



Colorful star

The Right Stuff

Resources to Help Realize the Promise of Each Vermont Child



Featured Topic: Creating Environments that Reflect Children and Families Issue No. 22 July 2018

The *Vermont Guiding Principles* remind us that children learn “within the context of secure and authentic relationships, play and interactions within their environments.” This is why, *the document continues*, it is so important for early childhood environments to be “responsive and appropriate to [each] child’s culture(s), language(s), abilities, developmental level, identities, and needs.”

This issue of The Right Stuff highlights free resources for learning about and creating environments that foster and inspire each and every young child in Vermont. Please enjoy these checklists, articles, videos, and websites and share them with colleagues and families.

Welcoming Refugee Children into Early Childhood Classrooms (2-6)

<https://www.naeyc.org/tyc/article/welcoming-refugee-children-early-childhood-classes>

This brief article offers both effective practices and resources.

Designing Environments (3-5)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/designing-environments>

Supporting each and every child requires attention to both the physical environment and the social environment. A visit to this site will yield a variety of resources for doing both, including a video, specific tips for teachers and families, and evidence-based practices for supporting children who are dual language learners. Don’t miss the section on how environment can affect behavior.

Creating Environments That Include Children’s Home Languages and Cultures (3-5)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/specific-strategies-support-dual-language-learners-dlls-when-adults-do-not>

This handout provides examples of how physical environments in early childhood settings can reflect and include all children’s home languages and cultures.

Creating a Welcoming Early Childhood Program for LGBT-Headed Families (0-9)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/lgbt-checklist-for-programs.pdf>

Use this checklist to assess what your early childhood program is doing well to create a welcoming environment for all children and families. It will also help you identify opportunities to enhance your program. Resources and related materials are available at <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/article/creating-welcoming-early-childhood-program-lgbt-headed-families>

Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices on Environment (0-5)

<http://ectacenter.org/decrp/topic-environment.asp>

Young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays/disabilities learn, play, and engage with adults and peers within a multitude of environments such as home, school, child care, and the neighborhood. Space, materials (toys, books, etc.), equipment, routines, and activities can intentionally be altered by professionals and families to support each child’s learning across developmental domains. Visit the site above to find checklists of evidence-based practices and practice guides with video clips for families and professionals. A module on the Recommended Practices on Environment offers ideas for how to adapt environments to support young children with disabilities. The module is available at <https://rpm.fpg.unc.edu/module-3-environment>

Never Too Early to Learn: Antibias Education for Young Children (3-5)

<http://www.kappanonline.org/hooven-never-early-learn-antibias-education-young-children/>

While it is one thing to voice support for race-conscious, anti-bias principles, it is something else entirely to bring them to life in the classroom. This article describes the process that the educators in one program used to achieve that goal, using the actual words and examples of the teachers.

Children's Books (3-9)

<https://socialjusticebooks.org/>

One way to incorporate images and stories of children like those you work with is through children's books that reflect diversity. This website features carefully selected lists of multicultural and social justice books for children, young adults, and educators.

Do Your Environments Support Boys and Girls Equitably? (4-9)

Here are three awesome video clips that will make you think twice about how your environments support boys AND girls.

- Boys and Girls Paid Differently <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bH9AyDYbrEc>
- Boys and Girls React to Salty Lemonade <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KD9-jnLD4IY>
- This is Your Brain on Engineering <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArNAB9GFDog>

Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades (3-9)

<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/film-kits/starting-small>

This film kit includes a DVD and book in which seven classrooms are profiled. Each is a classroom in which teachers are helping young children build inclusive, equitable, caring communities across differences that too often divide. Their approaches are as varied as their faces and names, yet they share three crucial habits: reflecting continually on their own assumptions, goals and behavior; talking with their peers about how these factors conflict as well as coincide; and practicing social skills as diligently as mental or physical ones. The book may be downloaded at http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/kits/Teachers_Study_Guide.pdf NOTE: To obtain a free copy of the training kit, you will need to register and provide your name and information about where you work with children and families.

It's Hard to Be What You Can't See (adults)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marian-wright-edelman/its-hard-to-be-what-you-c_b_8022776.html

This article underscores the importance of children who are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, heritage, and ability to see themselves in the books, stories, art, and conversations that are part of each preschool. Read it, then use it to make sure children can see themselves and the accomplishments of people who look like them in your classroom resources.

The Right Stuff is a free, one-way listserv that is distributed monthly. Each issue features resources for supporting the learning and development of young children who are culturally, linguistically, and individually diverse, birth to Grade 3, and their families. All resources are readily available and free. **The Right Stuff** may be freely shared or reproduced. Past issues are available at <http://fpg.unc.edu/presentations/right-stuff>

The Right Stuff is compiled by Camille Catlett, supported by the Vermont Agency of Education, and funded by the Vermont Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant.

To receive your copy of The Right Stuff each month, send an email **with no message** to subscribe-the_right_stuff_listserv@listserv.unc.edu

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