

ROOM ARRANGEMENT

The room arrangement has a powerful effect on the behavior of the teachers and the children. The arrangement also influences how the children will act and learn. If you want the children to act orderly, the room must represent order. If you want the children to be happy, the room must be a welcome place to be. The following guidelines will help you establish an appropriate preschool environment.

1. **EQUIPMENT/MATERIALS:** Equipment and materials must be "child size." Pictures and bulletin boards should be at the child's eye level. Coat hooks, cupboards, shelves, and toys must also be at their level. This will make the children more comfortable and safe. Make certain that each piece of equipment and materials have a purpose and meaning. You may ask yourself, "Why am I using this," or "What am I trying to accomplish?" If you cannot answer these questions, do not use the equipment.
2. **ORGANIZATION:** The room must be organized and uncluttered. It is very difficult to work in a messy, cluttered room. To keep the classroom organized, only put out part of the toys at a time. For example, if you have six puzzles, only put out two puzzles at the same time. How would you like to sort the pieces to all six puzzles at once? In addition, keep the learning centers separate from one another. Blocks should be kept in the block area and puzzles in the puzzle area. (Label the backs of each puzzle with a different letter. For example, place an "a" on each piece of one puzzle, and "G" on each piece of another puzzle. If the room is organized when the children arrive, they will quickly learn where things belong and remember where to put materials away.
3. **ROOM ARRANGEMENT:** When planning a room arrangement, remember the traffic flow. Do not leave long running spaces in the room. Plan your learning areas to avoid this arrangement. Learning areas, such as painting or art, need to be close to a sink or clean-up area. Think logically while planning your room arrangement. Keep quiet areas close together and noisy areas by other noisy areas.

4. **APPEARANCE:** The preschool classroom should be clean, neat, and cheerful. Cleanliness is a law, neatness enhances learning, and colors provide a cheerful atmosphere that children enjoy.
5. **SKILL DEVELOPMENT:** Organize your room so that children will be able to keep the room organized. This will help them learn classifying, categorizing, and matching skills. You may wish to trace patterns for toys and place them on the shelf. The children must then match the shape of the toy to the shape on the paper when putting the toy away.
6. **VISIBILITY:** The teacher must be able to see and supervise all areas of the room. Tall cabinets and shelves should be placed against the wall. Shorter cabinets and shelves may be used as dividers within the room.
7. **STORAGE:** Make certain that you have a place for each item in the classroom. You may need containers of water to put paint brushes into after use so they will not harden and be ruined. Is there a place for the children's personal belongings? How will you care for the children's artwork?
8. **MOBILITY:** Rotate and change areas and materials often. Children will tire quickly if the same materials are always in the classroom. Make wise use of the equipment and supplies you have by rotating learning centers often.