

## SUGGESTIONS FOR ENRICHING THE ENVIRONMENT

- Design children's spaces as places where they experience joy, feel comfortable, safe, and successful.
  - Include photos of each child with their family, as well as other materials that reflect their homes and *cultures* throughout the environment.
  - Place unbreakable mirrors in several different areas of the room, such as at the changing table and on the walls at children's eye level.
  - Provide many opportunities for children to explore the outside natural environment, as well as the indoor environment.
  - Provide opportunities for children to do "inside" activities in the outdoor setting such as painting, reading, instruments, or kitchen/dramatic play.
  - Label cubbies or personal spaces with children's names and photos.
  - Provide activities that are stimulating and challenging yet achievable.
  - Provide cozy areas where children can be alone if they wish within sight of an adult.
  - Provide a *dramatic play*/housekeeping area with familiar real-life materials children can use in their play, such as telephones, dishes, food cartons, pots, and pans to encourage *independence*.
  - Set up a "safe haven" table near the door, where children who have trouble separating may ease into classroom routines by engaging with playdough or simple puzzles.
- Provide shelves and other spaces for children's extended art projects.
  - Display work from all the children at their eye level. Include children's own descriptions of their work as part of the display. Occasionally use paper or inexpensive frames or mats to highlight their work.
  - Provide materials and activities that are *developmentally appropriate* for a wide range of ages and abilities. Include *adaptive materials* so children can fully participate and experience success. Offer choices of *open-ended* art materials, simple and more advanced puzzles, and a variety of blocks that children can access independently. Set up a safe woodworking area with child-safe tools and safety glasses.

