



## Reflective Exercise: Experience Your Space from the Perspective of an Infant or Toddler<sup>1</sup>

How do the infants and toddlers in your care experience the space around them? Take a moment to consider their perspectives.

- ◆ Settle into your child care space when there are no children present. This space may be a room in a child care center or several rooms in a family child care home. Pretend you are an infant in the space. If you are comfortable and able to, lie on your back on the floor and examine the environment from an infant's perspective.
  - What do you see? Hear? Feel?
  - Is there anything that makes you uncomfortable? Are the lights too bright? Are there loud or startling noises? Is the floor too cold? Are there a variety of things available for you to look at and touch? Is the amount of materials overwhelming or just right? Are the shades and numbers of colors calming or overstimulating?
- ◆ Spend a few minutes crawling around and examining your opportunities from a mobile infant's point of view.
  - What do you see? Hear? Feel?
  - Is there anything in your reach that is unsafe? Is there stable equipment for you to hold onto in case you want to pull yourself up? Is there a variety of textures, surfaces, and materials for you to play with?
- ◆ Get down to a kneeling level and look at the room from a toddler's point of view.
  - What do you see? Hear? Feel?
  - Are there areas in the room that invite you to explore? Are there safe spaces to climb, cuddle, rest, and play? Are there enough toys available so that you have plenty of choices?
- ◆ Consider your space from the point of view of an infant or toddler in your care who has special needs.
  - What do you experience?
  - Are materials accessible to you and easy to use? Do images and objects in the room help you to feel included?
- ◆ Consider the cultural backgrounds of children in your care as you explore your space.
  - What do you see? Hear? Feel?
  - Are there images of yourself and your family? Are there items from your home environment? Do you hear your home language? Do you feel like you belong here?

After you complete this exercise, reflect on your experience. What did you notice? Are there things that you could change to make the space safer? More comfortable? More engaging? More individualized to the needs of the children in your care?

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<sup>1</sup> This reflective activity invites you to physically experience and explore your child care setting from an infant and toddler perspective. Please modify any part of the activity to suit your own physical abilities.



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