



PO Box 1346 • Brattleboro, VT 05302
802-251-7250 • info@oakmeadow.com • oakmeadow.com

What Makes an Effective Learning Environment?

Effective learning environments can boost student engagement, autonomy, and motivation. Help your students and home study families create effective learning spaces with this simple checklist.

Make a plan.

Create a weekly list of what will be accomplished and then make daily lists so your student can work at his or her own pace without having to wait for more instructions. Help your student learn to use a weekly planner and check off assignments as they are completed.

Create a distraction-free environment.

Put away phones and other electronic devices while learning (or teaching). Focused work time is efficient and productive, allowing students to make real progress toward their goals.

Gather materials ahead of time.

Review the curriculum to plan and anticipate upcoming projects, then gather together all the necessary materials. Keep supplies organized and handy.

Have a dedicated work space.

Make sure that the space you are using is clean and orderly. Clutter can be distracting. Make sure your student has a comfortable place to sit, where his or her feet can touch the floor (or rest on a footstool) and there is enough room for the writing arm to be supported by the writing surface.

Give students a choice.

Allow students to choose from a variety of activities, or choose how to complete a specific assignment. Let them create their own work schedule, using the weekly planner as a guide.

Incorporate imagination and creativity into the learning environment.

Creative activities can enhance academic lessons. Explore the art and music of a historical time period you are studying, design and build models related to science and math lessons, use improvisation or role playing to explore philosophical or political views, etc.

Use the outdoors for natural inspiration, reflection, and rejuvenation.

Help students learn to recognize when they need a break and, if possible, take breaks outside. This encourages physical movement and helps students relax after a period of focused intellectual work. Incorporate reflections on the material and on the learning process, and have these done outdoors, too. Walking is a great path to meaningful reflection. Move writing, drawing, and reading activities outdoors for a refreshing change.