How To: Setting up the environment for learning

What does it look like?

Arranging the environment with the following considerations in mind can help provide a more effective learning environment for the child.

How?

- Choose an area that has minimal distractions (visual and auditory)
  - Can't see/hear a T.V. or other digital devices
  - Away from other children or adults that aren't working
  - An area with reduced noise or designate a certain time period as quiet time for everyone if a separate area is not available
  - If you are limited on space, consider building a makeshift room divider with a sheet and/or bookcase
  - White noise can help drown out other distracting sounds
- Choose an area that can be used every day
  - If you choose an area that is multipurpose (i.e. a dining table), consider using a bin, box, or bookshelf to house study items when they're not being used. This will reduce set up time each day and minimize things being misplaced.
- Choose an area with good lighting (consider utilizing window light)
- If possible, use a table, countertop, or hard surface as the workspace
  - Avoid beds and lounge chairs if falling asleep or daydreaming is an issue
  - Laptops are less likely to overheat if placed on solid surfaces rather than fabrics
  - Larger books, tv trays, bins/lids and crates can be used as work surfaces
- Choose a neutral place to work so that you can check in regularly and offer assistance
- Get input from the child, when developing the study area
- Post visuals in the workspace or have them visible in some way to child
  - Expectations, schedules, calming strategies, token boards, break cards, etc.
- Preferred items are put away or are not accessible unless they have earned them, or study time is over.
  - Some individuals will become distracted by the sight of a preferred item, so having it visible in the environment may lead to off task behavior
- If several children are sharing the same work area:
  - Ensure they all have their individual supplies and that they know which supplies are shared, to minimize arguments and off task behavior.
  - Supplies can be kept in baggies, cups, baskets, or a pencil box/bag
  - Make sure they are not within arm's reach of one another while working.
  - Allow all children to provide input when developing rules for study time together.

Tips?

- ➢ Timers/clocks are useful tools so that children know when to start/stop tasks or how long they have for breaks and reinforcers.
- ➢ Might the child need a beverage, tissue, or trash can? While offering breaks is important, if unplanned breaks tend to lead to delay in completing assignments, place the items in the environment proactively.
- ➢ If snack time occurs during the designated work time, consider having snacks prepared in advance to limit time off-task. (ex. Pack in a lunchbox or have it in a small bin that is easy to access.