Elements of the Environment

Social Emotional Elements- Building on children's innate ability to develop relationships

¥ Where in the environment do the children work calmly, with focus for long periods of time? Where do the children seem to have difficulty focusing? How are these areas arranged?

¥ Where are there cozy places for children to get away from the group and work alone?

¥ Where can children work with one other child or a small group of children?

¥ Where are places where children can easily develop relationships with special time, sharing, and enjoyment with educators, family members and other children?

¥ Where in the environment can children see representations of their identity and family life?

¥ What specific things about this environment help children learn about order and organization, and feel calm and focused?

Sensory/Motor elements – appealing to children's flexible brain, lively minds and active bodies

¥ Where do children use their active bodies and large muscles in the environment? What is the quality of their play in this area?

¥ How is the environment arranged to invite children to spread out and pursue their ideas and use their active bodies?

¥ What opportunities are available for children to feel powerful, independent, important, and competent?

¥ Find all of the places where children can climb, crawl, push, pull, slide, bounce, hide, throw, go up/down, up/over, in/out, etc.

¥ Identify all the places where children can use their hands and fingers to grasp, bang, poke, stack, shake, squeeze, pat, pour, fit something together, and take something a part, build and create designs.

¥ Find all of the places where there are sensory discoveries and experiences for children to engage with. Where children can explore the magic and wonder of different textures, pools of light, color, shadows, smells, and sounds.

Schema Theory Elements- Providing opportunities for children to use their natural abilities to organize experiences through repeating actions and patterns. Identify materials

and areas of the environment where children can explore the following schemas:

Transporting
- ¥ Picks things up, moves things, puts down or dumps. Uses things like strollers, wagons, bags, baskets, and trucks.

Transforming
- ¥ Uses materials to explore change in shape, color, consistency, etc.

Trajectory
- ¥ Explores the horizontal, vertical and diagonal movement of things and oneself. Makes things fly through the air, moves own body in these ways.

Rotation and Circulation
- ¥ Experiments with things that turn like wheels and balls, Explores curved lines and circles.

Enclosing and Enveloping
- ¥ Surrounds objects with other things. Uses self to get inside a defined area like blocks, boxes, etc. Hides, covers or wraps self and other things completely up.

Connecting/Disconnecting
- ¥ Joins things together and ties things up. Takes things a part, scatters pieces and parts