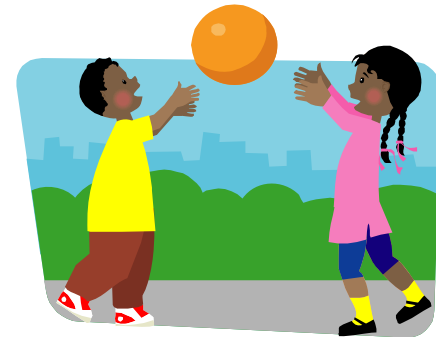


Learning Environment for Young Children 123

“Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another”

-John Dewey



Promoting Positive Attitudes towards Diversity

Roots and Wings, York, S., 1991

- Our classrooms convey attitudes to the children and parents by what is included in the room and by what is left out
- Omissions can be as destructive as stereotypes and inaccurate information.
- Leaving culturally relevant and anti-bias education out of the curriculum sends the message...“you don't need to know this, your too young to learn about this, it doesn't concern you.”
- It is our job as teachers to include in the environment all kinds of people doing many different things.
- “Normalizing diversity” is the result when we display pictures and materials that reflect diversity.

Example: If children are learning about shells, display a variety of shells.

If children are learning about the color red, create a display showing many shades of the color red.

Promoting Positive Attitudes towards Diversity

Roots and Wings, York, S., 1991

"Use the classroom environment to give children the message that diversity is good and it's a normal part of everyday life."

Promoting Positive Attitudes towards Diversity

Roots and Wings, York, S., 1991

Home School Connection - Does your classroom environment include...

- Photographs of children in classroom
- Photographs of children with their families
- Photographs and posters of important people from the children's home cultures
- Photographs and posters of children's homelands
- Classroom labels and alphabet and number charts in children's home languages
- Art and fabric from children's home cultures
- Dolls, puppets, and block play figures representing the identities of the children in your class
- Music and books with audiotapes from children's home cultures
- Games from the children's home cultures
- Pretend food, eating, and cooking utensils from the child's home culture
- Computer with Internet access to connect to culturally related Web sites

Responding to Discriminatory Behavior

Roots and Wings, York, S., 1991

- Don't ignore it
- Explain what was observed and engage participants in discussion
- Do not fear conflict
- Become aware of your own attitudes
- Be understanding
- Recognize your own frustration
- Model expected behavior
- Be ready to intervene
- Be nonjudgmental
- Distinguish between categorical and stereotypical thinking



Responding to Discriminatory Behavior

Discuss and Respond...

- "You're stupid"
- "You talk funny; you can't sit by me"
- "You have glasses; your ugly"
- "I don't like you"

Learning Environment

- Reflect language of children and families in the program
- Reflect culture of children and families in the program and community
- Reflect customs of children and families in program and community
- Promoting Cultural Diversity and Cultural Competency Self-assessment checklist

Classroom Rules

- Children need limits to feel safe and comfortable
- Children vary in the degree in which they conform to a routine (individual needs)
- Include children in developing rules, making new rules, changing rules - children will be more likely to conform.
- Major objective for young children is to teach self-control
- Teachers help children learn self-control by:
 - Explaining consequences of undesirable behaviors
 - Helping children recognize and find solutions for problem behavior



Classroom Rules

Importance of Consistency

- Combine affection with fair and steady rules
- Children feel secure when adult is consistent
- Be clear to eliminate potential problems
- Apply rules to all children
- Explain reason for rule
- State rules positively, tell children what they can do.
- Some rules vary between adults
 - Tolerance for noise
 - Running in room

Wawona Preschool Rules

- Respect self
- Be respectful of others
- Be respectful of materials