



Explore a Preschool Classroom

Classroom arrangement is vital in early childhood programs. A well-organized and thoughtfully arranged room facilitates children's active exploration and learning. Conversely, a poorly arranged environment leads to behavior problems, confusion, and chaos. When you walk into a preschool or kindergarten room, you should see the following:

- The classroom has distinct interest areas so children can make clear choices about where they want to be.
- A wide variety of learning materials-this ensures that no matter where children choose to play, they are learning.
- Materials are on low shelves, in containers, and on hooks so children can get them independently.
- Shelves are neat and uncluttered so materials are easy to see and find.
- Similar materials are grouped together to teach children to sort and classify-skills which are important in all academic content areas.
- Picture labels are on containers and shelves so children know where materials belong.
- The alphabet is clearly visible in the room (preferably at children's height) and a variety of children's work is on display.

Interest Areas

When the room is divided into interest areas, children know what choices are available. A room with clearly defined, well-equipped interest areas promotes independence, fosters decision-making, and encourages exploration. An area set aside for books, art, or table toys provides opportunities for quiet play. Areas set aside for dramatic play, block building, woodworking, or large muscle experiences give children options for active play. While most programs won't have all of these areas, an effective learning environment will include many of the following interest areas:

- Blocks
- Music and movement
- Cooking
- Computers
- Outdoors

- Library
- House corner
- Table toys
- Art
- Sand and water

