

Learning Environment

Look at schedules, transitions between activities, room arrangements, rules, emotional climate, and teacher-child relationships. For additional support and implementation of these ideas contact the [Early Childhood Council of Larimer County](http://www.ecclc.org/contact) (<http://www.ecclc.org/contact>)

1. ASSESS YOUR ENVIRONMENT

[Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning Environmental Strategies handout](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout6.pdf)
(<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout6.pdf>)

- Do a program/classroom environment self-assessment to gather information.
- Have classroom staff observe all the children in the class and the interactions with the child exhibiting social emotional issues.
- The teacher/assistant/early childhood staff at the facility records observations and documents them at least weekly.

2. TEACHING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS

[Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning What Works Briefs](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/what_works.html)
(http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/what_works.html)

- [Label feelings in self and others to start perspective taking](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout21.pdf)
(<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout21.pdf>)
- [Problem Solve](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout9.pdf)
(<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout9.pdf>)
- [Emotional Literacy](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout21.pdf)
(<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout21.pdf>)
- [Friendship Skills](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout8.pdf)
(<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout8.pdf>)

3. INTERVENTION

a) Use positive reinforcement when addressing negative/disruptive behavior.

- The early childhood provider may see normal behavior as challenging or disruptive and may need to change their expectations.
- Use alternative, positive activities, and interventions to re-direct the child's challenging behavior (for example during a challenging behavior occurrence redirect the child to help distribute an art project, help clean, read a book).
- Observe the strengths/behaviors of the child in the classroom setting.
- Observe the challenging behaviors of the child in the classroom setting.
- Send home weekly reports of the positive and negative/challenging behaviors the child exhibited.
 - Early childhood staff may need to talk with families and formulate a plan or modify the existing one (Collaborate/Refer section goes into more detail)

b) Intentionally teach children the expectations you have for their behavior within their capability.

- Individual social and emotional intervention supports for children ensure that each child has the opportunity to be understood and responded to in an effective manner.
- Children need to learn at their own pace based on their individual temperaments, development, and family culture.
- Create a social and emotional respectful learning environment that incorporates activity time. Foster a sense of safety and trust for each child.

- Areas that can be taught to your children and/or addressed environmentally:
 - Identify classroom rules.
 - Make 3-5 developmentally appropriate classroom rules.
 - Teach the classroom rules every day.
 - Use positive language when talking about rules and actions pertaining to challenging behaviors. Examples: “use your quiet voice”, “be kind to others”, and “use your walking feet”.
 - Have the children in the classroom come up with rules and make it a fun project to work on together.
 - Make and use a visual schedule.
 - Do something visual to show the routine.
 - Use consistent routine daily throughout the year.
 - Break down the schedule in detail for the children. Sometimes we talk too generally for children and they need specific details to understand.
 - Make sure the schedule is referenced throughout the day. In doing that gives consistency so children know what is coming next, which decreases anxiety in a child.
 - Create a consistent routine. Doing this helps children know what is coming next.
 - Look at schedules, rules and room arrangements to determine if these can be adjusted to help the child be successful.
 - Use transition activities and limit the number of transitions and length of time spent on transitions in the child’s day.
 - Explain daily changes. Prepare children for changes and routine. Example: “We can’t go outside today because of bad weather”.

4. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- Social and emotionally respectful environments are strengthened by positive communication and interactions between the adults and children.
- Children need to be able to form positive loving attachments with adults who are predictable, calm, and tuned in to their needs.
- Early childhood staff play an important role in teaching children directly about how to interact and get along with others.
- Early learning settings are ideal for teaching children about emotions, the feelings of others, understanding and communicating about needs, wants, and feelings.
- Social and emotional competence is the foundation for success in school and is linked to being a high functioning adult. Remember we are looking at adaptations to find ways to help the children be successful.

5. RESOURCES FOR POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

[What Works Briefs](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/what_works.html)

http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/what_works.html

[Inventory of Practices/Environmental Assessment Tool](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/modules/module1/handout4.pdf)

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/modules/module1/handout4.pdf>

Early Childhood Challenging Behavior Tool

<http://www.ecclc.org/child-care-providers/challenging-behavior-tool>

