

Environments for Playful Inquiry: Where do I start?

1-Questions to Ask Yourself:

- What are your intentions for the start of your year? What essential things do you want your students and families to experience as you settle in? How do you want them to feel?
- How do you teach? How do you want to grow as a teacher? How will the environment you create support the teacher you want to be?
- Collect images and words that describes the spaces that inspire you
- What are your hopes and dreams for your space?
- What do you think your students hope for? How can you find out more about them?
 - Where do students love to be most?
 - Where do they like to be together or alone?
 - What are the spaces used the least or with only adult direction?
- What are the challenges of this space?
- What do you like about it?
- What are your must haves?
- What are your must go's?
- What spaces do you want to add that you don't currently have?
- What spaces are you willing to part with?

2- Reflect on Principles of Classroom Design for Playful Inquiry

Where do you see these elements in your classroom already?

Where do you see potential to bring them in?

- Image of the Child/ Children's Voices/ Reflect diversity of community
- Flexible Space that can change over time
- Warm and Welcoming: Varying heights/ Textures/ Multi Sensory
- Organization: Materials/ Routines
- Relational: Agency/ Empathy/Collaborative/ Group/ Individual Work
- Realize latest Brain Research in what helps children to learn best and addresses trauma and meeting basic needs for safety and scarcity

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3- Make a list of what you have to have and what are you willing to let go of?

- Is there a filing cabinet in your room that you haven't opened in the last few years?
- Do you really need a desk and a kidney table?
- How can tables or spaces in your room serve multiple purposes?
- Where else can you store curriculum materials that you are not using on a daily basis? Are there other storage areas where you can keep things that you can rotate in and out of your classroom?
- What materials can you share and rotate with your team?

4- Draw a map of your classroom

- layout what areas you want to include (gathering area/ blocks/ table groups/ small worlds/ maker space/ art studio/ book boxes/ classroom library/ loose parts/ writing/ cozy nooks for 1 or 2/ light table...)
- make difficult decisions about what you do and do not have space for
- feel ok to start small, you don't need to change everything all at once, it's ok to pick one area and go from there

5- Visit [this link](#) for inspiration from a BSD K Classroom Makeover

6- Start moving things around, try things out, you can always change things if something doesn't work once the children arrive

- invite students to give input once they've had a chance to explore the environment

"Each time I walk into a classroom, I can choose the place within myself from which my teaching will come, just as I can choose the place within my students toward which my teaching will be aimed. I need not teach from a fearful place: I can teach from my curiosity or hope or empathy or honesty, places that are as real within me as are my fears. I can have fear, but I need not be fear..."

-Parker Palmer