Chapter 1 Applied Learning Activity:
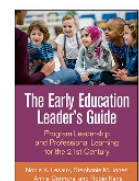## High-Quality Early Education Environments in the 21st-Century

The Early Education Leader's Guide highlights high-quality features of 21st-century early education environments. Use the table below to consider whether the learning environment in your professional work and setting have these features and how often they are present. Place a checkmark in one of the following categories for each prompt: *never*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, *often*, or *always*. You will use this same exercise at the end of Chapter 9 to reflect on how you and your team have progressed after implementing the strategies, tools, and ideas in the guide.

Features of 21st-Century Early Education Environments	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Leaders provide educators with ample time, structures, and supports for instructional planning and instructional reflection.					
Leaders provide educators with strategies and tools they can use to regulate their emotions in the classroom.					
Leaders routinely use data to identify patterns and challenges.					
Leaders provide adults in our setting with consistent opportunities for professional development that are collaborative, interactive, and cultivate strong relationships.					
Our early learning environment is rigorous. Children routinely engage in learning experiences that actively build and develop cognitive and social and emotional skills.					
Our early learning environment is regulated. It is routine-oriented and predictable; it centers on the flexible, but consistent use of routines, appropriate setting of limits, and warm, responsive adult-child relationships.					
Professional development opportunities are frequent, data-driven, and goal-oriented.					
Professional learning communities (PLCs) are used to foster collaboration and supportive relationships.					
PLCs anchor learning in daily practice, and engage participants as decision-makers.					
We use a coaching model that includes three components: observation, reflection, and a discussion protocol.					
Coaches and educators have warm, trusting relationships.					
Educators use their executive function skills to thoughtfully plan and adjust plans as necessary.					

Features of 21st-Century Early Education Environments	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Educators use and model self-regulation strategies to respond to challenging situations.					
Educators are attuned to how each child's behavior and development reflect individual experiences and able to relate to a child's strengths and weaknesses.					
Educators use emotion awareness and relational skills to understand how adults' and children's behaviors influence one another.					
Educators use relational skills to read and understand social cues, manage conflict, and maintain high quality relationships with children and co-workers.					
Educators use language in specific ways to promote social-emotional, literacy, and language development.					
Educators intentionally use language to positively influence classroom management.					
Educators integrate instructional practices to simultaneously build children's social-emotional and academic skills.					

Before reading subsequent chapters, consider the following questions:

- What is your team currently doing well to support quality of learning environments and children's learning and development?

- How could your team improve the ways in which you support children's learning and development?

- What are you and other leaders in your setting doing well to support adults' learning and development?

- How could you and other leaders in your setting refine your practices to better support adults' learning and development?

- How are professional learning opportunities successfully used to support adults?

- How could you and your team rethink professional learning opportunities to better support adults' learning and development?

- What is currently the most pressing challenge or area for growth? What are you most excited to learn about and begin implementation efforts in your professional work and settings?