

Characteristics of a Good Pre-school Classroom

For learning to take place effectively, the classroom must be well spacious and well organised. KIE (1995) asserts that the classroom size/space, ventilation, lighting, size of furniture and also their arrangement can foster or hinder effective learning. The classroom should therefore be spacious to allow 1m² space per child (KIE 1995), have adequate windows to let in fresh air and light. The tables (50 – 63.5 cm) and chairs (25.4 to 35.5 cm) should be of the right size to allow children's feet to rest on the ground and the chairs should have backrests to support their delicate backs.

Despite the fact that straight rows facing the front of the class help to discourage pupil-pupil talk, making classroom control easier, they are not recommended for pre-schools.

It is best to have children sitting in groups all round a table because it makes the feel one and the sharing of materials also becomes easy. It is also easier for the teacher to attend to a small group. It also makes the children feel close to the teacher and loved. Children should be grouped according to a specific criteria and should not remain in the same group the whole day, e.g. according to ability in a certain activity, interest, age or friendship at some point.

Classroom materials should be colourful, varied, neatly arranged and displayed. They should also be clearly labelled by name so that children learn to associate the name and object e.g. floor, chair, window, floor, ceiling, blackboard, table etc. Charts and children's work should also be well displayed according to activity area and at children's eye level. This ensures that they do not strain their necks or eyes when they are reading or simply admiring them. Hanging mobiles should also not be too high.

Materials not in use should be stored neatly in bins/jars and labelled with pictures or words depending on the children's age. In baby class, for example, the tin for pencils could have a picture of a pencil instead of the name since they do not know how to read.

The children must be trained to ensure proper use and care of the learning and play materials. They should be taught to ensure that they return them to their respective storage area after they have used them.

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