

# Peaceful Practices: Children as Decision Makers — Creating Time and Space for Playful Learning



<b>Age Range:</b>	Infants to kindergarteners
<b>Rationale (Why):</b>	Putting play opportunities central when planning a balanced curriculum or daily schedule builds the pro-social brain. Assuring time and space in every group care program for play develops skills such as collaborating, problem solving and creativity.
<b>Resources:</b>	Knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice. Literature from programs such as Reggio Emilia, Montessori, High Scope
<b>Environment set-up, inside and outside:</b>	Design the indoor and outdoor environments so the children, as much as possible, are able to choose materials, playmates and spaces to play. Teachers observe the children's use of space as it is set up with a willingness to rearrange the space so there is more room to play actively.
<b>Materials needed:</b>	Age appropriate, safe furniture and play materials with a focus on open ended materials such as blocks, sand, water, manipulatives, art supplies, dramatic play, and books.

## How, Process, Directions

<b>Opening: Introduce the topic</b>	Create the space for infants and toddlers to move around freely. and interact with the materials that they chose and with each other.  Engage the 3- to 6-year-old children in the process of deciding if the space needs to be changed to facilitate their play.
<b>Explorations: Children's Work</b>	Infants and toddlers have time to play both during routines and play time. Preschoolers have ample time (45 minutes or more) of play both inside and outside.
<b>Wondering Questions — adapt for specific experiences</b>	Examples of open-ended questions: <b>Planning questions...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ...where you would like to play today in our classroom?</li><li>• ...what would you like to do wherever you are playing?</li><li>• ...who would you like to play with?</li></ul>
<b>Extended opportunities</b>	Select books or rotate materials that reflect the play, problems or issues that the children are encountering or working through. For books, go to the list of Children's Books for Peaceful Practices.
<b>Closing reflection</b>	In the group setting, review any interesting and insightful things that took place with children's input.

**Notes to share with other teachers and families**

Explain to the parents of the infants and toddlers that a focus will be on active play inside and outside and that the learning environment and the schedule will be changing.

Describe how the activities that engage the children in play are based on learning to be decision makers and peaceful together. Peace is based upon trust, welcoming one and all, cherishing the contributions everyone makes, offering help and support, as we come together with all our gifts and differences.

Create classroom stories to share on play that was observed on a day and ask for comments from parents and children.

**Final notes**

Have fun!