



Viewing Guide Surroundings: space, layout and materials

SOURCE: Expertise Centre Childcare 2023

This viewing guide is intended to provide insight into the layout of the surroundings and possible areas for improvement, with the aim of stimulating the development of the children. The intention is to examine the surroundings on the basis of four basic pedagogical objectives:

- 1 **The promotion of emotional security;**
- 2 **The promotion of personal skills;**
- 3 **The promotion of social skills;**
- 4 **The transmission of norms and values.**

FOR WHOM

For pedagogical employees, pedagogical coaches and managers.

WORKING METHOD

Three or more 'viewpoints' were formulated for each basic pedagogical objective. An assessment can be made for each viewpoint by placing a cross on a scale ranging from very dissatisfied (left) to very satisfied (right). The viewing guide can be completed by various parties involved: the pedagogical employees, the pedagogical coach or manager. The viewing guide is intended as a starting point for joint discussion, self-reflection and more conscious layout of the surroundings.



1. The promotion of emotional security:		
Recognisability		
Children recognise themselves in the layout of the space. Consider colours, materials, and furniture that are familiar to the children. But also on a family wall, photos of pedagogical employees and children.	○-----○	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children can exhibit things they have made.	○-----○	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children have a space where they can store their own belongings, work and drawings (basket, box, etc.).	○-----○	<input type="checkbox"/>
Predictability		
The space is clearly laid out with distinct play areas.	○-----○	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walking routes do not pass through play areas, so that children are not disturbed while they are playing.	○-----○	<input type="checkbox"/>
The layout and design of the space will only be changed if it appears that the children need it.	○-----○	<input type="checkbox"/>
The play materials are regularly changed to suit the development stage of the children, for example by alternating the books in the reading corner or adding new ones.	○-----○	<input type="checkbox"/>

very dissatisfied very satisfied N/A
 ○-----○ ○ □

Visibility and overview		
Areas for children up to approximately three years of age are divided into clear play zones with a low partition (cupboard, wall, rug, etc.), allowing the child to continue to see the pedagogical employee.	○-----○	□
Rest and privacy		
There is a retreat area (small tent, cubby) where young children can see what is happening in the rest of the room without having to participate.	○-----○	□
For school-aged children, there are places where they can play / sit separately with one or more other children. This satisfies their need for privacy.	○-----○	□
2. The promotion of personal skills:		
Stimulating and facilitating various areas of development		
There is sufficient and suitable space to stimulate all areas of development.	○-----○	□
There is sufficient and suitable (play) material to stimulate all areas of development.	○-----○	□
Materials are visible and available.	○-----○	□
Materials can be found close to the space(s) where they are needed (creative materials in the studio, for example).	○-----○	□
For the motor development of young children, there are indoor and outdoor climbing and scrambling materials such as a small slide or climbing frame, and toys that you can push or pull.	○-----○	□
For young children, there is free floor space (this can also be a corridor) to move around freely (dancing, jumping, running).	○-----○	□
For sensory development, there are hard, soft, smooth and uneven materials, as well as things that feel warm, cold, wet and dry.	○-----○	□
Noise pollution is prevented, as this can have a negative impact on both adults and children.	○-----○	□
For creative development, there is space for fantasy and role-playing.	○-----○	□
For creative development, there is space for crafts, painting, clay modelling, drawing, etc.	○-----○	□
For cognitive development, there is a space where children can explore, discover, combine and experiment.	○-----○	□
There are spaces and materials for construction play (building, organising, sorting, combining).	○-----○	□
For speech and language development, there is a quiet reading / viewing space where materials such as reading, listening and picture books are available for children to pick up themselves.	○-----○	□
There are open-ended materials such as blocks, Duplo and other loose materials that children can use to build something bigger (a train track, for example).	○-----○	□
There are sufficient materials for exploration.	○-----○	□
For young children, a table at child height is available as a space for activities that can be used for complex exploration (combining multiple materials or components, such as making puzzles or doing crafts).	○-----○	□

Division into space for activities in relation to autonomy		
There are clearly recognisable spaces for activities appropriate to the development stage(s) of the children in the group. This can be a building corner, but also a painting wall, a ping pong table or a bench to relax on.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children can take the play materials themselves. For young children, this means that materials are displayed visibly and at their height; for older children, it means that they know where materials are located.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children make their own choices when combining materials, for example by moving the dolls to the reading corner or to the free floor.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The free floor can be used for movement play or as a temporary extra space for activities or play area by laying down a mat or rug with play materials.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children can help themselves to play materials in all spaces for activities.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The promotion of social skills:		
There are spaces for meeting and interaction, but also spaces where children can play alone or be near each other without actually playing together.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For young children, there are spaces to play alone.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For young children, spaces for parallel play, such as a home corner, play kitchen with two sinks next to each other, are ideal.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The transmission of norms and values:		
The space is well-maintained, organised, and quiet (in terms of interior and noise).	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The space is ready for play at the start of the day and looks well-maintained.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The space does not need to be tidied up all the time, as this can disrupt the children playing.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The layout offers children ample opportunity to pick up their own things and tidy up themselves.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The interior layout of the space reflects an appreciation for nature, in a manner consistent with the vision of the organisation.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The surroundings reflect the diversity of society.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children are involved in the layout of the space. They contribute ideas and thus become co-owners of the space.	<input type="radio"/> ----- <input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>