

The Environment



The EYFS Statutory Framework tells us "It is essential that children are provided with safe and secure environments in which to interact and explore rich and diverse learning and developmental opportunities." A child's environment has a huge impact on their behaviour. As practitioners, we need to adapt the environment to meet every child's needs.

What are the common difficulties shown by children when the environment doesn't meet their needs?

- Children become frustrated/bored because of the limited experiences on offer and express this through inappropriate behaviour
- Children failing to listen. It is difficult to 'tune into' adults giving instructions if there is a lot of noise or the radio is on continually.

Why do environmental difficulties occur?

- Staff not keeping up to date with training
- Lack of funding for resources
- Staff not skilled at evaluating the environment and making changes as necessary
- High turn-over of staff
- Staff not skilled at observing children's interests
- Children do not have the words to express how they feel
- Staff do not have the confidence to make changes



How can we help?

- Partner more experienced with less experienced staff
- Keep staff consistent in a room
- Conduct training on observation and including children
- Constantly offer even the youngest children choice
- Find out what motivates and interests each child
- Develop room rules with the children. Give copies to parents
- Set up an emotions board for children to express how they feel
- Are staff polite and respectful
- Do staff have opportunities to discuss the environment and their practice
- Conduct an environmental audit (see Inclusion Development Programme)
 - are resources accessible
 - are there any areas that are difficult to access and so cause friction for the children
 - is the atmosphere and décor calm
 - is music playing all the time, are there 'quiet' times
 - are there areas where children can 'chill out' and 'let off steam'
 - are there opportunities to go outside especially when they have just arrived
 - do you follow a quiet activity with an opportunity for vigorous exercise
 - do you have a structure to the day