

Makeover Minutes

Quick tips for your learning environment



Room Arrangement: Making the Most of Your Space

To arrange an engaging early learning environment, spaces should be well defined and include a variety of materials, organized for easy access by children. Room layout, number and ages of children, and the amount of space can present challenges. By thoughtfully arranging the space, children are supported in knowing what to do and how to go about it. When the environment promotes independence, teachers spend less time with routines and behavior, and have more time to engage with children.



Watch Video:
[Room Arrangement: Making the Most of Your Space](#)

Environmental Tips

Define learning areas

Creating defined areas helps children know where to use materials and can prevent problems with crowding and competition. Use low shelving, rugs, or tape on the floor to create boundaries for different areas of the learning environment.

Consider supervision needs

Supervision needs can vary widely depending on the children in the group and the space available. Maintain open space that is easy to visually scan, use low shelving, and keep areas for privacy within view. Activities requiring closer supervision, such as art or water play, should be placed where they are always within easy view and close reach. Also consider areas for routine care, such as food preparation, diapering, toileting, and handwashing. Plan ahead for supervision during these times.

Allow more space for noisy or active play

Areas such as dramatic play and blocks tend to be noisier and more active than areas such as math and fine motor. By having more room in active play spaces, children can engage fully with materials. A dedicated space where louder play is permitted also supports positive behavior for children who need more active play throughout their day.

Separate loud and quiet spaces

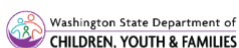
Quiet spaces are important in an early learning environment because they provide a designated space where children can escape the pressures of group care. Soft furnishings for relaxing should be placed away from louder areas, such as blocks and dramatic play. Consider arranging learning areas from quietest to loudest, with the two on opposite corners of the room.



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This cozy area is well defined with a low barrier and rug, which helps children know that it is intended for one person. It is placed away from more active areas of the room.



Tape on the floor is used to help children know where to line up, and to define boundaries for learning areas.



This toddler classroom uses low shelving to clearly define play areas and walkways. A soft mat defines a larger area for active play.



This block area is well defined with shelving and a rug that doubles as a play mat. It is large enough to allow for more active play and is set away from quieter areas of the room.



Tape and labels on the floor help children know what to do. This example shows labels that help children know where to line up as well as tape squares that serve as a boundary when children are playing with materials meant for one person.

Additional Resources

Visit the [Meaningful Makeover](#) website for full episodes and more tips!

References

Harms, T., Cryer, D., Clifford, R. M., & Yazejian, N. (2019). *Family child care environment rating scale, third edition (FCCERS-3)*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

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