Exploring school-age children

Capital District Child Care Council

a tipsheet for parents and caregivers of children ages 5 to 13

Creating a Learning Environment

The space around us effects the way we feel and what we feel like doing. The same statement is true for school-age children. The environment should be comfortable and home-like. The space for a school-age program is extremely important. Children feel most at home when they have helped design their own spaces. Children need different environments to accommodate their different moods and activities.

Tips For Creating a Learning Environment:

Include Space for the following activities
- Creative Arts
- Board Games & Puzzles
- Blocks & Construction
- Dramatic Play
- Physical Games
- Nutrition & Cooking
- Quiet
- Music, Movement & Dance
- Science & Nature
- Math & Computer
- Sand & Water

Soft Space that is comfortable and relaxing
- Pillows
- Bean bag chairs
- Rugs and carpets (carpet pieces work great!)

Private Space
- Personal space for belongings
- Small space to be with a few friends
- Private space to be alone

Work Space
- Tables and chairs that are the appropriate size for school-age children
- Variety of work surfaces that are easy to clean and allow for messy activities
- Adequate size for the number of children involved

Well Organized Space for a Wide Range of Simultaneous Activities
- Without interruptions
- Active play away from quiet area
- Pathways that do not disturb ongoing activities

Furniture for school-age programs includes
- Dividers for private spaces
- Bookshelves
- Snack table
- Refrigerator for perishable snack items
- Telephone
- Cubbies or baskets for belongings
- Portable shelving units (available for children)
- Storage area for teacher material and confidential information
- Bulletin board/parent tables/sign-in and out table
- Space for childrens' creations

Creating a Floor Plan

Once a program has decided what areas they want in their school-age program, then the fun begins - creating a floor plan that works. When creating the layout of a school-age program there are many things to consider.
- Traffic flow
- Storage use at site
- Activity levels
- Noise levels
- Lighting convenience and level

The space around us affects the way we feel