INCLUSION
STRATEGIES
& TOOLS

Setting Up For Success: Physical Space

What is the impact of physical space?

Creating a welcoming, stimulating and inclusive environment allows all children to feel supported, accepted and valued.

Reflective Questions

Are different play areas set up in the room?

Does the environment foster independence and a sense of inclusion?

Are there enough toys and materials to keep all the children occupied?

Do all children use the different areas?

Where to find materials?

- Value Village, Saint Vincent de Paul, The Salvation Army, Boomerang Kids, "Buy Nothing" Facebook groups

- Ask for donations from parents/community (e.g. spare parts, sheets, pots, wood, etc.)

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Checklist

Clearly defined interior and exterior spaces

☐ Use furniture and rugs to clearly define play areas (e.g., dramatic play area, reading corner, construction area, crafts, table games, etc.).

☐ Organize materials on shelves/carts using bins, baskets and labels with photos or words.

☐ Find a balance between active and quiet play areas

☐ Designate storage space for long-term projects.

☐ Create an organized and accessible place for children's personal belongings, using solutions such as, lockers labeled with children's names, individual baskets or hooks in a common area.

Set-up, materials and activities that reflect children's interests and needs

☐ Provide basic materials: craft materials, card games, books, construction toys, board games, outdoor play equipment.

☐ Create invitations to play by placing materials on tables upon arrival to encourage play and exploration.

☐ Set up specific areas or plan activities based on children's interests (e.g., a dinosaur sensory bin, a superhero corner, a hair salon, a Pokémon Bingo game, etc.).

☐ Provide sensory materials and activities throughout the day (e.g., sensory bins, a play area or high motor equipment, an obstacle course followed by a quiet drawing or reading activity, etc.).

Have a welcoming and accessible relaxation area available to support regulation

☐ Set up a calming tent or large box with cushions or stuffed animals, books and sensory objects.

☐ A calm bag or bin can also meet children's needs during outings, outdoor play, or in the gym.

INCLUSION STRATEGIES & TOOLS

Setting Up For Success: Structure & Transitions

What is the impact of structure and transitions?

Creating a predictable and well-organized daily routine is important to reduce stress and promote cooperation.

Reflective Questions

Do children know what is expected of them?

How do you capture children's attention to communicate transitions?

Are transitions as short as possible?

When I am on the bus,

The Bus

I sit on my seat.

I keep my hands to myself.

I can look through the window.

I can talk quietly to my friends.

I can wear my headphones when there is too much noise.

I can choose an activity from my calm bag.

First — toilette

Then — gymnase

3 Minute

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Checklist

The structure is well defined

- ☐ Plan a schedule with consistent routines

- ☐ Plan for the unexpected; have a "Plan B" (e.g., bad weather, no access to the gym, etc.).

- ☐ Determine the roles and responsibilities of child care staff (e.g., who does what and when, tasks are distributed fairly according to shift or individual strengths/interests).

- ☐ Set limits and expectations to communicate them well to children and adults (e.g., clear and concise instructions, short sentences, "Tell children what to do" strategy).

- ☐ Model and follow through on expectations, boundaries, and rules so that everything is well organized and upheld (e.g., staff model how to take care of equipment and how to communicate respectfully).

- ☐ Display visual supports (e.g., schedule, calendar, rules, volume scale, staff tasks and schedules, etc.).

Transitions are planned, short and efficient

- ☐ Ensure all staff are ready before signaling the transition to the group to minimize wait times (e.g., the activity is prepared, all materials are accessible, backpacks and equipment are ready for the outing/outdoor play/gym).

- ☐ Provide warnings before transitions (e.g., "In 5 minutes...", use of a timer, visual cues, bell).

- ☐ Determine how to capture children's attention before giving a reminder, instruction, or warning (e.g., turning off the lights, a rallying cry like "Mac and cheese! Everybody freeze!", etc.).

- ☐ Communicate an instruction using visual aids, simple and concrete language (e.g., visual timetable, pictograms, a "First/Then" statement or chart, a concrete object).

- ☐ Prepare and plan transition activities or a bag with waiting items.
  (e.g., singing or incorporating movement during transition periods).

Setting Up For Success: Educator Response

What is the impact of educators' responses?

Secure relationships, caring attention and empathy are essential to fostering a positive climate.

Reflective Questions

What connection rituals do you use every day?

How do you connect with each child individually?

How do you show children that they are valued and listened to?

How do you build strong bonds with children?

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Checklist

Create authentic connections every day

☐ Greet each child and their family individually, every day. (e.g., "Hello (name), how was your weekend?")

☐ Use the 2x10 approach to build a bond with each child (2 minutes of individual connection for 10 consecutive days).

Establish a trusting relationship with each child by being consistent and present.

☐ Provide positive attention to all children in order to build a connection with each of them; to foster learning and motivate the repetition of desired behaviours. (e.g.: "Well done, you asked your friend for a turn with the blocks!").

☐ Clearly communicate what the child needs do (desired behaviour) using a calm, neutral, and reassuring tone.

☐ Foster connections through shared activities (e.g., talking about experiences and interests, making positive comments about shared experiences).

Using empathy and understanding to respond to behaviours

☐ Recognize behaviour as a means of communication; respond with curiosity and care (e.g., offer an empathetic response to validate the child's feelings, wants, and needs).

☐ Create a climate of security and emotional support (e.g., co-regulate with the child).

☐ Model and encourage the expression of emotions.

☐ Teach and support children in resolving conflicts/problems.

☐ Listen carefully (e.g., to a child talking about their dog, a child expressing a feeling, a child showing through non-verbal language that things are not going well, etc.)

Setting Up For Success: Programming

What is the impact of programming?

Providing a varied, inclusive, rich and well-planned program motivates and involves **all** children while taking into account their development and interests.

Reflective Questions

What types of activities encourage children to get involved?

How do you adapt activities to different needs and interests?

Does the programming support all types of learners (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic)?

How do you celebrate different cultures and identities in your programming?

Where to find programming ideas?

- CISS Resource Library
- Internet and social networks (e.g., Instagram/TikTok/Facebook/Pinterest/#)
- Networking within your agency or in the community
- Share on WhatsApp, Padlet, etc.

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Checklist

Activities (indoor/outdoor/outings) reflect children's interests and needs

☐ Observe children to plan motivating and fun experiences based on their interests and needs (e.g., Super Mario bingo game, obstacle course, Super Mario-themed snack or craft, sensory bin with quicksand).

☐ Plan activities and materials that support the interests and needs of all children (e.g., creative activities, sports, board games, multipurpose and sensory materials, etc.).

☐ Ensure there are enough basic games/materials and activities to engage each child in the group according to their interests and abilities (e.g., rotate games, refill craft supplies, provide equipment/games/supplies for outdoor play).

☐ Create a running list of equipment or games to purchase/prepare.

Balance child-led and adult-led activities

☐ Include children in program planning (e.g., group or individual discussion, put a suggestion box at children's availability).

☐ Observe, evaluate and adapt your programming regularly to meet the needs and interests of all children.

☐ Allow children to explore, create and take risks with staff involvement (e.g., the educator prepares a construction activity with hammers and nails, the educator provides versatile materials for children to create obstacle courses in the yard).

☐ Create board games and simple materials with children (e.g., planning long-term projects).

Educators actively engage in activities with children

☐ Have fun with the children (e.g., making positive comments, playing with children, laughing and having fun, etc.).

☐ Share your talents, hobbies and passions – your interests!

Promoting an inclusive and diverse environment

☐ Create a bulletin board to display photos of children in action and their creations.

☐ Offer a variety of toys and books that reflect diversity.

☐ Introduce games from your childhood.