

# WHAT ARE THE “BIG 3?”

Relationships, interactions, and schedules are the “Big 3” classroom components that have the most significant impact on the quality of daily learning opportunities children experience after their health and safety needs are met.



## RELATIONSHIPS



When children have positive relationships with their caregivers, enjoy being with them, and trust them to meet their needs, children feel safe enough to explore, play, and learn.

## INTERACTIONS



Having positive conversations, smiling, and having fun with children during routines and play throughout the day promotes learning, engagement, and relationship building.

## SCHEDULE



Free play is a prime opportunity during the day for relationship building and individualized teaching interactions as teachers rotate throughout the room having interesting conversations with children about their play.

## Tips for Enhancing Classroom Experiences using the Big 3:

### Build relationships one child at a time.

- Sing, smile, and play with children.
- Talk with children during routines, such as arrival, diapering, handwashing, and meals.
- Respond quickly when children are upset and when they awaken from nap.
- Get to know the interests of individual children.

### Use personal interactions to teach.

- Talk with children about what interests them.
- Ask open ended questions to encourage children to talk more.
- Have conversations with children about their play.
- Share new words or concepts related to their play.

### Create opportunities for individual interactions and relationship building in your schedule.

- To maximize learning, plan as much free play in the schedule as possible, with some indoors and outdoors.
- Minimize or eliminate whole group times.
- Plan short and individualized or gradual transitions to minimize wait times so children have more time to play.

*“Play is not frivolous; it is brain building.”*  
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS



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