



# ALLiES eGuide

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Principle - Environment

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**Pedagogy is meant to create a community within each school where balance, simplicity and transparency are predominant in the schedule, environment and all devices, and rules are visible and tangible. This creates an environment that is understandable and manageable for the children, regardless of their age, maturity and abilities.**

One of the basic principles is the simple belief that a school's policy should emphasize organizing and managing factors that can be influenced in a formal way. Teachers will thus spend a lot of time and energy thinking about and organizing the usage of the equipment, housing and premises of the school, and meticulously planning and executing the agenda. Great care is put into creating and sustaining a clustered milieu, and constant reevaluation ensures that each solution is the best one. This thorough steering of all elements creates the framework that guides the outcome; i.e. the interaction, the play, instructions and learning will never be better than what the framework allows. A good framework greatly increases the likelihood of a successful school. In this way, manageable factors can improve the unmanageable ones, if one can say so. They increase the possibilities of constructive attitudes; they strengthen the good will of staff and they facilitate professional work.

The well thought out steering of environmental elements is meant to act as a positive stimulus for the school. This makes life easier and makes it possible for both staff and children to understand the daily routines. Everyone knows what is expected, and what methods to use to get the desired results when things need to be done.

A key factor in the organization is to create a simple and calm environment where every item has a meaning. Thus, both children and grown-ups can "read" into it in order to learn and understand each situation at hand, in a short amount of time. This environment is meant to be one of the cornerstones of the school, and in fact to serve its own independent role in the upbringing.

- The staff examines the current ideology, as it appears in the Principles and gender focused curriculum, to coordinate their methods so that everyone is in sync when running the school.
- The school's handbook is consulted regularly, and it is revised at the outset of each school year. The handbook contains, among other things, the rules and resolutions of the school, and clear job descriptions, so that every staff members knows exactly what the demands of the job are and how they can live up to the school's expectations. The handbook also describes the procedures of daily work, and blueprints on how to respond to and sort out various situations that may arise.
- New employees are instructed in the handbook and receive tutelage from more experienced colleagues in the school's department where they work.





- Each space and each school unit (core unit, group) are given a name that reflects a meaning and purpose. The rooms are given names according to activity options. Undisputable factors such as gender, age or alphabetic order can be the ruling factor. The staff avoids giving personal names to, for instance, groups. If no undisputable name charged with a suitable meaning, can be found, then a meaningless name is chosen.
- All areas in the space are well marked with their name and/or sign. Markings are put on floors and walls to show where and how every object should be placed. The children's areas in communal spaces, as well as traffic rules, are precisely taped or painted on the floor.
- All the possessions of each school unit – both large and small, inside the house and outside – are labeled for each unit. All things have their proper place in lockers and shelves, and all are maintained with respect.
- There staff members do not decorate the schools according to their personal taste. Instead, the decorations are meticulously plain looking. It is important to emphasize that the school, however homely, is never a substitute for a private home. Play schools and elementary schools are part of a public life, and there the children will learn to exist on different premises than at home. Other principles apply there than in a private home, where children rehearse their private lives and build their emotional lives and family relations. Thus, it is better that the appearance of the school is not homelike.
- Walls are empty except where it has been decided to create a space for important and purpose-filled items. Exhibitions showing the children's own works are there for a short duration.
- Daily cleaning, neatness and tidying up is both a pedagogical issue and as well a prerequisite for letting the environment support the work of the teacher. In this way, the staff and the children work together to sustain their environment.
- Both children and staff wear school uniforms in order to strengthen the unity of the group.
- The school's agenda is balanced between the two approaches that shape the school work, and are alternated between during the course of the day. One of them is group work and teaching, where a teacher or group supervisor leads organised work. The other is playtime and choice, which always starts with a selection meeting where the children choose their play area according to a simple and easily understood arrangement.
- The system of scheduled times is simple and easily learned, and these set times are followed with precision. The days of the week are in most respect identical, and exceptions to these are according to a rule, for example singing meetings, joy meetings on Fridays. This creates order and safety for the children. The same member of staff takes care of a particular job for a long time, and the children learn to trust their surroundings.
- This principle is especially connected to the initial and final stages of the social qualities. These are respect, conduct, courtesy and manners, as well as friendship, caring, closeness and love. The principle is also related to the initial stage of the strengthening of individuality, or independence, self-confidence, security and personal expression.