It is evident that if a young child is “immersed” in a rich learning environment (Rushton 2001) one that is filled with age-appropriate literature, materials to manipulate, and questions that excite the child’s interest, then greater learning opportunities can take place. Immersing a child in an environment that stimulates all the senses and has an emotional element to it that alerts the brain’s neurological networks that something here is worth paying attention to, and learning is likely to occur.

“Models” or “demonstrations” (Cambourne 2001) of age-appropriate lessons presented in an interactive manner, allow the child’s creative and spontaneous abilities to be expressed. This is critical in the overall development of learning. Having stimulating ‘mini-lessons’ or ‘teaching points’ modeled in a manner that is non-threatening will focus the student’s attention.

Children require the opportunity to make relevant choices regarding their daily activities as well as the content studied. Freedom of choice is inherent in creating a non-threatening environment.

Children of all ages need to feel “safe,” allowing and learning from mistakes along the way and celebrating accomplishments.

Young children use play as a model of learning that is open-ended and congruent with individual differences as well as unique talents.

When children are exposed to caring, imaginative educators who accept the ‘whole child,’ and are encouraging of the natural progression of learning, children will feel confident about their abilities, trust their teacher, and in turn, will be more inclined to ‘want’ to learn.

In the middle of the brain is a walnut shape organ (the Amygdala) that has been recognized to have a powerful impact on both children’s and adults responses to stress. If the Amygdala is activated by a perceived or real threat, it will immediately send messages to the pituitary gland the adrenal glands in order to release a host of hormones and neurotransmitters into the body that inhibit rational thought. Initially designed for humans to survive, this spontaneous reaction needs to be dampened in the classroom. Children learn most favorably in positive, stimulating learning environments, where they are able to make the decisions about their own thinking and learning; being allowed to choose a topic of inquiry has immediate ‘buy in’ from the child. As educators, it becomes our responsibility to connect the topic of interest to existing broad standards.