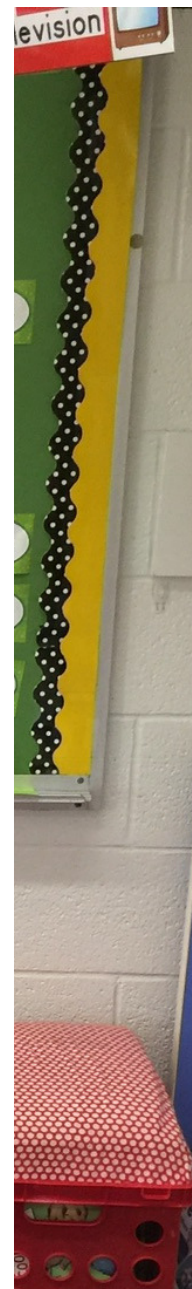
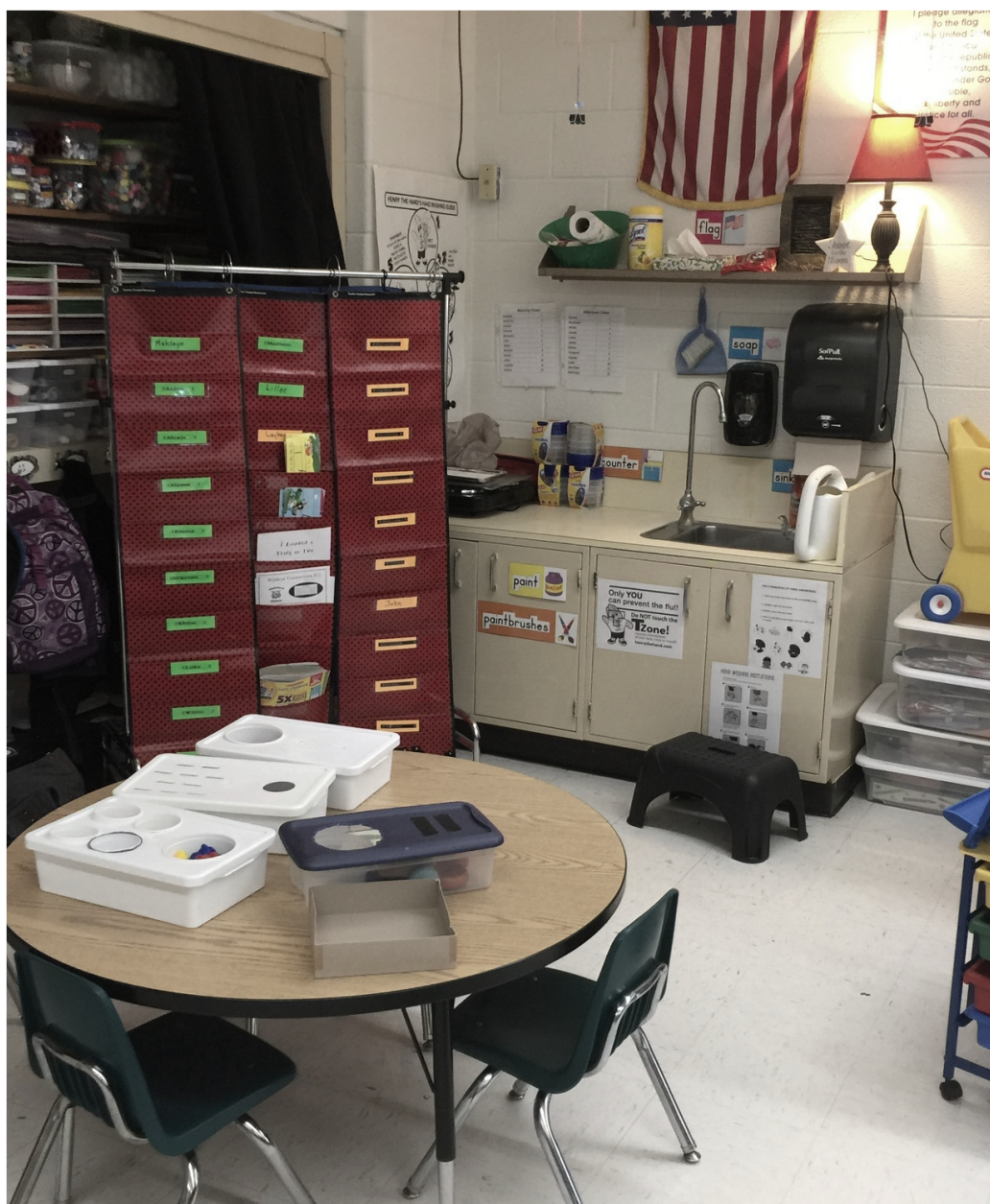




# EPISODE 28: A FRESH LOOK AT LEARNING CENTERS



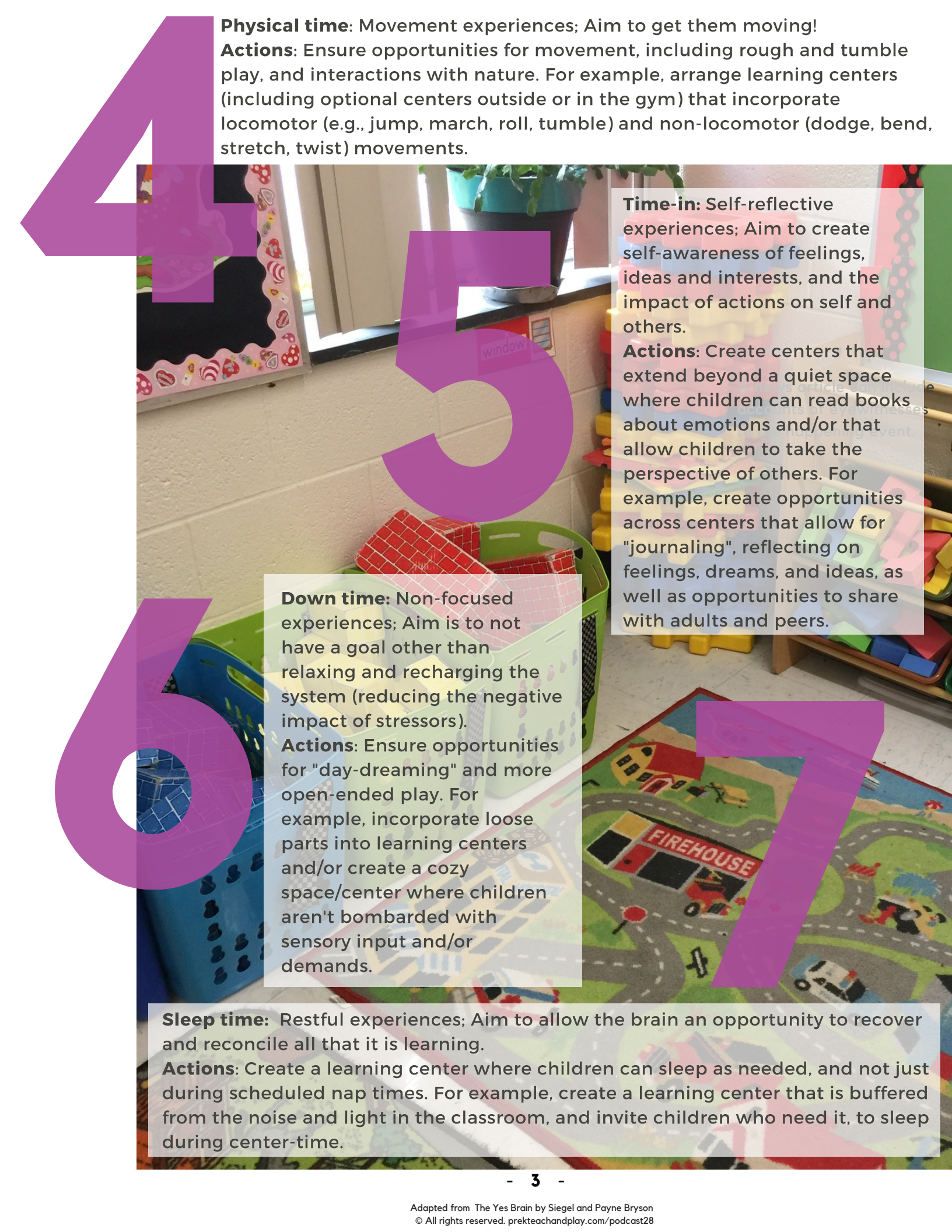
**Focus time:** Task or goal oriented experiences; Aim to make deep connections.  
**Actions:** Provide materials that promote learning across areas and create opportunities for children to integrate and make connections. For example, incorporate writing materials into the block area to allow children to manipulate objects, practice literacy skills, engage in reasoning, and learn about spatial relations.

**Play time:** Creative, joyful, and novel experiences; Aim to make new connections within the brain.

**Actions:** Ensure opportunities for children to engage in sustained and pretend play where they take the lead and follow their interests. For example, even though schedules and predictability are important, consider when children can have the freedom to decide which learning centers to play in, how to play, and for how long.

**Connecting time:** Social experiences; Aim to make and strengthen the brain's relational circuitry.

**Actions:** Promote learning centers that build upon peer-to-peer interactions and friendships. Adults aim to engage as true play partners. For example, instead of asking questions, directing, and correcting, adults engage in self-talk and parallel-talk. Avoid being distracted and aim to be fully present and engaged with children at various learning centers.



**Physical time:** Movement experiences; Aim to get them moving!  
**Actions:** Ensure opportunities for movement, including rough and tumble play, and interactions with nature. For example, arrange learning centers (including optional centers outside or in the gym) that incorporate locomotor (e.g., jump, march, roll, tumble) and non-locomotor (dodge, bend, stretch, twist) movements.

**Time-in:** Self-reflective experiences; Aim to create self-awareness of feelings, ideas and interests, and the impact of actions on self and others.

**Actions:** Create centers that extend beyond a quiet space where children can read books about emotions and/or that allow children to take the perspective of others. For example, create opportunities across centers that allow for "journaling", reflecting on feelings, dreams, and ideas, as well as opportunities to share with adults and peers.

**Down time:** Non-focused experiences; Aim is to not have a goal other than relaxing and recharging the system (reducing the negative impact of stressors).

**Actions:** Ensure opportunities for "day-dreaming" and more open-ended play. For example, incorporate loose parts into learning centers and/or create a cozy space/center where children aren't bombarded with sensory input and/or demands.

**Sleep time:** Restful experiences; Aim to allow the brain an opportunity to recover and reconcile all that it is learning.

**Actions:** Create a learning center where children can sleep as needed, and not just during scheduled nap times. For example, create a learning center that is buffered from the noise and light in the classroom, and invite children who need it, to sleep during center-time.