



## Appendix A- Categories for Funding Support Document

Six overarching categories have been identified to challenge your thinking and planning of indoor and outdoor environments. Keep in mind that environments, both indoor and outdoor, are beautiful, joyful, and provide rich opportunities for sensory learning, social interaction, language, exploration, manipulation, and representation. They are purposefully designed and planned to enhance children's healthy development and learning.

**Language and Literacies** - Different people, different materials, different events and different environments support children's exploration of art, math, drama, music and communicative practices.

**Nature and Science**- Environments which support exploration, investigation, provisions for play with elemental materials, and connect to the natural world are rich in experiences and materials.

**Construction and Blocks**- Environments which support constructive play provide children with the opportunity to invent new connections as they design and create with mud, sand, twigs, cardboard and blocks.

**Inclusion and Diversity** - Each child who comes to your early learning program is unique. They bring with them distinct interests, strengths, talents and social identities. Respectful and responsive environments celebrate the uniqueness of every child.

**Infant and Toddler**-Engaging with infants and toddlers has unique aspects that are worthy of distinct considerations. How you welcome our youngest citizens into your early learning community will contribute to their understandings of the world around them.

**Aesthetics**- The environment speaks to the values, beliefs, and philosophy of the people who inhabit the space and provides the first glimpse into your provisions and practices.

**Small Renovations**- Small renovations to your physical space, indoor and outdoor, may be required to support environments which are beautiful, and provide space for rich experiences for children and adults.

## Outdoor environment

Category	Item Examples	Reflective Questions
Language and Literacies	<p><b>Art:</b> Paper, paint, paint brushes, clay, mark making tools, (markers, chalk, crayons, pencils, pencil crayons, pastels, etc.), easel, tape, scissors, chalkboard, clipboard, tables and chairs, baskets, containers</p> <p><b>Music and Movement:</b> various instruments, wood blocks, scarves, tambourines, rhythm sticks, CD Player, stage, a range of popular, classical and children's music responding to the interests of the children and reflective of the families in the facility.</p> <p><b>Drama:</b> real kitchen items (pots, pans, wooden spoons, other utensils), a mud kitchen, dress up clothes, pieces of material, scarves, hats, props such as baskets, suitcase, backpack, stage area, animals, dolls, and mirrors.</p> <p><b>Math and number materials:</b> loose parts for sorting, matching, sizing, classifying and counting, measuring tapes, measuring cups, and funnels.</p> <p><b>Communicative Practices:</b> a variety of books (fiction, non-fiction, informational, picture), puppets, felt board, mark making materials, and small manipulatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What resources and sustained time do children have in the outdoor environment to support their growth in language and literacies? Think about children's access to a wide range of mark-making tools, props for shaping and supporting dramatic play, a wide range of books including magazines, musical instruments and small manipulatives, loose parts and open-ended materials such as sticks, rocks, pinecones, mud and water.</li> <li>– Are materials carefully selected and displayed?</li> <li>– Are there places and spaces for one or two children to be in a quiet area?</li> <li>– Are there provisions for children to rest and relax in the outdoor environment? Think about the provision of cushions, mats and shaded areas.</li> <li>– Are there spaces to celebrate and display children's work? Think about areas for displays of artwork and documentation.</li> <li>– How do you provide for language and literacy experiences throughout the year as seasons change?</li> </ul>
Nature and Science	<p>Natural and recycled materials</p> <p>Tools for investigation such as magnifying glasses, magnets, tweezers, droppers, shovels and scoops, nets, sea shells buckets, containers and baskets, and various sized hoses/tubes</p> <p>Sand, water and mud</p> <p>Planter boxes</p> <p>Seeds for planting</p> <p>Books which support nature and science topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How are children encouraged to explore, investigate and connect with the natural world? Think about the materials available and the time and freedom to lead their own explorations. Are there places to get dirty, muddy and wet?</li> <li>– Is there a place in the outdoor environment that is wild, where children can explore nature in its natural habitat?</li> <li>– How are children encouraged to recognize and record patterns and relationships in nature? Think about the natural growing process, and the changes of the seasons.</li> <li>– How do you support children's outdoor explorations in every season?</li> <li>– How do you involve children in the care of animal and plant life? Think about daily responsibilities such as watering plants, tending the garden, creating habitats for local birds and butterflies.</li> </ul>
Construction and Blocks	<p>Loose parts such as tubes, boxes, eaves trough, sticks</p> <p>Blocks of various sizes and types, unit, interlocking and wood cookies</p> <p>Materials to use for constructing such as pieces of wood, and real tools such as a hammer, saw, nails, sandpaper, measuring tapes, levels</p> <p>Manipulatives such as trucks, gloves, hard hats, animals, wagons</p> <p>Mediums such as tape, glue, mud, sand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How do you encourage children's engagement in building and construction? How can you support children in using real tools safely? Think about your comfort level with the use of real tools and materials. Think about discussing the advantages of one tool over another, or taking different approaches.</li> <li>– What materials can you purchase and what can you collect? What can you ask families to collect for use in your programs? Think about reusing and recycling everyday materials and natural materials.</li> </ul>

Category	Item Examples	Reflective Questions
Infant and Toddler	<p>Mats and cushions</p> <p>Low climbing platforms and ramps created from natural wood and slides built into the side of a hill.</p> <p>Loose parts for moving, stacking, piling and dumping such as blocks and wood cookies</p> <p>Manipulatives that encourage movement such as balls, wagons</p> <p>Sand, water and mud</p> <p>Small tools such as shovels and buckets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How does the environment meet the specific needs of our society's youngest citizens?</li> <li>– Are there places where infants and toddlers can be on the ground such as mats and cushioned areas?</li> <li>– What natural spaces exist where children can move independently and explore the natural environment? Think about your comfort zone in supporting infants and toddlers to play in mud and water.</li> <li>– How can you limit the amount of man-made materials in your outdoor space and offer experiences using natural pieces?</li> </ul>
Inclusion and Diversity	<p>Books displaying people of different ages, races, culture, abilities and gender in non-stereotyping roles</p> <p>Materials that celebrate diversity and inclusion including dolls, puppets, music , costumes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How do you learn about and incorporate differing family values, practices and beliefs into everyday routines?</li> <li>– What opportunities exist to support children to notice, think and talk about differences and similarities? Think about your comfort level in initiating and sustaining these conversations.</li> <li>– How is the outdoor environment inclusive of all children?</li> </ul>
Aesthetics	<p>Furniture and decor such as benches, trellis, planter boxes, composter, rain barrel, sunshades</p> <p>Physical design of the outdoor space such as walking paths, grassy areas</p> <p>Statues</p> <p>Solar lights</p> <p>Lawn ornaments</p> <p>Display areas for artwork and documentation safe from the outdoor elements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How does the outdoor environment provide areas for comfort, relaxation and spaces for collaboration and engagement? Think about places to dig, places to smell the flowers, spaces to sit and watch the clouds, and how the outdoor layout and furniture welcomes children and educators to spend time together.</li> <li>– How does the outdoor area connect children and adults to the natural world? Think about the use of materials made from wood and other natural materials versus man-made plastic additions.</li> </ul>
Small Renovations	<p>Landscaping such as plants, shrubs, grass, mulch, wood chips, rocks</p> <p>Accessibility</p> <p>Preparing the ground for a garden</p> <p>Different ground surfaces such as removal of pea gravel and addition of grass</p> <p>Creating grassy knolls</p> <p>Creating walking paths or a bike path</p> <p>Installation of an outdoor water source</p> <p>Creation of an infant play area</p> <p>Installation of storage space</p> <p>Installation of permanent shade structure</p> <p>Removal of large play structures</p> <p>Extending current outdoor areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What fond memories do you have of your time in the outdoors as a child? Think about materials, space, and opportunities for exploration.</li> <li>– In your outdoor environments, where do children see themselves, have opportunities to explore and interact with nature, spend time alone or in small groups? Think about space, materials and arrangement of trees, mud hills and shrubs to create spaces for children.</li> <li>– How does your environment encourage healthy risk taking? Think about where children can run, jump, balance and climb and expanding space so that children can move.</li> </ul>

### Resources to support the outdoor environment:

- Communication and Literacies Professional Support Document (pages 36-45)
- Our Youngest Children: Learning and Caring With Infant/Toddler Professional Support Document (pages 17)
- Play and Playfulness Professional Support Document (pages 48-49)
- Diversity and Social Responsibility Professional Support Document
- Community Day Care Homes Support Document
- ECERS-R – Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale- Revised
- ITERS-R – Infant /Toddler Environment Rating Scale- Revised

- Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)
- Valuing Early Learning and Child Care in Action Collaborative Assessment Tool (CAT)
- *Natural Playscapes* by Rusty Keeler
- *Seasons of Play* by Rusty Keeler
- Article: *Designing and Creating Natural Play Environments for Young Children* by Rusty Keeler
- *Hey Kids! Out the Door Let's Explore* by Rhoda Redleaf
- *Cultivating Outdoor Classrooms* by Eric Nelson
- *Lens on Outdoor Learning* by Wendy Banning and Ginny Sullivan

## Indoor environment

Category	Item Examples	Reflective Questions
Language and Literacies	<p><b>Art:</b> Paper (white and coloured paper), paint, paint brushes, clay, mark making tools (markers, chalk, crayons, pencils, etc.), easel, tape, scissors, open-ended materials and loose parts, scraps of material, feathers, ribbon,) chalkboard, clipboard, tables and chairs, books showing examples of artists and differing art styles</p> <p><b>Music and Movement:</b> various instruments, wood blocks, scarves, tambourines, rhythm sticks, CD Player, stage, mirror, range of popular, classical and children's music responding to the interests of the children and reflective of the families in the centre.</p> <p><b>Drama:</b> real kitchen items (pots, pans, wooden spoons, other utensils), Furniture pieces such as table and chairs, refrigerator, stove and sink, dress up clothes, pieces of material, scarves, purses, hats, shoes, props such as baskets, suitcase, backpack, stage area, animals, dolls, mirrors</p> <p><b>Math and number:</b> loose parts for sorting, matching, sizing, classifying and counting, measuring tapes, measuring cups, funnels, parquetry blocks, pegboards, balance and scales</p> <p><b>Communicative Practices:</b> a variety of books (fiction, non-fiction, informational, picture), puppets, felt board and story pieces, story stones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How is children's independent use of materials encouraged? Think about the access and availability of materials.</li> <li>– How have you provided children with the knowledge around the use and care of materials? Think about how materials are introduced and how their uses and maintenance is conveyed.</li> <li>– How are materials cared for, displayed and respected? Think about places for children's work to dry, to be displayed and designated places for materials.</li> <li>– How do you document children's learning and offer new experiences to scaffold their learning. Think about where children's individual expressions are displayed for them to see and how materials are introduced, rotated and replenished.</li> <li>– Are their places for individual, small, and large group initiatives?</li> </ul>
Nature and Science	<p>Natural and recycled materials</p> <p>Tools for investigation such as magnifying glasses, magnets, tweezers, droppers, shovels and scoops, nets, sea shells, small rocks, buckets, containers and baskets, various sized hoses/tubes, measuring tapes</p> <p>A wide variety of mediums for discovery and exploration such as sand, water, flax seed, commeal, rice</p> <p>Planter boxes</p> <p>Seeds for planting</p> <p>Books which support nature and science topics</p> <p>Microscope</p> <p>Scent jars</p> <p>Flashlights</p> <p>Binoculars</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How will you model a sense of awe and wonder for nature and science? Think about how you can link experiences inside and out.</li> <li>– What experiences and information do you provide to cultivate children's curiosity? Think about books such as the encyclopedia and <i>National Geographic</i> and your role in supporting and extending their quest for knowledge.</li> <li>– What tools will be available that will enable, then to collect and record information? Think about ways to introduce children to chart and graph their findings.</li> <li>– How will you support children in making sense of their findings? Think about how the environment is set up for discussion and collaboration.</li> <li>– How do you include diverse viewpoints about sustainable futures?</li> </ul>

Category	Item Examples	Reflective Questions
Construction and Blocks	<p>Loose parts such as tubes, boxes, eaves trough, sticks</p> <p>Blocks of various sizes and types, unit, interlocking and wood cookies</p> <p>Materials to use for constructing such as pieces of wood, and real tools such as a hammer, saw, nails, sandpaper, measuring tapes, levels</p> <p>Manipulatives such as trucks, gloves, hard hats, animals, wagons</p> <p>Rugs</p> <p>Photos and books celebrating construction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How do you expose children to a wide range of architectural art forms?</li> <li>– How will you support children’s creations using a wide range of natural and manufactured materials? Think about the use of equipment for construction and your comfort in their use.</li> <li>– What provisions are made for children’s work to be cumulative? Think about space for children to set their work aside to continue at a later time, and the availability of materials while others are able to continue with their creations.</li> </ul>
Infant and Toddler	<p>Mats and cushions, soft stuffed animals</p> <p>Rocking chair</p> <p>Chairs and tables of appropriate height</p> <p>Props that support crawling over, under and through.</p> <p>Loose parts for moving, stacking, piling and dumping such as blocks and wood cookies, pine cones.</p> <p>Baskets and containers to fill, scoop with and dump</p> <p>Manipulatives that encourage movement such as balls, blocks, wagons, pull toys, beanbags, items to bang</p> <p>Manipulatives that inspire awe and wonder</p> <p>Textures and materials to explore, such as sand, water, smooth and rough surfaces.</p> <p>Mirrors</p> <p>Treasure baskets which contain a variety of objects to explore, such as ribbons, sponges, tins, lids, musical instruments</p> <p>Stereo with various music</p> <p>A wide selection of books (board books, soft books, fiction and non-fiction, picture only and those with words)</p> <p>Picture frames</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How do you welcome infants and their families into your program?</li> <li>– What spaces are there where infants and their families can feel comfort, safe to explore and engage with materials, and collaborate with one another? Think about soft spaces, availability and access to materials, room to move and explore, and places and spaces where children and families can see themselves in the indoor environment.</li> <li>– Is there space for children to move? Think about how our youngest citizens need space because they are constantly on the move, walking unsteadily, crawling, and bumping into things.</li> <li>– How do you incorporate language and literacy into your day? Think about songs, oral stories, felt boards and books.</li> </ul>
Inclusion and Diversity	<p>Books displaying people of different ages, races, culture, abilities and gender in non-stereotyping roles</p> <p>Materials that celebrate diversity and inclusion including dolls, puppets, music</p> <p>Photographs of diverse people engaged in everyday routines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How does the setting ensure equitable access to materials and social worlds for all children? Do you challenge behaviours that exclude or discriminate?</li> </ul>
Aesthetics	<p>Curtains and window shades</p> <p>Rugs</p> <p>Rocking Chair</p> <p>Couches and Chairs</p> <p>Items that reflect those who inhabit the room</p> <p>Plants</p> <p>Coffee table</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What does your space say about the people who inhabit it? Think about the overall aesthetics of the environment considering what furniture is in the space, how it is placed and how are items arranged on shelf?</li> <li>– Where do children and families see themselves in the environment? Think about items that have special meaning to children and families.</li> <li>– Is child and adult work displayed with respect? Think about how work is presented and how creativity and individual work is celebrated.</li> </ul>

Category	Item Examples	Reflective Questions
Small Renovations	Accessibility Environment improvement: paint, flooring, etc. Dedicated space for staff Natural light Installation of storage space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Often our indoor spaces were created for purposes other than caring for our youngest citizens. What alterations are necessary to welcome children, families and educators into our spaces? Think about dedicated spaces for educators and families to meet and reflect.</li> <li>– What provisions are available for children to eat in a family setting? Think about spaces for children to sit in small groups and how meals and snacks are prepared and served.</li> <li>– What is the overall feel of the space? Think about the colour of the walls and ensuring the space is in a state of good repair.</li> <li>– What does the space provide for natural lighting and connection to the outdoors? Think about windows and light into rooms, and access to outside areas.</li> </ul>

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- Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)
- Valuing Early Learning and Child Care in Action Collaborative Assessment Tool (CAT)
- *Loose Parts* by Lisa Daley and Miriam Beloglovsky
- *Loose Parts 2: Inspiring Play with Infants and Toddlers* by Lisa Daley and Miriam Beloglovsky
- *Beautiful Stuff!: Learning With Found Materials* by Cathy Weisman Topal and Lella Gandini
- *Designs for Living and Learning* by Deb Curtis and Margie Carter
- *Inspiring Places for Young Children* by Jessica Deviney

