



Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Massachusetts' Young Children

Designing and Assessing Environments



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Learning Objectives

- Participants will understand how environments affect children's behavior.
- Participants will be able to design an environment that supports appropriate behavior and social skills.
- Participants will know the criteria for a well designed, responsive infant/toddler environment.
- Participants will be able to articulate the importance of schedule, routines, and transitions in promoting child social engagement and preventing challenging behavior.
- Participants will be able to describe responsive infant/toddler routines that support the social emotional development of each child.

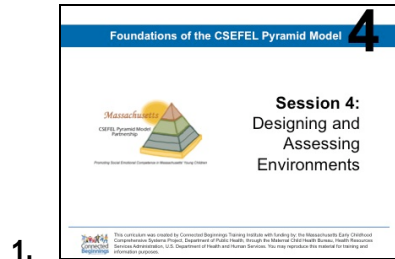
Suggested Agenda

I.	Introduction to Session 6	5 min
II.	Review of the CSEFEL Pyramid Model	5 min
III.	Designing the Physical Environment	35 min
IV.	Schedules, Routines and Transitions	35 min
V.	Giving Directions and Teaching Classroom Rules	30 min
VI.	Structured Field Experience	5 min
VII.	Wrap-up and Evaluation	5 min
	Total Time	120 Minutes (2 hrs)

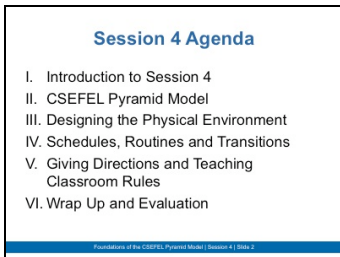
Materials Needed

- Session 4 PowerPoint Slides
- Facilitator's Guide
- Flip chart or large paper or white board and markers
- Video Clips
 - 4.1 Stop/Go Teaching Rules
- Handouts
 - 4.1 PowerPoint Presentation Slides
 - 4.2 Infant Toddler Planning Document
 - 4.3 Infant/Toddler Responsive Routines Inventory
 - 4.4 Designing Supportive Environments
 - 4.5 Structured Field Experience #2
 - 4.6 Session 4 Evaluation

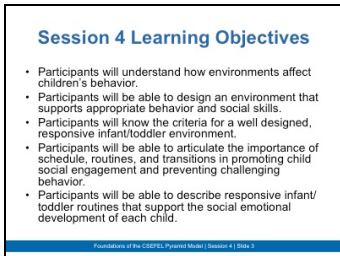
Part I: Introduction to Session 4 (5 min)



1.

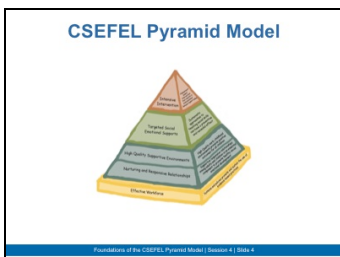


2.



3.

Part II: CSEFEL Pyramid Model (5 min)



4.

Part I: Introduction to Session 4 (5 min)

- A.** Show **Slide 1**. Welcome the group to Session 4 entitled, *Designing and Assessing Environments*
- B.** Show **Slide 2**. Review the agenda with participants.
- C.** Show **Slide 3**. Review the Learning Objectives with participants.
- D.** Draw the group's attention to Session 4 in the Participant Materials.
- E.** Address logistical issues (e.g., breaks, bathrooms, etc.)
- F.** Collect Structured Field Experience #1 from the group. Respond to any questions the group might have about the assignment.

Part II: CSEFEL Pyramid Model (5 min)

- A.** Show **Slide 4**. Point out that we are now at the second level of the pyramid – *High Quality Supportive Environments*.

Explain that this session will focus on how the learning environment prevents challenging behavior and promotes social emotional development. Tell participants they will learn to look at their environments through different lenses – the social emotional competence lens and challenging behavior lens.

- B.** Ask participants for a definition of “environment”. Record key phrases on the large paper.

Point out that the environment includes not just the physical space and furniture arrangement, but routines, schedules, activities, and the emotional tone of the space.

Part III: Designing the Physical Environment (35 min)

5.

Classroom Arrangement and Design: Traffic Patterns

- Minimize large open spaces
- Minimize obstacles and other hazards
- Consider the needs of children with physical and sensory disabilities

Foundations of the CSEFEL Pyramid Model | Session 4 | Slide 5

6.

Classroom Arrangement and Design: Learning Centers

- Physical Design
 - Clear boundaries
 - Visibility
 - Visual prompts when centers are not an option
 - Adequate number of centers
 - Size and location of centers
 - Number of children in centers
 - Organization of materials
 - Preparation of centers

Foundations of the CSEFEL Pyramid Model | Session 4 | Slide 5

- C. Emphasize that our goal in this session is to investigate how the environment can be used as a powerful tool to promote social and emotional engagement and to prevent challenging behaviors.
- D. Encourage participants to think across the age groups of infants, toddlers and preschoolers. As we discuss environments designed to meet the needs of children, ask the group to consider how they can best serve the children with whom they work. For instance, how can looking at preschool environments inform an infant teacher? How can learning about the “responsive environment” criterion from infant and toddler programs help a preschool teacher assess her book area?

Part III: Designing the Physical Environment (35 min)

- A. Tell participants we will talk about two sets of strategies related to the physical design of the environment: **traffic patterns** and designing **learning centers**.
- B. **Show Slide 5.** Review the following major issues about traffic patterns:
 - a. Minimize large open spaces in which children can run
 - b. Minimize obstacles
 - c. Consider environmental arrangement as it applies to children with physical or sensory disabilities
- C. Show **Slide 6.** Strategies related to learning centers are created to increase the likelihood of children being engaged and decrease the likelihood of challenging behaviors occurring.

Talk about two aspects of planning learning centers – the **physical design** and the **actual content** of the materials and activities that occur in each center.

Review these major points about the physical design of learning centers:

- a. Have clear boundaries so that children know where the center begins/ends, and so that children are not crowded together.
- b. Make sure that all children are visible to adults and that adults are visible to children.

- c. When learning centers are closed for some reason, indicate that the centers are closed by using visual prompts such as a drape or signs (e.g., a circle with a slash through it, a stop sign, etc.).
- d. Have enough centers for the number of children in your care and enough materials within the centers so that children are engaged and not continually arguing over materials.
- e. Consider the size and location of centers. For example, it is best to avoid having a high activity level center such as blocks or dramatic play located near a quieter activity level center such as library or computers.
- f. Use developmentally appropriate and creative ways to limit the number of children in centers if this is necessary. For example, you could laminate cards with children's names that can be moved into pockets at a center, rather than posting a sign that says "2 children only." Ask participants if they have any creative ideas to contribute.
- g. Organize materials and keep them in appropriate places, according to the children's' development of independence skills.
- h. Have centers organized and ready to go when children arrive each day.


D. Show **Slide 7**. Ask participants to imagine themselves in a classroom that they know well. Now go through the questions posed on the slide. Point out that this is a way to start assessing the environment in a way that acknowledges children must be engaged and interested in order to grow socially and emotionally.

Points to cover in your discussion include:

- a. Materials within centers need to be meaningful and relevant to children's needs, interests, and lives (e.g. within the dramatic play area, materials that are culturally appropriate should be available; the pictures on puzzles and in the classroom library should reflect the diversity within your community, etc.)

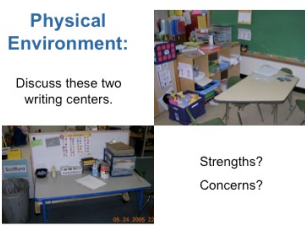
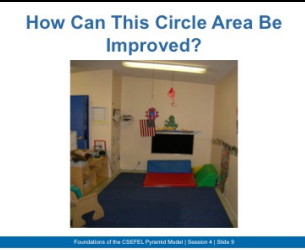
Create Meaningful and Engaging Learning Areas

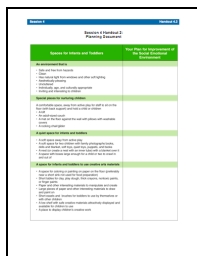
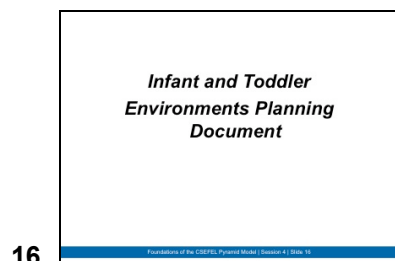
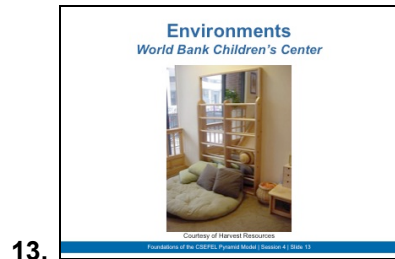
- Stand in center of the room
 - Is there a clear entry to each center?
 - Is each center inviting?
 - Are there enough materials (3 units of play per child allowed in center)?
 - Is there a system in place for entering and exiting centers?
 - Are centers and materials/shelves labeled?
 - Is there a rotation of materials?
 - Are materials highly engaging?
 - Are the activities relevant to children's needs, interests and lives?



Foundations of the CSEFEL Pyramid Model | Session 4 | Slide 7

7.

8. **Physical Environment:** Discuss these two writing centers.  Strengths? Concerns?
9. **How Can This Circle Area Be Improved?** 
10. **Responsive Environments**
Caregivers are the ones responsible for setting up the physical space, choosing activities and play things and engaging in the interactions that make up the learning experiences for infants and toddlers.
11. **A Well Designed Infant-Toddler Environment**
- Supports the social emotional needs of infants and toddlers as well as their language, cognitive, and motor development
 - Encourages responsive care from adults
 - Supports peer relationships
 - Is developmentally appropriate
 - Age appropriate
 - Individually appropriate
 - Culturally appropriate
- b. There should be culturally meaningful activities and materials. Also consider using labels in multiple languages around the room. When possible, choose languages that families in your program speak.
- E. Centers need to be highly engaging and interesting to children. Build on children’s interests by including materials and activities that children enjoy or express interest in. If children tend to stay in one or two centers, that would suggest the other centers are not engaging or interesting to the children.
- F. Provide a variety of materials in each center. For example, related books can be added to each center to support learning there. Writing utensils and paper can also be in a variety of centers. Be creative!
- G. Change the materials or themes in centers on a regular basis. Listen to what children are talking about. Create centers that build on their interests. Rotate materials within a center so that the same materials are not available all year. Let children help you choose the materials.
- H. **Show Slide 8.** Discuss the strengths and concerns of each center arrangement. Ask, “Why do you think children would select one center over the other?” Ask, “If you had a writing center in your classroom, how would you design it given what we have talked about so far?”
- I. **Show Slide 9.** Facilitate group discussion about how this Circle Time area could be improved.
- J. **Show Slide 10: Responsive Environments.** Introduce the idea that environments are a crucial element of infant and toddler care. Caregivers decide what babies, see, touch and hear. They make decisions about how much fresh air, sunlight and exercise the baby will have. Caregivers create the physical spaces, choose toys and other materials, and provide the interactions that make up their learning experiences.
- K. **Show Slide 11.** Make the point that a well-designed infant toddler physical environment can have a major positive impact not only on children’s social emotional development but also on their language, cognitive and motor development. Go through the slide and review each of the criteria.
- a. Ask participants to add their own requirements for a responsive environment to the list on the slide **[NOTE: If your group**



(Handout 4.2)

is made up of primarily preschool teachers you may need to guide them to consider how these criterion might help them think about their classrooms.] Write the additional suggestions on large paper.

- L. Ask participants to consider the criteria we have just discussed while viewing the following infant toddler environments. Facilitate discussion while reviewing **Slides 12-15**.
- M. Show **Slide 16**. Introduce **Handout 4.2: Infant Toddler Planning Document**
- N. Go over the content of the planning document, discussing the support that each space and its components provide to the social emotional development of infants and toddlers, and relate it to the criteria just discussed.
- O. Explain that this tool will be one of the choices they will have for the Structured Field Experience Field work assignment that will be discussing at the end of the session.

Part IV: Schedules Routines and Transitions (35 min)

How Schedules and Routines Support Social Emotional Development

- They are an important part of each day
- They meet children's basic needs
- They provide opportunities for learning and development
- They help develop a sense of security and control
- They provide predictability
- They support competence and confidence

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Responsive daily routines	What do you do for them?
Provide a predictable routine for sleeping, eating, and other daily activities.	
Provide a predictable routine for transitions and other daily activities.	
Use routines to communicate to children about daily activities.	
Provide predictable consistency.	
Provide predictable consistency for daily routines and other daily activities.	

(Handout 4.3)

Part IV: Schedules Routines and Transitions (35 min)

- A. Schedules.** Show **Slide 17**. Ask participants what the difference is between a **schedule** and a **routine**. Point out that routine refers to a pattern established over time, something that a child learns to “internalize” or be able to predict easily because of consistency. By routines we mean the regular and repeated things we do each day and the way in which we do them. When we talk about schedules we tend to mean the time that we do something.
- B.** Make the point that babies and young children learn about people and the way the world works through their daily routines, what people say and how they say it, and what people do and how they do it - all of this is curriculum.
- C.** Make the point that while, for very young infants, individualization is essential, older toddlers and preschoolers also benefit from flexible but predictable routines and schedules. Routines and schedules help them organize themselves around what is coming next. Predictable routines provided in the same way by the same people give young children a sense of control and security that allows them to relax and to explore and learn from the environment.
- D.** Make the point that across the age groups, **responsive consistent routines and schedules are used by caregivers/teachers to enhance the quality of the relationship between children and adults, to provide security and to assure children that the world is a safe and interesting place to learn and grow.**
- E.** Draw the group's attention to **Handout 4.3: Responsive Routine Inventory**. Go through the section headings and point out some specific items from each (e.g. “Provide daily routines includes: Implement a flexible routine (eating, sleeping, inside-outside so that toddlers learn to predict”).

Explain that this tool will be one of the choices they will have for the Structured Field Experience Field work assignment that will be discussed at the end of the session.

Ask the participants who work with infants and toddlers for their reactions to the assessment (e.g. “These suggestions are too much for any teacher to do,” “We do a lot of these practices already.”)

Ask participants who work with older children how

18.

Schedules and Routines

- Develop a schedule that promotes child engagement and success.
 - Balance activities:
 - Active and quiet
 - Small group and large group
 - Teacher-directed and child-directed
 - Teach children the schedule.
 - Establish a routine and follow it consistently.
 - When changes are necessary, prepare children ahead of time.

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these practices relate to preschool settings. How might it feel for a child transitioning from a toddler program using the practices outline in the Responsive Routines Inventory to a preschool? What are some things that would be different? (e.g. “Preschoolers always eats together,” “The group is too big to sit with every kid as they are waking form naptime.”) What are some practices that could be adapted to the preschool environment?

F. As we talked about earlier, when children are *engaged* with materials, a peer, or an adult, they are less likely to be distracted, bored or feel the need to exhibit challenging behavior. Well-developed clear, schedules and routines can also assist in keeping children engaged in the day’s activities and the classroom community. This notion of engagement can be especially important when thinking about effective practices with older toddlers and preschoolers.

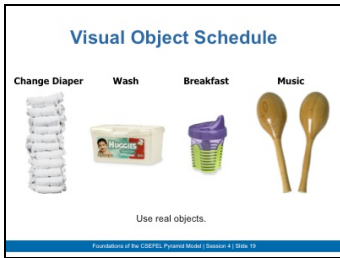
G. Show **Slide 18**. Point out that some of the things that will help children stay engaged are:

- a. Balancing the activities so there is a mix of one-on-one, small group and large group activities, and a mix of teacher-directed and child-directed activities.
- b. Teaching the children the routine: we can’t expect children to follow the routine if we don’t teach it to them. Make the point that knowing the schedules and routines creates an environment in which children are able to anticipate what will happen next, which in turn helps them feel more secure.

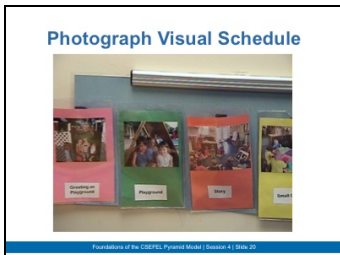
Ask the group if they can think of children for whom this is especially important.

H. Ask the group for ideas on how adults can support children in learning schedules and routines. Write responses on large paper. Some ideas include:

- a. Be consistent with your schedule and routines. Children will be more likely to learn a schedule if it is implemented consistently.
- b. Support children with verbal encouragement and positive touch as they go through the schedule of the day.
- c. Post your schedule visually, and refer to it frequently throughout the day so children learn what will happen next.



19.



20.



21.



Activity:
Using Visual Schedules

- You announce that it's time for centers and a girl runs to go out the door yelling "No! Play out!"
 - How can you use your visual schedule to teach?
 - What else might you be able to use to teach?

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22.

Activity:
Using Visual Schedules

- A new little boy arrives in your classroom and he is very scared. When Mommy says bye, he screams, cries, pulls on her leg, and tries to climb up Mommy's body.
 - How can you use your visual schedule to teach?

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23.

- d. Teach the schedule during circle time, using visual cues that all children understand (e.g., use pictures of real objects and when possible, Use simple symbols.
- e. Provide individual instruction to children who need more assistance, and use individualized picture cues.
- f. When changes are necessary, prepare children for them; make announcements at opening circle, using visual prompts on a posted schedule indicating a change, (e.g., a stop sign). Remind children of the changes. It is important to consider that for some children with disabilities such as autism, changes in the schedule or routine can be a trigger for challenging behaviors.

- I. Show **Slides 19-21** as examples of visual schedules. Ask the participants if they use visual schedules in their classrooms. If so, what do they look like? Do they make reference to them during the day? If so, when?
- J. **Activity: Using Visual Schedule.** Show **Slides 22 and 23.** Read through the scenario and ask the group for ideas concerning how a visual schedule might be used effectively.

Transitions

- Plan for transitions
 - Minimize the number of transitions that children have during the day.
 - Minimize the length of time children spend waiting with nothing to do.
 - Prepare children for transitions by providing a warning.
 - Structure the transitions so that children have something to do while they wait.
 - Teach children the expectations related to transitions.
 - Individualize supports and cues.

24.

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Transition with Visual and Timer



25.

Foundations of the CSEFEL Pyramid Model | Session 4 | Slide 25

Transition with Visual



26.

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K. Transitions. Show **Slide 24**. Make the point that challenging behaviors often occur during transitions from one activity on the schedule to another, especially when all children are expected to do the same thing at the same time and then end up waiting with nothing to do. We know from research that children often spend a significant portion of their preschool day making transitions between activities so our goals should be to:

- Minimize the number of transitions that children have during the day.
- Plan transitions so that a minimal amount of time is spent in them and that children are highly engaged during transitions.
- Give children a warning before each transition.
- Minimize transitions during which every child has to do the same thing at the same time.
- Structure the transition so that children have something to do while they are waiting, (e.g., provide some children with helping roles during transitions).
- Teach children about expectations for transitions. This can occur during group time and should be reinforced throughout the day.

L. Point out that, just as with schedules, young children benefit from displayed visual cues for transitions – especially those with special needs and for whom English is their second language. Visual cues can help children anticipate transitions, and assist them in knowing what to do during transitions. Show **Slide 25 and 26** as examples.

Part V: Giving Directions and Teaching Classroom Rules (30 min)

Giving Directions

- Give directions that are positive.
- Give children the opportunity to respond to a direction.
- When appropriate, give the child choices and options for following directions.
- Follow through with positive acknowledgment of children's behavior.

27.

Foundations of the CSEFEL Pyramid Model | Session 4 | Slide 27

Part V: Giving Directions and Teaching Classroom Rules (30 min)

A. Show **Slide 27**. Tell participants that research has shown that preschool children have high rates of not following teacher directions. While this might be because of the child's characteristics, it might also be because of the way teachers give directions. Directions that are stated negatively ("Why haven't you cleaned up?") or as a question ("Can you clean up?") may confuse children and make them less likely to follow the direction.

General Guidelines about Rules

- Have a few simple classroom rules.
- Involve the children in developing the rules.
- Post the rules visually.
- Teach the rules systematically.
- Reinforce the rules at high rates initially and at lower rates throughout the year.

28. Foundations of the CSEFEL Pyramid Model | Session 4 | Slide 28

Involving Children in Developing the Rules

- Have children help generate the rules.
- Name the rule and have a child demonstrate the rule.
- Name the rule and have the children identify the visuals that might go on a poster.
- Have children help decorate a rules poster.

29. Foundations of the CSEFEL Pyramid Model | Session 4 | Slide 29

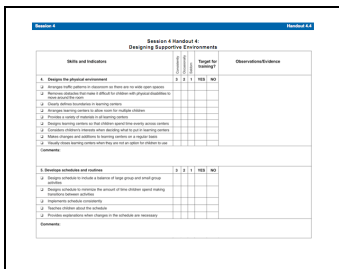
Video 1.5: Stop/Go Teaching Rules



30. Foundations of the CSEFEL Pyramid Model | Session 4 | Slide 30



Video Clip 4.1: Stop/Go Teaching



(Handout 4.4)

Go over the points on Slide 27 in order to provide strategies that will increase the likelihood that children will follow the teacher directions.

- B. Show **Slide 28**. Review the points on the slide. Share a couple of examples of negative directions and then ask the group to follow the guidelines of making them positive.
- C. Show **Slide 29**. Review the points on the slide. Share a couple of complicated rules and ask the group to simplify them.

For example:

- Complicated: Do not climb on shelves, tables or benches in the classroom.
- Simplified: Feet stay on the floor.

- D. Show **Slide 30**. Introduce this segment by telling participants that the segment shows a group activity in which children are beginning to learn the classroom rules or expectations. Show **Video Clip 4.1: Stop/Go Teaching Rules**. After viewing the segment, ask participants if the rules were stated positively and are developmentally appropriate; (Did they meet the guidelines just discussed? What are the strengths of the group activity? How might you adapt this activity for your particular needs? How does the activity help the children learn the rules? How can you modify this activity to support children with disabilities? Second language learners?)

- E. Refer to **Handout 4.4: Designing Supportive Environments** (from the **Inventory of Practices for Promoting Social Emotional Competence**). Point out the skills and indicators, and ask how participants might use this tool to inventory their own practice. Ask about parallels with the Massachusetts Preschool Standards and Guidelines and with NAEYC Accreditation Standards. Do any of these practices remind participants of what they are being asked to do in their own classrooms?

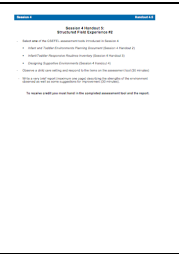
Explain that this tool will be one of the choices they will have for the Structured Field Experience Field work assignment that will be discussed at the end of the session.

Part VI: Structured Field Experience (5 min)

Structured Field Experience #2

- Select **one** of the CSEFEL assessment tools introduced in Session 4
 - *Infant and Toddler Environments Planning Document* (Session 4 Handout 2)
 - *Infant/Toddler Responsive Routines Inventory* (Session 4 Handout 3)
 - *Designing Supportive Environments* (Session 4 Handout 4)
- Observe a child care setting and respond to the items on the assessment tool (30 minutes).
- Write a very brief report (maximum one page) describing the strengths of the environment observed as well as some suggestions for improvement (30 minutes).
- To receive credit you must hand in the completed assessment tool and the report.

31.



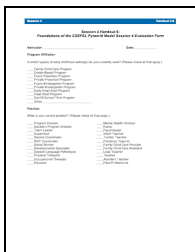
(Handout 4.5)

Part VII: Wrap Up and Evaluation (5 min)

Major Messages from Session 4

- The environment includes physical space, furniture arrangement, routines, schedules, transitions and the emotional tone of the space.
- The physical design of the environment can promote child engagement and prevent challenging behaviors.
- Schedules and routines are important to help children anticipate what will happen, which makes them feel more secure.
- Because challenging behaviors occur most often during transitions, they need to be planned so that minimal time is spent in them and that children are engaged.
- A few classroom rules that the children help develop should be intentionally taught and reinforced throughout the day.

32.



(Handout 4.6)

Part VI: Structured Field Experience (5 min)

- Show **Slide 31**. Draw the group’s attention to **Handout 4.5: Structured Field Experience #2**. Go through the directions for Structured Field Experience #2.
- Point out to the group that the total time for this exercise, observing and writing, should be one hour. Point out that to get credit for this assignment participants must hand in the completed assessment and the brief summary of strengths and suggestions of the observed environment.

Part VII: Wrap-Up and Evaluation (5 min)

- Show **Slide 32**. Go through each of the Major Messages.
 - The environment includes physical space, furniture arrangement, routines, schedules, transitions and the emotional tone of the space.
 - The physical design of the environment can promote child engagement and prevent challenging behaviors.
 - Schedules and routines are important to help children anticipate what will happen, which makes them feel more secure.
 - Because challenging behaviors occur most often during transitions, they need to be planned so that minimal time is spent in them and that children are engaged.
 - A few classroom rules that the children help develop should be intentionally taught and reinforced throughout the day.
- Ask participants if they have any additional Major Messages they would like to add.
- Ask participants to complete **Handout 4.6: Session 4 Evaluation Form**.