



Reflect on your own experiences with children, families, and colleagues. If you are an supervisor, administrator, or adult educator, how might you use these questions and activities to help other adults reflect on their experiences?

Examine the Environments

In order for children to develop and maintain good health, several things need to occur. Children need nutritious foods to eat, a safe place to rest and be with loved ones, and physical exercise, movement, and play.

Try This!

In most programs, children will spend part of their day inside and part of their day outside. Here are three different programs and their policies for being indoors and outdoors.

Program A: Separate times are scheduled for children to be indoors and outdoors.

Program B: Children are allowed to be indoors or outdoors as they choose throughout the day.

Program C – Children stay inside throughout the entire day.

Which of these programs would provide the healthiest environment for young children? Rank the programs and write down why you think one program would be better than another for supporting health.

Read about Claudia’s experiences in her program where children stay inside the entire day.

I was hired to teach in a center in a Head Start program in Los Angeles. I was shocked to discover that the children are not allowed outside to play. Turns out that the neighborhood is dangerous and often our staff finds used needles on the ground outside the building. One time we even found a gun! So in order to stay safe, the children are indoors throughout the day. In order to support children’s physical and emotional health, we use our hallways as running paths, bike paths and change out equipment and small play structures as our space is small. We are trying to fundraise in the community so that one day our program can hopefully build a small gymnasium.

Go back to your ranking and jot down the assumptions you made about each of the programs and their policies of allowing children outside or not.

Reflect on other judgments you make ,or have made, about children and their families' health practices. What are some of them?

What advantages and what obstacles exist in your program for supporting health, growth, and development? Make a list. Brainstorm some possible solutions to overcome the obstacles you identified. You can do this alone. Better yet, do it with a colleague.
