



# **Thinking Critically About Environments for Young Children: Bridging Theory and Practice (Early Childhood Education (Teacher's College Pr))**

*Lisa P. Kuh*

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"Reminding us that 'the environments we provide children are within our control,' Kuh and her colleagues challenge us to create spaces that inspire young children's exploration, play, and deep learning. Through rich examples and clear explanations of the historical, political, and aesthetic dimensions of design, they help us think critically about environments and provide theoretical and practical tools to support our efforts."

--**Benjamin Mardell**, professor, Early Childhood Education, Lesley University

This comprehensive book will help early childhood practitioners consider the "why" and "how" of setting up classrooms and other learning spaces to create environments that are most conducive to child development. Using a practice-based focus and a researcher lens, the contributors consider the ways in which environments for children enhance or diminish educational experiences, how social constructs about what is good for children influence environmental design, and what practitioners can do in their own work when creating learning environments for young children. There are copious examples from practice, lessons learned, and illustrations and photographs of key aspects of the environments they discuss. Organized into three parts, this essential text addresses:

- \* Aesthetics, politics, and space configurations in school environments for young children.
- \* Outdoor spaces, beginning with intentionally designed playscapes, children's gardens, and spontaneous improvisational play venues.
- \* The role of environments outside school, including informal learning environments that promote science knowledge, museum spaces, and virtual environments.

A unique combination of the philosophical and practical aspects of formal and informal environments, this volume enables educators to create and articulate why carefully designed children's spaces are critical to their learning and development.

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