



Kindergarten Classroom Environment

Good learning environments have a special feeling. The facility and its classrooms are inviting and welcoming, offering warmth and comfort in an away-from-home atmosphere that also offers stimulating learning opportunities. Children and adults in a well-designed classroom interact with each other in respectful ways while children are actively engaged in activities, oftentimes self-selected. Everyone takes responsibility for the materials in the room and displays a sense of ownership. Children know what is expected, display appropriate behavior and transitions occur seamlessly. Materials and equipment are organized and orderly and there is a sense of community in the room.

The Kindergarten classroom should be characterized by productive noise, lots of activity and a certain amount of mess. The environment is social in nature and provides a secure and stimulating climate for children to take appropriate risks and to develop interpersonal skills by working and learning cooperatively together.

The physical environment is important in setting the stage for early learning experiences and should be planned around the developmentally stages of the children and the desired learning outcomes. The classroom is print rich with a library children can access easily and a word wall posted at the children's level. A posted daily schedule provides a consistent structure for children with a balance of active and quiet activities, large and small motors activities, whole group, small group, partner and individual work. Play enables children to construct new learning on past experiences and new information so time is planned for children to play in self-selected centers such as housekeeping, dramatic play, blocks, music, listening, art, etc. The published or teacher-created curricula should align with The Early Learning Standards and the Key Learning Areas should provide the focus for the daily lessons and center development. Children should be provided with many opportunities to expand their oral language by talking with their teacher and each other.

This document can help with providing an appropriate classroom environment for the kindergarten age child. The center arrangements have been structured around the Key Learning Areas ad materials from one center can be incorporated in others.

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening	Mathematics Thinking and Expression	Social Studies Thinking: Connecting to Communities	Creative Thinking and Expression
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading instruction should occur in whole or small groups, individually and at centers. • Teacher reads to children multiples times during the day • A wide variety of books are available in the classroom library and are rotated frequently. • There is a soft, comfortable area for silent reading. • Books positively reflect diversity in culture, ages, gender, races and abilities. • The word wall is easily accessed by children. • The classroom is print rich. • Many opportunities are present for children to strengthening their oral language development. • Writing occurs daily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math instruction should occur in whole or small groups, individually and at centers. • Children have the opportunity to use hands-on materials in every math lesson. • Mathematics software is available for use on the computer. • Math concepts are integrated into other learning areas every day. • Graphs, tally charts and other visual tools are used to enhance math understanding. • Manipulatives and math centers are evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively investigating and playing • Asking and answering open-ended questions • Play and social interactions expand across all Key Learning Areas • Reading books to children • Books on topics of study are included in the library • Cooperative learning activities • Classroom responsibilities and rules developed together • Inviting community members to share their work • Blocks, housekeeping, dramatic play and other centers are available and in use. 	<p>Music and Movement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many different examples of music are available for listening during center time. • Musical instruments can be used to accompany music or songs <p>Dramatic and Performance Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include everyday, real life props. Newspaper ads for grocery stores, menus from favorite restaurants, tablets for grocery lists. • Rotate themes in and out of the area such as : Doctor's office, Mailroom, Animal Hospital, Grocery Store etc. <p>Visual Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities are provided for children to explore and discover different themes and patterns in different art forms. • Different materials are offered for children to create their own works of art.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centers such as reading, computer, writing, listening, working words, etc. are present and used daily. 			
<p><u>MATERIALS:</u></p> <p>Books on tape Listening Center Nonfiction books Fiction books Puppets Class-made books Rocking chair Bean bag chairs, pillows or other soft items Book rack to neatly organize books Language and Literacy materials</p>	<p><u>MATERIALS for math instruction and centers:</u></p> <p>Pattern blocks Color cubes Money Sorting materials Lacing cards Geoboards Balance scales Bristle Blocks Measurement tools Cash register</p> <p>Stringing beads Abacus Number puzzles Counters Shape puzzles Legos Lincoln logs Pegboards/Pegs Clock</p>	<p><u>MATERIALS for instruction and centers:</u></p> <p>Housekeeping unit with dishes, etc. Dolls of different ethnicities Dramatic play area with clothes, community helper uniforms, etc. for pretend play Puppet theatre and puppets Pictures of American symbols American Flag Hands-on materials to manipulate Blocks of all different sizes Cars, trucks, farm animals, etc. on topic of study to use with block center</p>	<p><u>MATERIALS:</u></p> <p>Include everyday, real life props and gender specific clothing in the dramatic play area..</p> <p>Maracas Tapes Scarves Ribbons Rainsticks Home made instruments</p> <p>Drums Symbols Triangles Rhythm sticks Bells</p>

Useful information for planning kindergarten environments:

Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood, Revised 2009

Teaching Young Children: A Guide to Planning your Curriculum, Teaching Through Learning Centers, and Just About Everything Else

Learning Environment: The Physical Setting, The Daily Schedule, Teacher-Child Interaction, High/Scope K-3 Curriculum Series Standards Aligned System (SAS)

Scientific Thinking and Technology	Health, Wellness ad Physical Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific concepts should be incorporated throughout the key areas of early learning. Comparing similarities and differences Categorizing Using the 5 senses Observing, gathering data and drawing conclusions Discovering and exploring at centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to develop and strengthen gross and fine motor muscles Active indoor and outdoor play Integration of health and safety activities throughout the day Teachers model safe practices and healthy lifestyles Opportunities for cooking and food experiences Opportunities to understand how healthy practices support body development and function.
<p><u>Materials for instruction and centers:</u></p> <p>Living and non-living items (or pictures) Pattern blocks Family pictures Materials for recording information Non-fiction literature related to topic of study Growing plants Walking field trips Various items for sorting and classifying Sand and water table Thermometers Models of planets and spaceships Pictures or examples of types of technology</p>	<p><u>Materials for instruction and centers</u></p> <p>Games to play indoor and outdoors Follow-the-leader exercises Scissors Playdough Pegs/pegboards Puzzles Measuring cups for sand/water table Self-help dolls for manipulation Forms to trace String beads/other objects Blocks</p>

The PA Learning Standards for Early Childhood are research based standards that identify key learning areas of development for children. The Standards guide practitioners to intentionally integrate developmental knowledge with the attitudes, skills, and concepts children need to make progress in all learning areas.

It is important and best practice to document the Learning Standards in lesson planning, children's artwork and display such as experience charts, graphing etc.

For more information:

<http://websites.pdesas.org/ocdel/2010/4/30/47302/page.aspx>

