Objective
Consider how to make adaptations to the physical, social, and temporal components of an early childhood environment to promote the full participation of a child with a developmental delay or disability.

DEC Recommended Practices Overview
This activity addresses the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices topic areas outlined below. (DEC is a division of the Council for Exceptional Children).

Environment
E1. Practitioners provide services and supports in natural and inclusive environments during daily routines and activities to promote the child’s access to and participation in learning experiences.
E2. Practitioners consider Universal Design for Learning principles to create accessible environments.
E3. Practitioners work with the family and other adults to modify and adapt the physical, social, and temporal environments to promote each child’s access to and participation in learning experiences.
E6. Practitioners create environments that provide opportunities for movement and regular physical activity to maintain or improve fitness, wellness, and development across domains.

Overview
Creating environments that support children’s learning can sometimes be difficult for early childhood teachers. Well-designed classroom environments:
- Support responsive care giving
- Foster independence and feelings of competence in young children
- Encourage staff efficiency
- Promote children’s engagement
- Decrease challenging behavior
- Facilitate appropriate social interactions among children
- Provide structure and predictability

The table on the page below describes three interdependent components of early childhood environments: physical, social, and temporal. These three components need to be carefully designed and implemented to create an environment that is conducive to the learning and development of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.
### Early Childhood Environments: Adapting for a Child with a Disability

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<th>Components of Early Childhood Environments</th>
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| Physical Environment                      | Overall design and layout of a room and learning centers | • Arrangement of furnishings (e.g., bookcases, tables, shelves, easels, pillows) and floor coverings (e.g., carpet or foam for quiet areas, center area rug)  
• Selection and placement of materials (e.g., toys, books, art materials)  
• Design and display of visual materials (e.g., posters, bulletin boards, pictures)  
• Lighting (e.g., natural, lamps)  
• Sound (e.g., quiet areas) |
| Social Environment                        | Interactions that occur within the classroom between peers, teachers, and family members | • Group size and composition  
• Teacher- versus child-initiated activities  
• Materials and activities that promote interaction  
• Family involvement |
| Temporal Environment                      | Timing, sequence, and length of routines and activities throughout the day | • A variety of activities (high-energy and quiet)  
• Effective transitions  
• Routines and schedules  
• Continuity between program and home |

### Activity

Identify an infant, toddler, or preschooler with a developmental delay or a disability. This child should have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an individualized education program (IEP). If you are currently working with young children, this might be a child in your classroom. If you are not currently working in an early childhood environment, schedule to visit a classroom that has a child with a developmental delay or a disability. Once you have identified the child:

1. Describe the strengths and needs of this child.

2. List one to two potential issues with the physical, social, and/or temporal environments that may not be conducive to the child’s learning and development.

3. List two to four adaptations that could be made to the physical, social, and/or temporal environments to support this child’s full participation in the classroom.