

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENRICHING THE ENVIRONMENT

- Work to develop a sense of community among the children and adults by reading books, singing and playing together.
- Allow each child in the environment to have responsibilities such as setting the table, helping to put away toys, watering plants, caring for pets, and contributing to the good of the group.
- Create inviting interest areas or centers in the room where small groups of children can play. Include a housekeeping/*dramatic play* area with materials that represent a variety of *cultures* and families, changing *props* throughout the year.
- Provide plenty of time and opportunity for enjoyable peer and adult interactions during routine times, such as snack time, hand washing, and clean up. Avoid hurrying children.
- Promote cooperation and sharing by having enough materials in centers/*interest areas* and elsewhere around the room that allow children to play together.
- Provide activities that promote taking turns with peers such as simple board games.
- Provide opportunities for children to play cooperatively in pairs and in small groups to foster friendships. Make sure they have opportunities to play with and learn to appreciate all their peers.
- Provide books about families, friends, and other relationships in interest areas.
- Provide books and music that depict a various cultures and traditions.
- Provide activities that help children get to know each other and help them recognize and appreciate similarities and differences (graph eye color, hair color, gender, and how they get to school).

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

- Continually nurture individual relationships with children daily, working in close proximity to help each of them develop a sense of trust and belonging.
- *Nurture* relationships with each family, treating them as valued partners with frequent conversations and seeking their input.
- Be honest with children, providing a good model for them to follow. Follow through on what has been told to the child
- To promote *attachment*, assign one specific person to be the primary caregiver for each young child for as long as possible.
- Reassure family members that children can form attachments to more than one person. Children will not become less attached to family even if they have positive relationships to others.
- Support each child's attachment to their family. Greet both children and family members as they arrive and depart. Talk about family members with children during the day. Set up a *communication* system (report form, notebook, text, or e-mail) to let families know what the child's day has been like.
- Encourage family members to say goodbye to their children and reassure them that loved ones will be back.
- Help children learn strategies to deal with separation from their parents, such as bringing something special from home (their own or the parents).