



Ideas and Strategies for Incorporating the DEC Recommended Practices In Health, Safety, and Nutrition

The **2014 DEC Recommended Practices**¹ on Environment states that “Young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays/disabilities learn, play, and engage with adults and peers within a multitude of environments such as home, school, child care, and the neighborhood. Environmental practices refer to aspects of the space, materials (toys, books, etc.), equipment, routines, and activities that practitioners and families can intentionally alter to support each child's learning across developmental domains...They relate not only to supporting the child's access to learning opportunities but also ensuring their safety” (p.8).

The ECTA Center has developed five checklists (<http://ectacenter.org/decrp/topic-environment.asp>) to help learners learn about the 2014 DEC RPs related to the environment: 1) Natural Environment Learning Opportunities, 2) Environmental Arrangement, 3) Child Physical Activity, 4) Environmental Adaptations, and 5) Assistive Technology. Below are some ideas on how you might use the Environment Arrangement and Child Physical Activity checklists.

1. Using both the environmental arrangement and child physical activity checklists, ask students to visit a program and assess the extent to which that program is addressing physical activity and active play. They may need to look at the class schedule or interview the teacher to complete some of the items on the child physical activity checklist. Based on their assessment using the checklists, ask students to:
 - a. make 2-3 recommendations of changes or modifications they might make to the environment (indoor / outdoor) to provide additional physical activities opportunities for young children.
 - b. make 2-3 recommendations of how they might make changes to young children's routines and activities to provide additional opportunities for physical activity.
2. Ask students to watch “Henry gets around” video <http://www2.cde.state.co.us/media/resultsmatter/RMSeries/HenryGetsAround.asp>. Then have them review the environmental arrangement checklist before watching the video again to see what practices they might observe. You may ask students to score “Most of the time” if they see it in the video and “Seldom or never” if they do not see it in the video. Also, encourage them to make notes of what they see. Facilitate a discussion online or face-to-face so that students can share their findings.