Notes to accompany learning resource:

**Improving Environments for High-Quality Learning**

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| Slide  | Notes |
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| 1 | None |
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| 2 | None |
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| 3 | * Watch this video.
* Carolyn Love, ELC Training and Improvement Officer, is talking about the approach taken by her team to improving environments for learning across ELC settings.
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| 4 | * These are quotations taken from various texts and researchers as to the importance of creating the right environment for learning.
* The question asks you to consider these statements and to think about your setting. Which of these statements best reflects your own values as a team? Which of these strike a particular chord with you? Which, if any, would you use to help promote further the importance of the environment of your setting?
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| 5 | * It is important to make the connection between play and learning. Play is the primary means through which young children learn and how learning should be organised.
* Building the Curriculum, 2: Active Learning in the Early Years gives some important insight into the importance of offering an environment to facilitate powerful play. The environment provides the context for learning and therefore, needs to be equipped to offer children the scope to develop their ideas and practise their skills.
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| 6 | * When was the last time you talked about play in your setting? It is useful to remind ourselves what we mean by play and what it is that our environment needs to support.
* Tina Bruce’s 12 features of free-flow play is a helpful starting point. Think about features 1-6. Does your environment support this kind of play?
* Section 4 of Building the Ambition also references Tina Bruce’s work.
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| 7 | * Consider features 7-12. Does your environment support this kind of play?
* Might these features offer useful criteria for considering the effectiveness of the environment?
* What else could you use to help you determine whether your environment is ‘working’ for children?
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| 8 | * This section has been given the title ‘Children’s Space’. Is it better to think about how we use space in the environment rather than to think about how to fill the space?
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| 9 | * This is Raploch Nursery in Stirling. Raploch is a vibrant community within Stirling, where a high proportion of families experience socio-economic challenges.
* The slide shows that at Raploch furniture is used to designate learning spaces helping children to feel more in control of their environment. This is important for many children who attend the setting.
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| 10 | * The development of communication skills is an important priority at Raploch Nursery. For this reason, cosy spaces were created for storytelling. This helped children focus on the spoken word and to listen to the rhythm and the cadence of the human voice. Children’s questions and comments about the story could be heard by adults and other children, making the whole experience more interactive and worthwhile.
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| 11 | * Use of floor space at Raploch Nursery for creative and group play. Children are being encouraged to interact with peers and to share ideas and interests.
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| 12 | * Lighting being used creatively to highlight experiences and be made more inviting to children.
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| 13&14 | * At Raploch Nursery, the environment is made more homely and more calm through the introduction of enclosed spaces, promoting children’s sense of security.
* This provides areas for children to engage in conversations, small cosy spaces, occasional large groups to talk, listen and share their ideas.
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| 15 | * Banchory Nursery in Clackmannanshire, areas were made cosy and intimate. Staff wanted to help children become storytellers, so a pet cat was introduced.
* This environment is rich in print and thoughtfully arranged , providing a range of good quality story books, both fiction and non-fiction.
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| 16 | * Still with Banchory Primary School, Nursery Class. Staff worked with children to create a role play experience comprising three rooms.
* Here is an environment where furniture is sensitively arranged to give children space to move around safely and allows access to extend the child’s curiosity and interest in their immediate world.
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| 17&18 | * At Baker Street Nursery in Stirling, more sensory experiences were added to learning spaces across the playroom.
* The Nursery has spaces for quiet reflection and rest.
* This environment is suitable for quiet restful times, is spacious and not cluttered.
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| 19 | * A gazebo was added to the under 3’s playroom at Killearn Nursery Class to create a defined and enclosed space.
* A well organised space to allow children the freedom to select equipment and materials that they wish and also appreciate the need to accommodate the choices of others.
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| 21 | * At Dunblane Nature Kindergarten, internal spaces are used flexibly by children. Children are guided by the resources on offer but creativity is encouraged and cultivated.
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| 22 | * At Caulsnaughton Nursery Class, a ‘book nook’ was created to help engross children in story books.
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| 23 | * Moving on to consider the materials and resources that form a crucial part of children’s environment.
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| 24 | * Watch the video of Carolyn Love, ELC Training and Improvement Officer in professional dialogue with Head of Raploch, Denise Wallace and Depute, Marion Wylie.
* Consider, what is unique about the environment of your own setting? Does the environment reflect strongly enough the needs, interests and dispositions of your learners?
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| 25 | * What do you think Froebel meant by a ‘rich range’. How do you determine whether there is a rich range offered to your children?
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| 26 | * The photograph shows how art materials are offered to children at Aberfoyle Nursery Class in Stirling.
* Consider the richness of this way of offering materials to children. What other messages are children receiving here?
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| 27 | * At Dunblane Nature Kindergarten, the natural world is very important. Children’s learning spaces are furnished with natural materials. How in keeping with the Froebel principle is this?
* An interesting water-trough created from natural materials reflects better the outdoor environment, which is paramount in the setting. A clear bowl for the water allows children to observe how water moves and flows.
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| 28 | * There is not a great deal of space at Fintry Nursery but the natural world is also important.
* Here children are invited to explore, discover and problem solve.
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| 29 | * The outdoor water experience at Balfron Nursery Class offers children an unusual perspective and is aimed to be thought-provoking. Children are invited to observe the power of water, how water travels and flows.
* Consider the extent to which your own water area invites children to observe the properties of water?
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| 30 | * Snack time offers worthwhile learning.
* The photograph on the left is from Dunblane Nature Kindergarten. Glass, metal, wood and ceramic are offered to children during snack. Children are invited to be independent here and children are adept at using these ‘real’ items.
* The photograph on the right is from Raploch Nursery the snack table is set with fresh flowers and ‘real’ crockery.
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| 31 | None |
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| 32 | None |