**Essential Components of the Prepared Environment for Creating a**

**Peace Literate (PL) Culture of Respect and Belonging in a**

**Montessori Learning Community**

**1. The Physical Environment**

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| **Essential Components**  | **Details for your grade band** |
| **a) Materials*** Provided by students as co-creators of their environment, establishing belonging, e.g.,
	+ Student art shared after lessons on, e.g.,
		- Fires of distress
		- Alternatives to aggression
		- Nonphysical needs
* Provided by adults
* Core values/virtues of each building are displayed
* Peace Literacy materials displayed in Peace Corner, e.g.,
	+ - 9 Nonphysical Needs
		- Fires Beneath Aggression
		- 7 Deep Roots of Healthy Belonging
		- Muscles of Our Humanity
	+ Artifacts
		- Objects that reflect the seasons (and change with the seasons)

**b) Room layout/furniture*** Children are able to move freely throughout the classroom without asking permission to do their work.
	+ Rugs/mat for floorwork
* Classrooms have a combination of floor surfaces, part carpet and part hard surface for ease of cleaning and designated for “messy” work.
* Furniture can be moved and arranged to meet specific work needs.
* Materials and furniture are made of natural elements and cared for with natural/environmentally friendly products where possible
* Information is provided visually as to the materials’ components to support and enhance students' understanding of their learning environment.
* Observer chair is present in a designated location
	+ Detailed large group lesson/procedure on observer chair at onset of school year including general observer protocol
	+ Children are prepared prior to observer’s arrival and procedure is reviewed
	+ Children are provided leadership role in observer protocol
* Furniture and equipment is available for children to support sensory needs (ex. wiggle seats, fidgets, noise-canceling headphones, etc.)
* Natural light
* **Four fundamental freedoms** are reflected in the room layout that give children control over:
	+ What to work on
	+ Where to work
	+ With whom to work
	+ How long to continue with a chosen work
		- Self-directed learning is supported by choice of work with manipulatives, requests to teachers for lessons and choosing to work with peers.

**c) A**[**ssistive technology in the classroom**](https://study.com/academy/lesson/assistive-technology-in-the-classroom-types-uses.html)* is any program, device, or equipment piece that is intended to help improve the way children comprehend and interact with others.
* Becoming informed on the [history and advantages of assistive technology](https://study.com/academy/course/assistive-technology-in-education.html) in learning can help teachers better incorporate it into their classroom.
* Children with [intellectual or emotional disabilities benefit from assistive technology](https://study.com/academy/lesson/assistive-technology-for-intellectual-disabilities.html) because it gives them more independence over their work.
* [Assistive technology has benefits for gifted and talented children,](https://study.com/academy/lesson/assistive-technology-for-gifted-talented-students.html) too, as it allows them to learn at their own pace as well as participate in collaboration.
* Technology is used as a means to meet developmental goals of a child
* Technology is viewed as a component of preparation for life and is used to prompt tech literacy
* Distance learning basic technology protocols are developed and revised as needed

**d) Outdoor space/space beyond the classroom*** Classrooms have procedures for work to happen in the hall or other parts of the building, safely and responsibly.
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