(Description: Program Specialist Katie sitting on couch in classroom)

When we sit down to plan, we first talk about developmentally, what areas need to be in a classroom? What do we need to have? What are the core ones? What are the ones that we   really need to focus on? Is there ones that needs to be larger areas because there's more of a need for that at this developmental age? So we're going to focus on the areas, developmentally, the interest areas that the children really need. We then get out our ECERS book or ITERS book and we look through and we say these are the basic interest areas that we need to provide. So when we think about those areas we think about, "Oh, where would like to place them?" And when we do place them in those areas, why? So we'll talk about, well we need a group area where everyone can gather, a place that feel cozy and that they all want to be and is the space where it's not so distracted where can we put that? Let's just start there. And then we'll put our bookcase here because this is the area where they're going to grab a book before we come to group so we also think about just the normal routines of the day and how can we make those routines easier? How can that send that message to children? Well, the books are right there so you can easily grab a book and sit down and look at a book while we're waiting for everybody to gather. So we think about the practical elements of it and then once we setup, what we call, the bones of the room which initially, this is going to be our group area. This shelf is going to go over here because it houses the manipulatives really well so we're going to say manipulatives are going to go here we kind of do the bones of the classroom first of just the interest areas that need to be there

(Description: Photo of children's kitchen play area with a table and place settings)

before we put out any rugs or anything like that we try to go and get the materials that we need to put on the shelves because we put the materials on the shelves we want the materials to speak to the children. We want them to be excited to use those materials

(Description: Children playing with materials in kitchen play area)

We want them to be inviting to them to want to go and take them off the shelf. Because you can put as many materials as you want on the shelf but if children are not invited to use them or they do not look appealing to them they're not going to touch them so they're going to walk right past them.

(Description: Program Specialist Katie sitting on couch in classroom)

So we talk about how the materials need to be the thing that invite them over so when we put the material out we think about how we can display them in baskets or other ways that will look beautiful and attractive and inviting for them to be able to use. Once we've chosen those materials the materials that we've chosen, we base on the DRDP, on Individual Education Plans, on development, and where children are the children's interests that we've noted those are all the things we take into account when we look at how we're going to setup that shelf. We put all of those things on the shelf and then we look at it and say, "Well, this still feels kind of cold in this area. It still feels like it's not very warm and inviting and if I'm going to use this floor puzzle do I want to go to a hard concrete ground, cold ground to do this puzzle? No. I'm not going to want to." Neither are children, so it's going to sit there the entire time with dust on it so what do I need to do? Let's find a rug that we could put out where children could use it here or is this a material that they're going to use more sitting at a table or developmentally do they not really sit in chairs yet they mainly stand around tables so let's find a low table they can stand around, that's close by where they can pull the materials there. And then we look at and it still feels a little cold it doesn't feel real warm here, it doesn't have a whole lot of natural elements maybe we need to get a plant to put on the top of the shelf

(Description: Shelf with plants and lamp near an armchair with mirror and paintings on wall)

maybe the lighting isn't so great over here maybe we need to add a lamp to add some light to make it so that they can really see what they're doing or maybe we don't want this area here

(Description: Program Specialist Katie sitting on couch in classroom)

because we're now seeing the materials on the shelf and everything and you can't really see what's there because of where it is. Maybe we need to move it closer to a window. So we go through all of those aspects and then once the children come in and they use the materials we sit afterwards and go, "OK, well that didn't go anything like what we had thought." These children, developmentally, we were thinking they're going to be around this range; they're not at all so what do we need to adapt? What do we need to change? Let's take this off the shelf. Let's move this over. It seemed really congested in this area there wasn't enough pathways, children couldn't really get through so if we did have a child who needed to get through with a walker or a wheelchair, it wouldn't work so we need to relook at this, how we can make this work and we do a lot of revamping and re-changing

(Description: Panorama of teachers setting up classroom)

within the first week or school and sometimes even more into the semester as things change, as their needs change, as we see that they're outgrowing certain materials or they're needing other stimulation other than the materials we're providing then we continue and reevaluate and we do that on a weekly basis. So we think about all of

those: The lighting aspect, How does it feel when you walk in? We look at textures, and this rug is really rough,

(Description: Program Specialist Katie sitting on couch in classroom)

no one's going to want to sit here so what can we do about that? We look at all of those elements but then we also look at we have the other practical side we've got to make sure that we're meeting learning foundations, that we're using the DRDP that we're following the ECERS so we have that whole other practical side to it to so we take both of those worlds and marry them. We can make this happen on both ends.