

**EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER**



**MORE LIKE ADORABLE  
VELOCIRAPTOR TAMER**

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# Creating a Positive and Engaging Classroom Environment

where teachers and children will thrive

## Early Childhood Professional:

- ❖ Teacher
- ❖ Director
  - ❖ Behavior Guidance Specialist
  - ❖ Curriculum Specialist
  - ❖ Staff Support and Guidance
  - ❖ Parent Liaison
  - ❖ Maintenance
  - ❖ Policy and Procedure Developer

## Advocate for Young Children and Childhood



What does a high quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood classroom look and sound like?

- Busy-children moving around the classroom
- Happy noise-children talking with each other and with the teachers
- Chaotic-child's play can look like a tornado as toys are played with and discarded

**A preschool classroom should not look like an elementary classroom because the needs and brain development of a preschooler are very different.**

# What does DAP look like in a preschool classroom?

- ❖ Engaged teachers
- ❖ Variety of planned activities
- ❖ Long periods of uninterrupted play
- ❖ Plenty of outside time
- ❖ Teachable moments
- ❖ Processed based art
- Materials in the centers are rotated to reflect the needs and interests of the children and the theme.
- Materials do not need to be purchased
- NO WORKSHEETS
- Singing and dancing



# Building the Foundation

FIGURE 3.1  
Maslow's hierarchy of needs.



*From: Defending the Early Years*

- A child cannot learn if they are dysregulated.
- We cannot control what goes on outside of the classroom
- We can insure that a child is safe and secure in the classroom

## What makes a safe and secure classroom?

- ❖ Caring teachers with strong classroom management skills
- ❖ Strong routines
- ❖ Simple classroom rules
- ❖ A neat, organized, warm physical environment
- ❖ Developmentally appropriate and engaging activities



# Early Childhood Staff

## Should have:

- ❖ Patience
- ❖ Passion
- ❖ Flexibility
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Calm
- ❖ Empathetic
- ❖ Respectful and Inclusive
- ❖ Knowledge of child development

## Need:

- ❖ Support-regular check ins
- ❖ Team
- ❖ Breaks and prep
- ❖ Professional Development
- ❖ Coaching
- ❖ Professional Pay

# Behavior Guidance

- Behavior Guidance start by setting up a positive environment
  - A classroom space that is set up for success
  - Have clearly stated, simple class rules
    - Remind children of these regularly
    - Post them in the group areas
  - Have a classroom schedule
    - Share it with the children each morning
  - Model positive behaviors and communication
  - Reinforce positive behaviors

# Behavior Guidance

- ❖ Offer Instruction/directions related to problem solving
- ❖ Spend time with child
- ❖ Make Eye contact
- ❖ Get down to child's level
- ❖ Verbal direction
- ❖ Redirection
- ❖ Natural and logical consequences
- ❖ Removal from situation with which the child is having difficulty

# Teacher/Parent Relationships

- ❖ Start the year with a 20 minute family visit
  - ❖ Review forms and parent agreement (if applicable)
- ❖ Use a communication app to share daily summaries and photos. This also allows staff-parent communication without answering the phone or checking email.
- ❖ Share positive information regularly
- ❖ Teachers share behavior concerns face to face

*When parent and teachers collaborate, it sends a powerful message to children.*



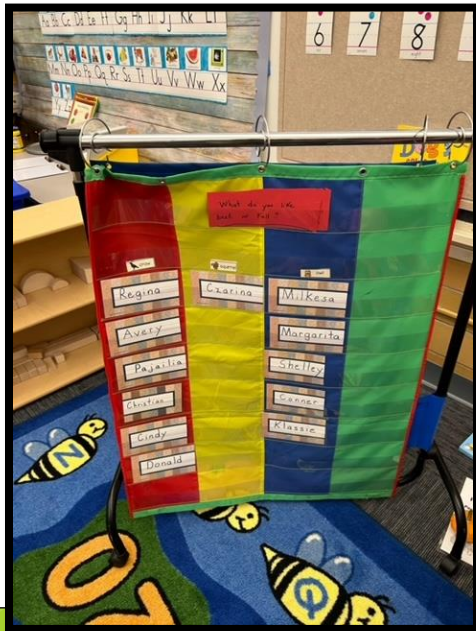
”

“ THERE ARE THREE  
TEACHERS OF CHILDREN:  
ADULTS, OTHER CHILDREN,  
AND THEIR PHYSICAL  
ENVIRONMENT.”

- LORIS MALAGUZZI.

# Is the space inviting?

- How do you feel when you enter the room?
  - Are the posters and pictures hanging at child's eye level
  - Are cubbies, etc. labeled with the child's name and photo?



# Are there enough materials?



- How are they displayed?
- Are the bins and shelves labeled?



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# Setting up the Room

- Quiet places away from loud areas
  - Blocks and dramatic play near each other
- Materials displayed to encourage independence
  - Start with less materials and add more as necessary
  - Add materials to scaffold learning
- Furniture arranged to minimize running and maximize site lines
- Make adjustments when necessary



# What to include?



## ○ Quiet Areas

- Library
- Writing Center
- Prayer Corner
- Science Area
- Math Area
- Puzzles/Games

## ○ Busy Areas

- Blocks
- Dramatic Play
- Art
- Sensory
- Music

Sometimes add elements of change and surprise...



# Introducing the Environment

- When adding new items or new set ups, introduce them to the children at group time.
- Be sure that a teacher is available to supervise and/or guide the play the first day or two.
- Start simple and gradually add items as the week goes on.
- If areas are going well, consider extending their time or scaffolding to encourage higher level of play.
- Follow the children's lead.

# Different Age=Different Needs

## Ages 3-4

- Props Necessary
- Act out roles they know
- Solitary play
- Short Attention Span
- Need Teacher Support Frequently

## Ages 4-5

- Use pretend items or create own props
- Interactive Roles
- Play will last long periods of time-even weeks
- Teacher Role is to monitor and add to or change direction

# Maintaining the Environment

- When writing lesson plans, consider the environment
  - Does the furniture set up need to change?
  - What materials need to stay and what needs to go?
  - What do the children enjoy? What similar items might you be able to add?
  - What behavior issues have you been experiencing? How would changing the environment help?

# The Teacher's Role in the Environment

- Observe, take notes, step in when necessary
- Only one teacher sitting with children at a time, the other teacher is moving round the classroom.
- Create teachable moments-helping to solve problems, add items as requested by children, introduce writing materials
- Ask open ended questions

# Building a Classroom Community

- Classroom Traditions
  - Class puppet or prop
- Use music to invite children to new activities
- Welcome and good-bye songs
- Classroom books
  - Family book
  - Halloween books
- Strong Transitions
- Communication

# i AM IN PRESCHOOL

I am not built to  
sit still,  
keep my hands to myself,  
take turns,  
be patient,  
stand in line,  
or keep quiet  
all of the time.

I need  
motion,  
novelty,  
adventure,  
and to  
engage the world with my whole body.

## LET ME PLAY.

(Trust me, I'm learning!)