

Supporting Concept Development: *Designing Learning Environments*

Use these ideas and questions to build on what you have learned and extend your practice.

THINK ABOUT IT!

- **Self-Reflection**

Use these questions to think about your own practice.

- **Reflect with Others**

Supervisors, directors, coaches, and teachers/providers can be reflective partners.

- **The Power of Practice**

Invite a colleague to join you; observe or record each other and share ideas.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

- When I was a child, what place(s) did I enjoy exploring or investigating? Why? What made the place(s) special?
- How can I stretch my practice to be more intentional in planning the layout of the learning environment?
- When during the day can I reflect on my environment design and take time to plan for future learning opportunities?
- How can I change the layout of my environment to encourage children to explore and investigate actively? How can I make materials more accessible for children to explore on their own?
- How comfortable am I with being flexible in adapting the learning environment based on children's interests? How can I stretch my comfort zone?

TRY IT OUT!

Sketch a layout of your early learning environment.

- Identify the open space and interest areas in your early learning environment. Which spaces offer the most opportunities for children's exploration and investigation?
- Label where you can make small changes to interest areas and open space to allow for more exploration and investigation.
- Draw a revised layout of your early learning environment.
- Write down ideas for additional materials to include in each area of the environment based on the interests of children.

Using the sketch of your revised layout, make these changes in the early learning environment.

How Did It Go?

After changing your layout, reflect on this planning exercise and record your thoughts. What did you notice? What worked and why? What might you try next time?

What Next?

Practice again! Try this exercise again when you notice that children develop new interests and outgrow the space. Use the next pack in this bundle, *Extending Exploration*, to think more about what kinds of materials to provide and how to extend children's learning while using those materials. Use Effective Assessment pack 8, *Organizing for Assessment*, to think about how environments can be arranged to create windows of opportunity to collect assessment information about young children.