

HANDOUT

1-4-2

SIX DIMENSIONS OF HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN: SECLUSION-INTRUSION



private nook
Seclusion

activity center

playground
Intrusion

This dimension indicates places in the environment where children engage in individual, small group, and large group activities. Children need private spaces where they can be secluded, alone or with a friend. They need places where they can play with a small group of children such as a housekeeping corner or a table for board games. They also need spaces such as a playground for fast-moving, energetic activities that invite the intrusion of people and events.²

To evaluate this dimension of your program environment, ask the following questions:

Are there a variety of spaces for children to play alone, in small groups, and in large groups? Make a chart with three headings and list all the places you have observed children playing alone (or with one friend), in small groups, and in large groups.

Are children encouraged to rearrange furniture to create the spaces they need (a private nook behind the couch or an arrangement of tables and chairs for a Monopoly tournament)?

Is some of the furniture adaptable and easy to move, such as large pillows, beanbag chairs, blankets, and cots?

Are pathways through the environment designed so that secluded areas are not intruded on by the ordinary course of children's movements?

2. Jim Greenman, *Caring Spaces, Learning Places: Children's Environments That Work* (Redmond, Wash.: Exchange Press, 1988), p. 80.