

## A “YES” ENVIRONMENT

Infants and young children learn best when they are provided opportunities to engage in well-designed environments that are emotionally and physically safe, supportive, and stimulating.

## THE THREE Ss: SAFE, SUPPORTIVE, and STIMULATING

### SAFE

#### Social And Emotional Safety

**Create an environment that says, “Yes, you are consistently cared for and loved here.”**

- The EDUCATOR is the most important part of an infant’s environment. Learning expands within the context of caring and secure relationships.
- Establish welcoming and home-like environment for families and their infants and young children.
- Post photos and integrate cultural items that are comforting and familiar to infants.
- Design quiet cozy spaces for calming.

#### Physical safety

**Create indoor and outdoor environments that say, “Yes, you are safe to explore here.”**

- Remain close by and attentive.
- Lay out the program so that all children can be seen at all times.
- Use toys that are non-toxic and age-appropriate.
- Use secure and child-sized furniture and equipment.
- Intentionally arrange the space based on traffic patterns, convenience, and safety.
- Separate active areas from quiet areas.
- Provide ample space for safe exploration.

### SUPPORTIVE

**Create indoor and outdoor environments that support independence and say, “Yes, you can do it.”**

- Remain present to expand exploration and promote full access to learning opportunities.
- Provide well-organized toys and areas and ensure that each has a clear purpose.
- Ensure access to spaces, materials, and activities.
- Offer choices based on infants’ and young children’s individual needs and preferences.
- Make modifications to support the success and development of each infant and young child.
- Make and use visuals to support positive behavior, play, and learning.

## STIMULATING

### **Create an environment that says, “Yes, the world is SO exciting!”**

- Remain available to scaffold and expand exploration and learning.
- Offer materials, toys, and activities that invite exploration of self and others.
- Make the environment rich in language, literacy, science, math, and technology.
- Provide materials, activities, and areas that delight the senses.
- Ensure just the right amount of light, space, materials, sounds, smells, and touch.
- Promote diversity.
- Enhance connection and relationship-building.