

K.I.S.S. Your Environment Hello-

Keep it Simply Stunning for Authentic Engagement

Presented by Amy E. Weaver

Create Pneumonic:

C ombine-can you add something else to enhance the play?
R earrange-parts be moved or changed?
E liminate-what can you remove or simplify?
A dapt-what else is this like?
T ry-can it be put to other uses?
E xtend-how can you make it more involved?

(Amy E. Weaver 2013)

7 Steps to Creating an Inspiring Environment-

Inspiring Spaces for Young Children (Jessica Deviney, Sandra Duncan, Sara Harris, Mary Ann Rody, Lois Rosenberry Gryphon House, 2010)

1. Nature inspires beauty
2. Color generates interest
3. Furnishings define space
4. Texture adds depth
5. Displays enhance ambiance
6. Elements heighten ambiance
7. Focal points attract attention

Quotes:

"You can't teach curiosity by reading *Curious George* and you can't teach creativity by telling a child they can put the eyeballs anywhere they want on the puppet. Creative thinking must be a part of every interaction or activity you offer and it must start with the environment you design."

Carol Aghyian and Amy Weaver

"If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength."

— [Rachel Carson, *The Sense of Wonder*](#)

Predictors of School Success:	Predictors of School Failure:
Children are more likely to achieve school success if:	Children are less likely to succeed in school if:
They can accurately identify emotions in self and others	They in engage in frequent aggressive behavior
They can relate to teachers and peers in positive ways	They are unable to control impulsive behavior
They can manage anger, frustration, frustration and distress	They engage in oppositional behavior
They can enjoy learning and approach it with enthusiasm	They are unable to cooperate with others
They are comfortable engaging in independent activities	They constantly seek attention
	They ignore peers or teachers

Open Ended Activities:

Seeing materials and activities not for the objectives they teach, but for the possibilities they provide frees us to interact and to watch the moments of brilliance unfold. When children create play and play strategies instead of simply complete the task, they are using far more complex processing strategies. This takes more time and focus building a solid foundation for later school success. It's only that you know the answers- it's that you know how to get the answers.

Tips for the Environment:

- ✦ Remove 1/3 of the things you have on your walls and 1/3 of the things you have on you shelves- too much stimulation is not a good thing
- ✦ Open ended materials provide more ability to stay at task then store bought or catalog materials
- ✦ Child initiated activities provide more sophisticated language opportunities and will help boys engage in language based activities
- ✦ Create science and math opportunities that include more than one child at a time so that girls can use their language strengths while engaging in abstract concept learning
- ✦ When looking at the centers in your room, try to break out of the “because it’s what we’ve always done,” mold. Think of Dramatic play as a place to develop roles so that you can break away from the “house” theme. For blocks think about it as construction so that you can think beyond blocks.
- ✦ Try not to think about how a child will use a material, it might close your eyes to possibilities

- ◆ Worry less about the objectives you assign to activities **before** you implement them but be willing to reflect back on all of the learning that occurred while the children were engaged with the materials

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