

Making Learning Spaces Accessible for Early Math

Engaging learning environments are intentionally organized spaces that intentionally promote mathematical learning for all children.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although math learning can occur anywhere, when exploring the LT activities, it is best to have a designated math area where all children can easily access the learning space. • The math learning environment can be a temporary or permanent space that has been predetermined and outfitted with appropriate materials for the activity (this includes wholegroup, small group, or one-on-one learning activities).
<p>The Learning Space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arranged with well-defined physical boundaries and pathways. • set-up with adequate room to move but not too much open space. • one with appropriate lighting (i.e., natural light, dimmed/less harsh lighting). • set apart from noisier areas to limit distractions. • labeled (in all languages used in the classroom) and accompanied by a visual • responsive to each learner by making sure their individual area in the space is clearly defined (i.e., chairs on each side of the table instead of side-by-side or painter's tape/trays to define space). • clearly defined with a visual of how many learners in the space at a time. • adapted for learners' size- visuals at their eye level, items on shelves within reach.
<p>Positioning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children learn best when their bodies are positioned appropriately. Proper positioning promotes increased hand/limb function. • When setting up the activity at a table (standing or sitting), set the table to an appropriate height for children to comfortably reach all materials without hunchingover or standing on tippy toes. • When setting up the activity on the floor, the child should be stable and positioned in a way that supports the movements required by the activity. A small pillow orrolled up towel can be used to help support comfortable positioning.
<p>Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize visuals to detail expectations for appropriate exploration of math manipulatives and activities. • Display visuals of learners doing previous math explorations to promote ownership and excitement in the task. Use pictures of children in the class or photos positively displaying race, gender, and ability. • Provide flexible seating arrangements and supports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory cushions (or wiggle seats) can be used in chairs or on the floor. These are often inflatable cushions with bumpy surfaces for children who need sensory input but can come in other variations. • Tennis balls can be added to bottom of chair legs to reduce resistance and noise when moving • Exercise balls can be used instead of chairs • Adding bungee cords to chairs for kids to bounce