

# *Kindergarten Environment Creation: Meaning and Strategies*

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**Abstract:** In February 2022, the Ministry of Education issued the Guidelines for Assessing the Quality of Kindergarten Care and Education, which included environmental creation as one of the five major assessment components. Kindergarten environment creation has a sufficient theoretical foundation, which is conducive to unlocking young children's wisdom, cultivating their noble character, enriching their psychological feelings, promoting their healthy physical development, as well as benefiting their aesthetic and social development. The role of kindergarten teachers is crucial in the creation of kindergarten environments, and kindergartens should improve their ability to create environments. Teachers should make full use of material resources to optimize kindergarten environments, pay attention to the creation of psychological environments, and always uphold the concept of children's perspectives.

## **1. The concept of kindergarten environment creation**

Kindergarten environment creation refers to the process of planning and arranging kindergarten places, facilities, materials and so on in a conscious and organized manner for the actual situation of the kindergarten in order to create an environment suitable for the growth and development of young children and to promote the all-round development of their abilities in various aspects. The goal of kindergarten environment creation is to provide a rich, inspiring and creative environment for young children, and to guide and promote the development of young children in all aspects through the environment. <sup>[1]</sup> Specifically, the creation of kindergarten environments should include the following aspects:

**Physical environment:** This includes indoor and outdoor rooms, space, furniture and facilities. The indoor environment should have sufficient natural light and ventilation, the room should be of an appropriate size, attention should be paid to the details of safety protection, and the layout should be cozy, clean, beautiful, and able to meet the needs of children's various activities. Outdoor environments should provide ample space for children to move and explore, with a variety of toys and play facilities.

**Material resources:** these include books, toys, craft materials, and so on. Books should be diversified and rich in content, covering knowledge in all fields. Toys should be of sufficient quantity and variety to stimulate children's desire for exploration and creativity. Handicraft materials should be able to meet the needs of children's various handicraft activities and encourage children to use their hands and brains.

**Social environment:** This includes human factors, including teachers, parents and other young children. Teachers should be friendly, approachable and maintain good interaction with young children. Parents and teachers should have a strong connection and cooperation with each other. Interaction with other young children promotes learning to cooperate, share and respect others.

**Psychological environment:** This includes the creation of a psychological space in the park, a mood corner, a corner for parent-child and teacher-student exchanges, and a space for praise and motivation. The creation of the above spaces is based on the emotional support and emotional dependence that young children need in their early childhood, and at the same time gives them positive emotional incentives.

**Cultural environment:** including garden style and garden appearance, school philosophy, educational ideas, emotional atmosphere, art and recreational activities, it is like air, everywhere.

To summarize, the creation of kindergarten environments is a comprehensive endeavour aimed at providing an environment suitable for the development of young children and promoting their all-round development. Through the creation of appropriate physical environments, material resources, social environments, psychological environments and cultural environments, it can help young children to develop all aspects of their abilities, cultivate their interests and hobbies, and promote the development of their social skills and autonomy.

## **2. Theoretical basis of kindergarten environment creation**

The environment is an atmosphere that can have a subtle effect on young children, and is an indispensable part of kindergarten education, as well as a basic condition for the existence and development of kindergartens. A good kindergarten environment will promote the healthy development of children as they develop various skills, improve their understanding and experience in the environment and grow up in interaction with the environment.

Watson put forward the frequency rate, bring us inspiration, the kindergarten environment for young children's stimulation of the inevitable frequent occurrence, will bring young children great linkage influence, so naturally become the kindergarten environment to create the importance of the seal. Watson's learning theory is based on conditioned reflex, which believes that the determining condition for learning is external stimulation. In his view, external stimuli can be controlled, so no matter how complex the behavior, it can be formed through external stimuli. His view of learning provides an argument for his environmental and educational determinism.

Bandura's Observational Learning Theory suggests that a person can learn many behaviors by observing the behavior of role models in the environment. Its interaction theory suggests that human behavior is largely acquired, and although Bandura did not believe that behavior is completely determined by the environment, this theory is common in kindergarten environments, where the creation of social, psychological, and cultural environments introduces the power of role modeling in conjunction with the role of young children's natural biological attributes of observational learning.

Bronfenbrenner's "ecosystem" theory points out that the environment in which children grow up plays a crucial role in their development, so the study of children's development cannot be separated from the study of the environment in which they live. Bronfenbrenner regarded the ecology of human development as "the science of the adaptation of a growing organism to the ever-changing environment in which it lives". He categorizes the environment in which children grow up as a microsystem, a mesosystem, an external system, a macrosystem, and a long-term system, all of which are interrelated. The microsystem consists of the environment that is in direct contact with children, that is, the families, kindergartens and communities of young children, in which adults have a direct influence on children; the core element of the mesosystem is the interconnections and interactions between the components in the microsystem, which is a collection of factors that have an influence

on young children, such as cooperation between homes and families, and the collaboration between kindergartens and the community; the external system is the system that has a certain influence on children, but has no direct connection with children; the macro-system consists of the components of the whole; and the long-term system is the long-term influence of the environment and its impact on their growth and behavior. These five systems range from microsystems to long-term systems, and their impact on young children ranges from direct to indirect. Therefore, kindergarten environment creation is more like polishing the microsystems of children's development to meet the needs of children's good development.

Vygotsky viewed learning as an activity that promotes development, and which can only occur between young children and their peers, in their lives and in interaction with their peers. When these processes are internalized, they become the fruit of children's autonomous growth. This is why many kindergarten environments promote the participation of children and teachers in crafts and more corners of the kindergarten environment.

According to Montessori, it is the fundamental purpose of early childhood education to enable children to achieve natural development in a suitable environment, and it is the responsibility of early childhood teachers to create a suitable environment for children and to create opportunities and conditions for them. Children's cognitive development is formed in the process of interaction with the surrounding environment. Children are active learners whose learning and development are the result of the gradual maturation of their physiological functions and their interaction with the psychological environment.

The environment plays a very important role in kindergarten education, which is not only an inevitable requirement for the construction of kindergarten curricula, but also an inevitable requirement for the realization of its educational function. On this basis, it is proposed to take “people” as the center, through the organic connection between “people” and “environment”, and take “culture” as the carrier to realize the “people-oriented” culture. The “culture” is the carrier to realize the “human-oriented” function of “edification”.

### **3. Significance of kindergarten environment creation**

#### **3.1. Unlocking the Wisdom of Young Children**

The environment has two effects on children's development, one is to influence children's thinking mode through the environment, and the other is that children change their surroundings by exploring and adapting to them. In order to make kindergarten education and teaching work smoothly and create an environment suitable for children's development, then when children enter kindergarten, teachers must have a comprehensive understanding of their basic conditions, such as their personality traits, behavioral habits and personal preferences, so that the educational effect of the environment can be better brought into play. For example, kindergartens can set up theme walls with diverse contents. For example, theme contents related to festivals, animals, seasons and so on can be arranged to stimulate children's interest in learning and mobilize their enthusiasm and initiative in learning.

#### **3.2. Fostering high morals in young children**

In early childhood education, the creation of an environment is a very important part, a good environment can influence and shape children, make them form good behavioral habits and develop their good morals. Kindergarten teachers should create appropriate educational scenarios according to the children's psychological development, to provide children with good emotions and noble moral cultivation, so that children will be good, learning and beautiful. Take the teaching of handicrafts as an example, teachers can take plastic bottles, used paper, disposable chopsticks and other wastes that

are more commonly used in life, and make them into small windmills, airships, cars and so on by strictly sterilizing them, thus cultivating children's sense of thrift. Some potted plants are placed in kindergartens and classes, and when teachers water and fertilize the plants, they should seize the opportunity to educate children about life, so that they will know how to cherish life and love nature from an early age, thus achieving good moral education.

### **3.3. Enrichment of young children's psychological experience**

First of all, the kindergarten environment can increase children's sense of security, a warm, comfortable and childlike kindergarten environment can help children adapt to kindergarten life faster, reduce their fear of unfamiliar environments, and increase their sense of security, for example, decorate some cozy corners, provide soft cushions and plush toys, which can make children feel the warmth of home. Secondly, kindergarten environment creation can stimulate the desire of young children to explore, inspiring and exploratory environment can stimulate young children's curiosity and desire to know. For example, teachers go about creating various thematic corners and providing a wealth of materials and props so as to encourage children to explore and discover freely, thereby fostering their imagination and creativity. Finally, kindergarten environment creation can provide opportunities for children to express their emotions. An inclusive and supportive environment can provide children with opportunities to express their emotions. When children are creating art, musical activities or other forms of expression, they can release their emotions and express their thoughts and feelings.

### **3.4. Promoting healthy physical development of young children**

A variety of facilities and activity settings in the kindergarten environment provide ample opportunities for children to exercise. For example, outdoor play areas, sports fields and a variety of sports equipment encourage children to actively participate in a wide range of sports activities. These sports help to strengthen children's muscles, improve their body coordination and sense of balance, and playing with large equipment also contributes to the musculoskeletal development of young children. In sports, children not only exercise their bodies, but also develop teamwork and a sense of competition. By creating a variety of challenging environments, such as climbing frames and balance beams, children are encouraged to try and challenge themselves. In these activities, children can not only exercise their bodies, but also cultivate the spirit of teamwork and competition.

### **3.5. Benefiting the aesthetic ability of young children**

Aesthetics is an indispensable quality of modern man and its importance is increasing day by day. The environment in which a child lives during his or her early years will have a subtle influence on him or her. As the old saying goes: "The one who is close to Zhu is red, and the one who is close to ink is black", which means that a person is influenced by the outside world to a great extent. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the creation of a beautiful environment in kindergartens, so that children can be influenced by beauty in a good environment, thus improving their aesthetic and appreciation ability. Setting up and designing kindergarten environments is to cultivate children's aesthetic ability, so that they can grow up in a beautiful environment and gradually know how to appreciate beautiful things.

### **3.6. Promoting the social development of young children**

No environment can be created without the cooperation and interaction of peers. As young children

grow older, their social nature gradually develops. The gradual socialization of the young child is realized in the process of interaction and mutual influence between the individual and the social group, the early childhood community and the peers.<sup>[2]</sup> Examples include play materials that require the cooperation of more than one person, joint planning, and so on. One of the manifestations of young children's integration into society is learning to share. For young children, in classroom area activities, peers are collaborators, participants and supporters of play. They participate in the regional activities together, cooperate together in the activities, and experience the pleasant feelings of the game.

#### **4. Implementation strategies for the creation of kindergarten environments**

##### **4.1. Kindergartens should enhance teachers' ability to create environments**

###### **4.1.1. Active participation of teachers in training related to environmental creation**

By participating in training related to environment creation, teachers' professionalism will be significantly enhanced. They will not only have a deeper understanding of the diverse ways in which the environment can be created, but they will also be able to clearly recognize the positive impact of the environment on children's development. With this understanding, teachers will be able to take a more active role in creating kindergarten environments in their daily educational practice, providing children with a rich and beneficial physical environment and a harmonious and healthy spiritual environment.<sup>[3]</sup> As the leader of environmental construction, the cognitive level and theoretical literacy of kindergarten teachers directly determine the overall quality and level of environmental creation. In terms of conceptual understanding, the ecological concept should be established and adhered to, and the environment and children's development should be regarded as an inseparable whole. This is due to the fact that the human being is both a “space” and a “relationship”, and is therefore inevitably affected by and has an impact on the “environment”. From an interactive point of view, attention should be paid to the naturalness, environmental friendliness and openness of the environment, so that children can have a comprehensive experience in a natural, open, free and safe environment.<sup>[4]</sup> Secondly, it is necessary to establish the concept of “the environment as a hidden curriculum”, so that the various elements of the kindergarten will have a subtle influence on children. Children's independent learning is not a kind of complete spontaneous learning, nor is it completely dependent on themselves, it cannot be separated from the teacher's guidance, also cannot be separated from the surrounding environment. Therefore, the kindergarten environment should take into full consideration of children's acceptance and support. To ignore the educational nature of the kindergarten environment is to exclude it from kindergarten educational activities.

###### **4.1.2. Enhancement of teachers' capacity to create environments through in-house competitions**

In-garden assessment not only tests the teacher's ability to create the environment, but also enhances communication and exchanges between teachers and students, so that teachers can learn from each other, make progress, and inspire their desire to create situations. The assessment in the garden can be carried out in the following ways: firstly, it can be judged from the children's point of view to see whether the environment created by the teacher is loved by the children, whether the children perform better in the new situation, and whether the children have more and better interactions with their surroundings; secondly, it can be judged from the use of teaching resources by the teachers to see that the teachers have created better conditions for learning in their teaching and learning activities and have made more effective use of the teaching and learning resources in the wider context effective use was made; thirdly, the physical and psychological aspects can be examined to see how well the teachers were able to construct the physical and psychological

environments.

## **4.2. Teachers should make full use of physical resources to optimize the kindergarten environment**

### **4.2.1. Utilizing diversified material resources**

The kindergarten teacher is the party that takes the initiative in creating the environment. When creating the physical environment of the kindergarten, the principle of multiple varieties and materials should be adhered to, so as to try to provide children with sufficient material materials, so that they can make full use of all kinds of materials, and so that their sensory skills can be developed to recognize the tactile sensation of all kinds of materials, thus developing their cognition. The physical environment in kindergartens can be created both on a macro and micro level. Teachers can set an example by bringing meaningful things from their own lives to kindergarten to share with the children, and at the same time help the children bring meaningful things from home, thus creating better conditions for the physical environment of the kindergarten. At the same time, teachers can also pay attention to examples of kindergarten environment creation on the Internet to create better material conditions for children.

### **4.2.2. Fully utilize local distinctive cultural resources**

Since kindergartens have few environmental resources, teachers can ask parents to bring their children to participate in cultural activities with local characteristics and bring materials with local cultural characteristics to the kindergarten, thus providing the kindergarten with physical environmental resources such as paper-cutting, embroidery, shadow and so on. In teaching practice, teachers can choose suitable materials according to their own teaching concepts and use them in kindergarten environment creation. Most teachers will encourage parents to bring their children to local cultural activities, while most parents are happy to cooperate with teachers in creating the kindergarten environment.

## **4.3. Teachers should focus on the creation of a psychological environment**

### **4.3.1. Creating a harmonious psychological climate**

Children have both a physical and a mental environment for survival. The mental environment of kindergarten is mainly reflected in the following: children are happy to interact with their peers and show behaviors such as cooperation and sharing; children trust their teachers and will actively seek help from them and communicate their wishes and needs to them. Whether it is children and children, or children and teachers, the guidance and assistance of teachers are indispensable. Teachers should stand on their own feet and establish an equal and respectful relationship with children. In the interaction between children and their peers, teachers should guide them to cooperate and communicate with others in a friendly manner. Only in this way can we create a harmonious psychological environment for the healthy development of young children.

### **4.3.2. Emphasizing the creation of a psychological environment for young children**

The purpose of creating a psychological environment in kindergartens is to make children mentally healthy, optimistic and active. Teachers should not only pay attention to the children's psychological condition under extreme behaviors, but also pay attention to the children's psychological changes at different stages and provide them with timely psychological guidance. Teachers can often



communicate with children and teach them how to express themselves. In the creation of a psychological environment, teachers should not only pay attention to whether the children have a good relationship with others, but also cultivate the children's curiosity, inquisitiveness, imagination and creativity, the development of which qualities has a vital impact on children's mental health.

#### 4.4. Teachers should take the perspective of young children

##### 4.4.1. Listening more to young children

The environment designed for young children needs to listen more to their voices and observe their reactions. On the one hand, children will show interest in and love for the materials put by teachers in the physical environment of kindergarten, on the other hand, after seeing the environment that is different from their own, they will also express their own views and different feelings, and children have a clearer understanding of the process of interacting with the materials in their daily life. Teachers listen more to the voice of children, in the kindergarten environment creation in order to pay attention to the hierarchy of the environment in order to adapt to different physical and mental characteristics, ability development level and the actual needs of young children. At the same time, we can observe children's behavioral habits to obtain the standards of kindergarten environment creation, for example, in the daily observation records found that whenever the outdoor play is over, children will take the initiative to organize the toys and materials, and tidy up before leaving their own play area, which means that neatly arranged materials are more likely to win the children's favor.

##### 4.4.2. More help for young children to participate together

In the creation of the environment, it is necessary to firmly believe that children are active, proactive learners and explorers with the ability to learn, and that they can develop in interaction with the outside world; it is necessary to fully recognize the holistic, long-term and diversified nature of children's growth, and to create a context of inquiry with a hierarchical structure for the young children; it is necessary to understand that children's learning cannot be separated from the support and guidance of the adults, and that in the creation of the environment it is necessary to regard it as a potential. When creating the environment, it should be regarded as a potential educational resource, and the dominant role of the teacher should not be emphasized too much. When creating the environment, children should be allowed to participate in it, this is because the real master of the environment is the children, and only by letting the children join in can we create a play environment that the children really like.

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