**Learning Environment**- this is the use and organization of the space in your classroom, the structure you provide and the plans you develop.

Setting Up the Physical Environment:

Including sights and sounds that are like those of their own homes encourages their feelings of safety and security that young children experience with their families.

Guidelines to consider when setting up your classroom:

* Arrange the room so that all the children can be seen at all times.
* Identify space for each of the routines and experiences- see below.
* Organize the room efficiently.
* Locate active, noisier play areas and materials away from relatively quiet areas.
* Clearly define spaces that need protection, such as spaces where infants will be playing on the floor.

Creating Places for Routines and Experiences

Areas should be well organized and equipped to make routine easier which allows you to focus on your interactions with the children

* Greeting Area-
  + Entryway and transition area should feel cozy and welcoming to the children and their families
  + Large enough to accommodate two or more families’ members with children at a time
  + Some items to think about when creating this space: bulletin board, cubbies with individual storge tubes, photos of children at play, children’s art work, a bench or counter space for adult to help children undress.
* Diapering/Toileting Area
* Sleeping Area
* Eating Area
* Areas for Experiences- be mindful not to overcrowd the shelves and materials should be displayed so children can choose what they want, shelves should be labelled with pictures and words and materials should be rotated regularly.
  + Playing with toys
  + Imitating and Pretending
  + Story and Books
  + Music and Movement
  + Creating with Art
  + Exploring with sand and water
  + Outdoors

Creating a Structure for Each Day:

Infants and toddlers need a schedule that is regular enough to be predictable but flexible enough to meet their individual needs and to take advantage of the learning opportunities that emerge continually every day.

In general, the younger the child the more flexible and individualized the schedule should be.

Characteristics of An Appropriate Schedule:

* Schedule is unhurried, child-directed pace for routine and experience of the day.
* Sufficient time for routines, play experiences and transitions.
* A balance between active and quiet times.
* Opportunities to be alone, one on one with teacher, and in small groups
* Outdoors offered daily.
* For toddlers, their days are more consistent and group oriented- meaning they eat and sleep as a group at the same time.
* Group time for toddlers should be short, and children should be able to decide how long they want to stay with the group.
* Transitions are planned for.
* There is a visual daily schedule at the child’s level using pictures and words.