Characteristics for a Quality Learning Environment

- Partnership with parents
  - Giving them skills and knowledge to help their child
  - Involving parents as resources to expose children to diverse populations
  - Being respectful of parents' rights
  - Communication of child's progress, expectations and roles of parents

- Support for play
  - Variety of opportunities and experiences
  - Opportunities to explore and feed their curiosity

- Role of direct adult input
  - Combination of direct instruction and scaffolding
  - Strong foundation and knowledge of content areas
  - Quality time

- Children's viewpoints
  - Allow children to express their opinions
  - Allow children to make their own decisions
  - Ask children about their preferences
Chapter 10
- Research different cultures, religions, etc. of the children in the classroom and have the class do projects on different cultures, religion, etc...
- Families included in class learning
- Inform parents, make sure you are all on the same page - use newsletters and calendars
- Arrange centers to enhance learning through play
- Send home activities for children to do with their parents at home
- Ask what children are doing at home and build lesson planning around that.
- Have one-on-one time with each child
- Interview children - ask what they want to learn about.
- Arrange the room to the children's wants/needs (show student's you care) takes focus of teacher and puts on students
- Play on child's level - experiment with them
Professional teams need to work with parents and use effective communication. This can be done through parents offering information regarding behavioral intervention, academic learning. Professionals need to listen to parents and offer professional opinion appropriately.

Support for play can be modeled after the home; except tweaked with adult input. Children need the freedom to play, but also need adult coaching to adequately learn from experiences.

Use child's perspectives to help create rules and solutions to problems.

Through surprises learned through trial-error, children can refine their ideas with the assistance of adult figures.

By allowing students to share their viewpoint, we give them ownership of the classroom.

Teachers can create an anti-bias curriculum, learning to encourage equal opportunities.

Using the diversity of the classroom as a framework. Tying the curriculum together creates an unbiased learning environment.
Necessary Characteristics for a Quality Learning Environment:

- Working with Parents
  - Feedback
  - Engaged in Sustained Shared thinking
  - Socialization
  - Parent involvement
  - Constructive criticism

- Support for Play
  - Learning through play
  - Developing Skills
  - Active Role

- The Role of Direct Adult Input - adults as active listeners

- Fostering Respect
- Positive Approach to Behavior
- Providing Equal Opportunities

We feel all of the characteristics above are integrated into a positive learning environment. All the aspects under working with parents involve frequent communication between the teacher, the parent(s), and the student. In a quality learning environment, children learn through play while developing skills and also participate through active roles.
Group Paper  2-4-05

We didn’t use our book, so as a group we felt like we understood the readings.
It did awhile to retrieve the information, so we could of had a better understanding if we went back and re-read the chapter so we had a full understanding of the key concepts. We would rate our group at PDG, because all of the important ideas were included and stated in our own language.

- characteristics
  Working with parents
  good communication & relationships b/w parents, teachers, & child
  share skills w/ parents to help child
  activities, worksheets
  family brought into class learning, don’t underestimate how much is happening at home
  provide parents access to their child’s information & academic records
  invite parents to be involved w/ their child (at school)
  genuine partnership to be able to explain your skills

Support for play
  child-centered play - meaning the type of play, you’re not forcing the child
  relaxed play environment - play the song in homed & in school
  can play w/a purpose
  tell them what their doing but don’t disrupt their thinking
The role of direct adult input
- share control of children's quest
  following an adult-determined path
- early childhood practitioners can't
  act like primary school teachers
- need to have good understanding
  early curriculum & child development

Viewpoints & expertise
- ask children their opinions, you might
  learn more about yourself
- own perspective on things
- taking on children's viewpoint & build
  on it

Frameworks/cultural wallpaper
- preschool gives a false definition of
  early practitioner, as they aren't
  supposed to be teachers like primary
  school teachers.
Quality Learning Environment

Keeping the parents involved
- ask for parent advice
- send home leaflets
- home visits
- partnership
- PTA & PTO
- student teacher conference

Play Based Curriculum
- Relax time (1 on 1 with parents)
- Expresses children's emotions
- Learning life skills (house, restaurant, school)
- Helping with household chores
- Sharing / not sharing
- Development of social skills
- Cognitive Development (fine motor skills, sports)

Role of Direct Adult Input (Child Viewpoints)
- Balance of adult lead & play based
- Structured play vs. free play
- Taking children's opinions
- Pictures of what is important to children
- Interviews for children input
- Student lead tours
- Children want adults to care about their opinions
Cultural Wallpaper

- Children learn life skills for later in life
- Environmental factors, like living conditions, economic status, family structure,
Continued...

Active use of children's viewpoints and expertise:
- Adults priorities dominate child-centered settings.
- Give children the opportunity to express their opinions on such matters.

Frameworks:

The term pre-school means that we are labeling these children as about to be in elementary school as opposed to a 3-year-old (for example).

Pedagogy - how we support children in their learning. If it's their environment or what the teacher promotes/provides.
Working w/ parents:
Providing intervention programs for group work to comm. about students learning. Also sharing educational aims w/ parents. Providing direct advice & even pamphlets to parents can help. Accepting different definitions of parental involvement.

Support for play:
Allows children to express emotions & resolve conflict. Helps them learn new skills. Allowing unrestricted learning through play. Providing unstructured time w/ adults.

The Role of direct adult input:
The culture forces these roles from adults:
"Adults' expectations of children, what they give children most opportunity to practice & which behaviors adults make meaningful for children in the terms of the central cultural goals & values."