

The trained teacher constantly evaluates the environment, following the child for clues about what works and what doesn't. The child engages the environment as a fundamental component of her quest for knowing, engaging, learning, and growing. The young child studies a prepared environment, a classroom for clues to understand how the adults value learning.

Among the variety of tools to help teachers evaluate their classrooms, this list of 19 questions from Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren (2011, p. 131) will be useful in evaluating environments. Think of a space designed for children, a classroom, a playground or a home environment. To what extent do the following 19 statements describe space? Use this checklist to thoughtfully evaluate the effectiveness of an environment, then proceed to write a short essay, 3-5 paragraphs, 1-3 pages, double spaced, summarizing your evaluation process.

1. Children move from one part of the room to another without interfering with other children.
2. Pathways and boundaries between learning centers are clear.
3. Areas are arranged to encourage active child choice.
4. Storage is labeled and near center so that children can put things away.
5. Shelves are neat and uncluttered.
6. Quiet areas are clustered away from more active, noisy areas.
7. There are places where children may work alone, with a small group, or in a large group.
8. Children and adults can gather comfortably in the large group space.
9. Temporary centers are adjacent to related core centers.
10. Adults see the children all the times.
11. The setting has been checked for safety.
12. Furnishings are child size, clean, and comfortable.
13. Decorations reflect the children's specific backgrounds, experiences, and identities.
14. Differences in ethnicity, ability, culture, and economic conditions are reflected in the books, pictures, and other materials in the classroom.
15. The environment is filled with words, books, and symbols.
16. Children can do things independently in some centers.
17. Children make choices, use materials appropriately and with care, and experience success in most or all centers.
18. There is a convenient place for children to keep personal belongings.
19. Adult areas are separated from child areas.

Submit your essay to dropbox by the due date.