



Clayton
EARLY LEARNING



Clayton Early Learning Institute

Making the Most of your Classroom Design





Training Agenda

- **Welcome/Introductions**
- **Introduction and challenges**
- **Power Point**
- **Design your own classroom**
- **Introduction to the Lakeshore Learning “Classroom Designer” online tool**





Why Create a Classroom Design?

When a space is well organized it allows children to become involved in meaningful, sustained play. They can move independently from one activity to another, giving the teacher an opportunity to attend to individual children according to their needs.





**A well
designed
classroom
should convey
six positive
messages to
children**





1. **This is a good place to be.** Furniture is clean and maintained. At least half of the display is work done by children.
2. **You belong here as a valued member of the community.** Each child has a cubby, furniture is child sized, pictures of the children's family are displayed.
3. **This is a place you can trust.** Equipment and materials are arranged consistently so children know where to find the things they need. Shelves are neat and uncluttered, and materials are labeled so children can make choices easily.





4. **There are places you can be by yourself when you want to be.** There are soft cozy areas and areas children can play by themselves.
5. **You can do many things on your own.** Protected and defined quiet areas encourage small-group activities (e.g., a table with three to four chairs enclosed by low shelves containing toys and games). Materials are stored on low shelves so children can reach them without help.
6. **This is a safe place to explore and try new ideas.**

Supervision

The arrangement of the spaces used by children in a classroom affect how well the staff can supervise the children to protect their health and safety as well as enhance their learning.





Supervision

- Organize classroom so you can see as much as possible from every location to keep children safe.
- Place high shelves against the wall.
- Avoid stacking materials on top of shelves.
- Assure all spaces for privacy can easily supervised by staff.





Classroom Design Challenges





Challenges

- Unique shaped classrooms such as “L” shaped, “S” shaped, using two classrooms, half walls.
- High Shelves
- Materials stacked high on shelves
- Blind spots
- Dead Spaces that encourage children to wander
- Pathways that interfere with another child’s play
- Large open areas that encourage running





Challenges

- Small play spaces that are over-crowded.
- Classrooms that do not have an area that allows children to play protected from interruptions.
- Cluttered play spaces including too many materials and teachers storing too many items in the classroom.





What to Consider When Designing your Classroom





Placement of Centers

- The ECERS-R tool requires *Quiet* areas be separated from *active* areas.
- *Quiet* centers include books, computers, listening centers, spaces for privacy.
- *Active* centers include music and movement, dramatic play, block building.
- *Transitional* centers such as art, science, math, fine motor, and art may be used between active and quiet areas.



Conveniently Equipped

- Allow enough room in centers to assure there is plenty of space for children to use materials and for the materials and furniture needed in activity areas.
- Common areas that do not have enough space are blocks and dramatic play.
- If space is an issue in your classroom consider limiting the number of children allowed in each area. Setting number limits for centers also encourages math skills.





Conveniently Equipped

- Conveniently equipped means that play and clean up can go smoothly because the necessities for the type of play are where they need to be.
- Art and messy play should be placed on an easy to clean floor near a sink.
- Sand, water and sensory play should also be located in an area that is easy to clean.





Conveniently Equipped

- The block area needs a space that is out of traffic with storage for materials and a flat surface for building.
- Table toys and other fine motor materials should be located by a table to give children the choice between table or floor.
- Computer, CD player and listening centers need to be located near an outlet.



Introduction of new materials

- New materials should be introduced slowly so children do not get overwhelmed.
- Use of materials should be explained and demonstrated to the children.





Labeling Systems

- Children's independence is fostered by creating centers that have materials stored on low open shelves.
- Creating child friendly labels, such as outlines of blocks of different sizes and shapes, picture and word labels tell children where materials belong.





Labeling Systems

- Consider labeling unit blocks by shape and put in a sequential order from small to large. Children are learning not only shape matching, but also comparing quantities.
- Photos of materials are also a great ideas for labeling.
- Consider creating labeling in the home language of the children as well as English.





Display

- Much of the display should relate closely to current activities and children in the group.
- Most, meaning 50% of the display should be artwork that has been created by children in your classroom.
- The artwork displayed should be individualized.
- Items can be displayed on shelves, floors, windows, and ceilings.





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