

Consolidated Notes

From CRNA Meeting December 12, 2014 - St. Isabella School

Topic: Environment

Discussed Resources:

- Authentic Childhood by Susan Fraser
- Andy Goldsworthy
 - Art as inspiration
 - Finding Andy project – preschool project
 - Grisdale, England – forest art
- George Foreman – website: Videatives
- iPad apps: A Beautiful Mess, Skitch
- access Home Depot for free paint chips
- IKEA for small pencils, measuring tapes and packaging

Notes:

- Have I intentionally considered the materials and furniture (both selection of pieces/objects and their placement) in the classroom/space and asked myself – why is it there? What is the purpose?
 - Furniture
 - Teachers/adult desk – have you considered having all spaces accessible to children? Is there a way to remove the ‘adult only’ space/furniture?
 - Is there such a thing as too much stuff in a space?
 - Sometimes less is more
 - Materials
 - Communal space and materials; creates community
 - Use of loose parts; corks, rocks, stones, glass marbles, etc
 - George Foreman; what are the affordances of the materials you make available?
- How do you use the interests of children to drive your work? How do we collect/gain this insight into our children?
 - Write down what they say (group discussions, large and small)
 - Use post-its (place over rooms so always available)
 - One scribbler/notebook per year/group to keep notes together/organized
 - Maybe one notebook by a specific area (fish tank, blocks, mirrors etc) to record observation from that specific spot

- Use recorders (in certain spots as above or in small/large group discussions or one on one discussions); could be tape recorder, digital, video
- photos
- Can be teacher interacting with child or children interacting with each other
- Children's written work/drawings
- Give the camera to the children – great way for them to show you what's important to them
- Allow time! Be flexible! Trust in the children.
- Problem: children breaking objects in classroom
 - Do the children have a voice in their environment?
 - Do they have a sense of ownership of space and materials?
 - Honouring children's work helps define their identity as a learner and can influence how they choose to use their space
 - Valuing children work in environment
 - Time and space very important
 - When we choose work that isn't based on holiday/season/restricted time, work doesn't need to be taken down when that season/holiday etc is over – can be displayed for long periods of time
 - Is there a way to restructure environment to suit kids with breakage issues?
 - Turn curiosities into questions, address their questions
 - Trying physical activities (yoga, deep breathing, Brain Gym) to help calm children who may become destructive
- What to do with projects that take up a lot of space?
 - Can be displayed in other school/building areas, doesn't have to be contained to classroom or hallway. Could be foyer, learning commons, etc
- Are you using the environment to set up provocations?
 - Getting kids to wonder and create and get out of the routine of receiving information
- Lighting can be a challenge
 - Mirrors can help reflect light you have
 - Artificial plants may give illusion of lightness
 - LED lights are often used/ have limited powers
 - Solar lights (recharge from electric lights)
 - Lighting from under shelving
 - Create light tubes from plastic bottles
 - Research doesn't support turning off all lights as eye development is still occurring
 - Lower the ceiling by criss-crossing a laundry line and string with LED lights