

Connections...

Over the last few months we have had the pleasure of getting to know each of your children and forming strong, lasting, trusting relationships. We have seen the experiences that make them sparkle, that capture their imagination and promote their sense of belonging at StartBright. As educators it is our job to encapsulate all their learning and interests and create an environment that reflects this vision.

The Environment is the Third Educator

What does this mean?

When we say the environment is the third teacher, we mean the space where children can explore, experiment, develop their ideas and test their own theories. It incorporates interests that we as educators, have seen blossoming alongside spaces that ignite curiosity.

For the environment to be the third teacher is must be well thought out, capture the curiosity of the child and be organized in such a way that it is aesthetically pleasing and reflective of the child's learning. When this happens successfully, it feels as if there is another teacher in the room.

Having our environment set up this way allows children to explore and lead their own learning. It allows freedom to engage with materials and resources to extend their own ideologies and also creates a social togetherness, where children can connect with each other to develop their social skills and emotional intelligence.

Different explorations with transport



The concept of transport is one that we have seen blossom in all our services at StartBright. This idea has bounced around and settled to capture the interest of a number of children, each learning something new and innovative with their exploration. Some enjoying the movement aspect, cars moving up and down beams and racing each other. Enjoying the mathematical exploration that goes hand in hand with this play.

“We value space, to create a handsome environment and its potential to inspire social, affective and cognitive learning. The space is an aquarium that mirrors the ideas and values of the people who live in it.”

Loris Malaguzzi



“A child’s play is not simply a reproduction of what he has experienced, but a creative reworking of the impressions he has acquired.”

Vygotsky



These environments not only support the children’s interest in transport as a whole, but they also provide wonderful opportunities for the children to engage in collaboration, work on their communication skills, support their development of critical thinking- how will that work, that car goes fast than the other, I wonder why? The open-ended resources within our environments allows for creativity to blossom too. Children are encouraged to trial and test out theories and work through our failures and towards a solution together. These skills are part of the Essential Skills for the 21st century. They are known as the 4Cs.



Others have exploring the nurturing side of their play, car washing and maintenance. The freedom within in these spaces offers children the opportunity to lead their own play and develop their own ideas and replay their own experiences of the world. They bring and share their own opinions and theories so that the group can learn together. This strengthens their friendships and unites their learning. As the environment supports this exploration, the children can lead their own learning and extend and progress their interest organically.

The 4Cs are part of the learning skills within the essential skills list. They are a group of skills listed as being essential for the jobs your children may go into in the future, jobs that have not yet been developed or exist yet. At StartBright we prepare children for lifelong learning. The essential Skills for the 21st Century are an important part of our day.



Transport is also about how we get there

In many of our spaces we have sensory toys to help the children explore all their senses but also to add alternative movements into their environment. Here you can see some exploration on the whizzy dizzy and the giant top. Transport is also about the journey, the physical getting from A to B and how this might impact the children's play and learning. In our centres we look to providing ample space for children to move and choose areas of significance to them and their interests. Whether that be by physically moving their bodies in alternative and explorative ways or the journey they take in their imaginative play to create a new world.



Sometimes the journey becomes the learning interest. Here the children documented their trip to StartBright, the buildings they saw along the way and the significant landmarks in their community. They then created their own environment to map out their vision. Now the children use this space as a small world play opportunity, where they connect with friends and work out social scenarios. Having children involved in the environment set up allows for their interests and opinions to be represented authentically. It also shows them, just how powerful their voice is and how we respect each voice at all times.



“The true strength in our classroom is in the collaboration of learners, not in the knowledge of one expert.”



As you can see its not just the children who explore the environment and reflect upon its purpose, we as educators do too. StartBright centres have undergone some construction to the outdoor environment, creating some sheltered spaces for the children to engage with. These spaces will allow even more exploration outdoors but also act as a transition space for some; an area that leads us gently from one learning space to another. Often children may need this space to reflect on previous learning, prepare themselves for new situations or unwind after physical and cognitive exertion.

Our educators are always improving on their skills and knowledge to provide the best quality care for the children in our centres. They have been working on new ideas for the indoor and outdoor environments, reflecting on the voice of the child, ownership, risk, inclusion and of course children’s interests. There are many new and inviting spaces being created for the children to explore develop and enhance once we all return.

