



Environmental Checklist

Your environment can help set the tone for inclusion. When setting up an inclusive environment, consider multiple elements, including the physical layout and sensory input. For example, is the space wide enough for a student using a wheelchair to navigate? Are there loud noises upon entering the space from another area? Consider building *Chill zones* – a place to take a break – to support students that get overwhelmed or overstimulated.

Physical Environment

- All students can reach program materials
- A variety of materials and activities are available to meet students' diverse strengths
- Materials are modified as needed
- All students can navigate each program space
- Schedules are posted in each program space and are followed
- All students are prepared for schedule changes
- Staff members cue or signal activity transitions
- Transitions are structured and planned
- Transitions are modified to meet individualized student needs (e.g., more time to travel between program areas, additional reminders about the amount of time left until a transition, a buddy to walk with during transitions, etc.)

Sensory Environment

- A quiet space is available with calming items (*chill zones*)
- There are designated spaces and times for movement breaks
- There are “visual breaks” in the activity area (e.g., there is some blank space on the walls)
- There is a system for alerting students when the noise level is too high
- When possible, glare from windows and lighting is minimized
- Staff recognize students' signs and signals when the sensory environment becomes overwhelming and they make modifications accordingly

Social-Emotional Environment

- Staff greet students by name
- Students help shape the group expectations
- Group expectations accommodate a range of developmental levels
- Staff are clear in teaching students how to meet expectations
- Staff model and coach appropriate behavior
- Student choice is built into activity options
- Staff chunk tasks/activities into manageable parts
- Staff customize participation expectations to individual student needs and abilities