

# GRAB AND GO LESSON

## Creating a Positive Learning Environment

---

### Education and Training

**Purpose:** This handout provides three elements for creating positive learning environments.

How would you define a positive learning environment? A learning environment is a community of people who share the same interest in which they learn, exchange knowledge, and problem solve. A positive learning environment embodies a safe, positive, and learning-driven space. It encourages learners to thrive, accommodates individual needs, and addresses any issues or challenges that negatively affect the environment. When participants are learning in these types of environments, they are more likely to retain information. For your next training, focus on these three elements to create a positive learning environment.

### Comfortable Space

The meeting room should be comfortable. It should feature the following:

- A comfortable temperature
- Adequate lighting that can be adjusted for various activities
- No distracting noises
- Adequate space for activities
- Comfortable tables and chairs
- Accessible restrooms

### Room Set-Up

The room set-up is essential for participation. There are several things to consider for setting up the training room.

- Arrange tables and chairs so that everyone can see the trainer and the screen for the PowerPoint (if applicable). If your training calls for group activities, set-up tables and chairs in a way that promotes engagement, such as round tables with four chairs. Another common way is to design the tables and chairs in a horseshoe or U-shaped for smaller groups.
- When planning to use a PowerPoint presentation, confirm the audio-visual equipment, such as computers and projectors, are working properly.
- If using a microphone, test it before participants arrive.
- Consider putting up posters or other visuals in the room that are related to the training topic. These visuals can be a tool to reinforce learning by helping participants begin thinking about the topic that will be discussed, creating curiosity, and stimulating questions.

# GRAB AND GO LESSON

## Creating a Positive Learning Environment

### Education and Training

### Create a Safe Environment

Create an environment where the participants feel safe, relaxed, and open to trying new things. Some participants may have had negative learning experiences in the past. They may have been embarrassed by a teacher or other students in school for lack of knowledge, and this fear of being mocked may carry over into adulthood. Establishing a safe learning environment upfront is very important.

- Greet participants as they enter the room.
- Establish ground rules at the beginning of the lesson that includes respectful communication among participants.
- Model respectful communication throughout the lesson by providing constructive feedback and demonstrating how to learn from errors.
- Incorporate fun and topic-related ice-breakers that allow the learner to get acclimated to the environment. For example, ask participants to introduce themselves and state two things they hope to learn by the end of the training.
- Provide adequate restroom and refreshment breaks if the training is over an hour in length.
- Add physical activity breaks to avoid having participants sit too long. These can be as simple as having participants stand and gently stretch at their chairs. For example, if you are providing training to child care cooks, you could include a game of Simon Says where all the motions are common kitchen activities (chopping, mixing, flipping, etc.).

Creating a positive learning experience is ideal for information retention. Refer to *Creating a Positive Learning Environment: Script* at <https://www.ntc.blm.gov/krc/uploads/475/Creating%20a%20Positive%20Learning%20Envir%20083012%20Note%20Taker.pdf> for additional information on creating positive learning environments.

### References

- Institute of Child Nutrition. (2017). *Foundations for training excellence instructor's manual*. <https://theicn.org/resources/1406/foundations-for-training-excellence-4-hour/116170/foundations-for-training-excellence-instructors-manual.pdf>
- Institute of Child Nutrition. (2018). *Foundations for training excellence: Basics instructor's manual*. [www.theicn.org/training](http://www.theicn.org/training)

This project was funded using U.S. Department of Agriculture grant funds. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA employer.

For more information and the nondiscrimination statement in other languages:  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cr/fns-nondiscrimination-statement>

Except as provided below, you may freely use the text and information contained in this document for non-profit or educational use with no cost to the participant for the training providing the following credit is included. These materials may not be incorporated into other websites or textbooks and may not be sold.

Suggested Reference Citation:  
Institute of Child Nutrition. (2021). *Grab and go lesson: Creating a positive learning environment*. University, MS: Author.

The photographs and images in this document may be owned by third parties and used by the University of Mississippi under a licensing agreement. The University cannot, therefore, grant permission to use these images. Please contact [helpdesk@theicn.org](mailto:helpdesk@theicn.org) for more information.