TIPS FOR TEACHERS
DESIGNING ENVIRONMENTS

**Design the Physical Space**

**Assess the Spaces**
- Complementary areas in proximity while noisy/quiet areas are separated.
- Visual display cues for children.
- Adequate room to move, yet not too much open space.
- Clearly defined boundaries and pathways.
- Elements that reflect children’s cultures and home life in a respectful and authentic way.
- Warm, home-like features (pillows, curtains, plants, student photos, etc.).

**Strategize Possibilities**
- Brainstorm possible ways to address challenges and limitations.
- Discuss ideas to fully utilize the strengths of the space.
- Experiment, move things around, try out ideas.

**Arrange and Modify as Needed**
- Small changes, like lowering a shelf or using stop signs on closed centers, can assist children struggling with an aspect of the room.

**Design the Classroom Contents**

**Relevance to Learning**
- The items (games, books, art supplies, etc.) give children opportunities to develop skills they are currently working on.
- The items are selected because children’s interests will increase participation in specific learning activities.
- The items relate to current classroom themes or teaching concepts.

**Variety and Quantity**
- Address different developmental levels in your selections.
- Supply the classroom with novel, complementary materials.
- Ensure that there are enough duplicates of the most valued toys.

**Integration and Individualizing**
- Put related books and writing materials in every center and dolls or puppets in the blocks and library areas.
- The items are chosen because they motivate and engage specific children and match their interests.

**Design the Groupings**

**Decide on the Purpose**
- Introduce a concept or teach a skill. Relate it to children’s goals or a specific classroom theme.
- Will this activity benefit from lots of back and forth interactions, or is it about building the classroom community?
- Something fun, based on children’s interests.

**Determine the Composition**
- Number of children.
- Matching skilled children with less proficient ones or clumping similar skill levels.

**Develop a Plan**
- Designate how the children will be grouped and what activity each group will do with which adult.