High-Quality Display in the Infant/Toddler Classroom

Creating a Space That Reflects Relationships, Learning, and Belonging

Why It Matters

Infants and toddlers learn who they are through relationships and their environment. High-quality displays help children:

• See themselves as valued and capable

• Feel connected to family, culture, and community

• Build language and familiarity with routines

• Develop confidence and emotional security

This practice aligns with ITERS-3 Display for Children and supports emotional development, identity, and belonging.

Principles of High-Quality Display

Child-Centered, Not Teacher-Decorated

Prioritize photos and experiences from the classroom, not commercial posters. Use brief captions in the teacher's voice describing real experiences:

"Amira is exploring soft and squishy paint with her fingers."

Displays should tell the story of this group of children in this classroom.

Family, Identity, and Diversity Matter

Children must see themselves, their families, and their cultures reflected. Display:

• Family photos: visible, touchable, and frequently referenced

• Photos of children's caregivers and routines

• A variety of people, cultures, ages, and abilities

Avoid theme posters. Use real photos and real people meaningful to the children. Representation should be authentic, respectful, and naturally integrated, not tokenized.

Show Children's Real Work

Toddlers should see their own art and exploration on the walls. Focus on:

• Process over product

• Scribbles, handprints, paint mixing, texture exploration

• Photos of children engaging with materials and simple captions

Avoid pre-cut shapes, Pinterest crafts, or "everyone's looks the same" projects.

Example caption: “Milo moved the paint with big arm strokes. Look at his strong muscles working!”

Accessible: But Secure and Safe
Displays should be at the child’s eye level, but securely mounted so they:

• Do not peel easily

• Cannot be ripped off or become choking hazards

• Are laminated or placed in protective pockets (infant/toddler durable)

Use clear tape, adhesive pockets, Velcro strips, mounted boards, or plexi frames so displays stay neat and safe for exploring fingers.

If children pull items down, it means they’re curious. Adjust materials rather than removing them entirely.

Simple, Calm, and Purposeful
Keep displays uncluttered and meaningful:

• Natural or neutral background

• Minimal text

• Rotate regularly to stay relevant

• Avoid overstimulation. The goal is calm focus, not decoration

A calm environment supports focus, regulation, and comfort for infants and toddlers.

Display Ideas by Age

Age	Examples	Placement
Infants	Family photos, caregiver faces, soft textures, mirrors	Floor level, crib side (safely), feeding spaces
Young Toddlers	Photos of peers, simple art, routines visuals	At eye level in centers
Older Toddlers	Child artwork with captions, step cards for routines, photo labels	Wall level in play and transition areas