, return to and extend an idea without unnecessary interruption? |
| **RELATIONSHIPS** | Do learners feel welcomed, respected and supported to take manageable risks? |
| **ACCESS** | Can different learners participate without having to fit one expected way of engaging? |

## THE ENVIRONMENT IS MORE THAN THE ROOM

A well-stocked classroom does not guarantee playful learning. Adult expectations, predictable routines, flexible use of space and opportunities for learner agency all shape what becomes possible.

Ask yourself: What does our environment invite learners to do independently — and what does it make difficult?

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## REFLECTING ON OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Use these prompts while walking through a learning space or observing it in use. Consider whose experience is being supported, and whose may be overlooked.

### NOTICE THE SPACE

Where do learners naturally gather, move, retreat or collaborate? Which areas are rarely used?

### NOTICE PARTICIPATION

Who can access materials and make decisions without adult permission? Who needs additional support?

### NOTICE TIME AND ROUTINES

When can ideas continue or be revisited? Which transitions interrupt sustained engagement?

## A QUICK ENVIRONMENT AUDIT

- ☐ Materials are accessible and invite multiple uses.
- ☐ There are spaces for movement, collaboration and quiet engagement.
- ☐ Learners can influence how spaces and materials are used.
- ☐ Experiences can continue or be revisited over time.
- ☐ Different sensory, communication and mobility needs are considered.

### ONE CHANGE WE COULD MAKE

What could we remove, rearrange, add or protect to expand possibilities?

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**An environment is never neutral: it makes some possibilities easier than others.**

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