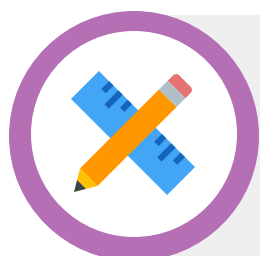# Using your environment to support agency

We know that children are to be encouraged to have agency and one of the ways this can occur in through the environment. A well planned out learning environment can support meaningful exploration and allow for better documentation.

The layout of the environment

Spend time putting some energy into planning the layout of the environment. Ensure that children have access to resources, clear pathways, quiet spaces and loud spaces are separate, and it is inclusive of all children's needs and interests.
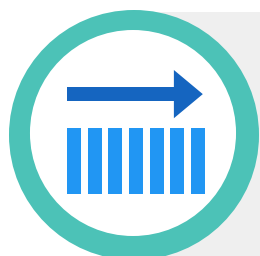
Consistency of the environment

Imagine how you would feel if your home was rearranged all the time when you weren't there and you didn't know where anything was anymore. Yet we often rearrange the children's environment which prevents them from being able to just get on with the learning.

Using open ended resources

The more open ended the resources are, the more children have freedom to play how they wish, instead of how the resources dictate. With a resource like loose parts children may choose to sort, classify, role play, make patterns, create simple rules etc., all at the same experience.

Allowing access to resources

The more access children have to resources the more freedom they have to challenge their ideas, extend their own learning, and resource their own learning. If they need to ask for paper and pencils, or to have a certain piece of equipment this may halt the play and the learning.

Knowing when to change the environment

Changes to the environment should be based on the children (and ideally done with the children). These include safety reasons, the children's suggestions, based on how the children are playing, or if the children have stopped playing with an area they have stopped learning from it.