

We Skoolhouse

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# CLASSROOM SET-UP GUIDE





*Preparing a classroom may come with a lot of questions, & that's where we come in!*

Whether you're working with a small or large classroom, we're happy to share some tips and tricks to keep in mind to better utilize these different spaces. Not only that, but we're taking the fun outside and offering some ways to maximize outdoor play as well.

## What WE Recommend:

- **YES! Space:** Your children should be welcome to explore anything and everything in their space, in their very own way.
- **Open shelves:** Offers easy access & visibility of materials.
- **Less is More!** Too many toys & materials available at once can be overwhelming. Consider reducing materials on shelves and bins for more intentional exploration. Keep materials open-ended, that way they can be continuously used in new ways.
- **Neutral & Natural Elements:** Keep colors neutral to provide a more serene feel. Welcome natural and/or warm lighting, plants, and mirrors - reflects light & makes space seem larger.





# INFANTS & TODDLERS



Before infants are mobile, a little bit of space goes a long way. A play mat and a few materials that are occasionally rotated offers far more than we think. Babies benefit from revisiting the same materials over-and-over again to build understanding of properties and uses.

When infants are on the move, ensure that your space is continuously secured to prevent any safety hazards or injury to your child.

**Refer to the checklist below to know what to look out for!**

As your baby grows, explore different ways they can exercise their gross and fine motor skills. If you don't have a lot of indoor space, no problem! Simply allowing your child to cruise along tables, crawl after a ball, and use furniture to pick themselves up is offering them more than enough!

## Infant & Toddler Environment Checklist

- Small Objects:** Ensure floors & accessible shelves/surfaces are free from small objects that may pose as a choking hazard.
- Open Outlets:** Be sure to purchase some outlet covers and check that any accessible electrical outlets are closed up.
- Sharp Corners:** Consider buying/creating corner pads on tables with sharp edges to prevent injury as your little crawls, climbs, and waddles around.
- Secure Large Pieces of Furniture to the Wall:** Consider bolting book/toy shelves, dressers, large mirrors, etc. to the wall.
- Loose Cords:** Be mindful of curtain chords, string lights, wires, etc. that your child can grab, pull down, and/or wrap around their neck or limbs.





## Indoor Materials: Babies & Toddlers

- Play Mat or Low Pile Rug
- Overhead Mobile
- Wooden Climbers
- Foam Blocks/Climbers
- Slide
- Ball Pit
- Tent/Teepee
- Crawl Through Tunnel
- Sensory Wall/Patches
- Sensory Bottles
- Texture Balls
- Wooden Toys
- Plush Dolls
- Stacking Rings / Cups
- Push Cart
- Board Books





PRESCHOOLERS



While your preschooler will still seek movement like they did when they were a toddler, you'll also notice that they're more likely to sit and stay a while, engaging in imaginative and dramatic play, small world play, and art materials, for longer periods of time.

Whether a small classroom or a large one, you can incorporate these different areas of play in various ways:

<b>Areas of Play</b>	<b>Small Space</b>	<b>Large Space</b> Same as "Small Space" plus...
<b>Dramatic Play</b>	Hats, scarves, loose fabrics, baby doll, cardboard boxes, loose parts	Pretend kitchen, doll stroller, toddler-sized couch, table, chairs
<b>Blocks &amp; Small World Play</b>	Rotating baskets of different blocks, toy people, toy animals, toy vehicles and train tracks	Large shelving unit to store blocks and toy figures, cars, etc. play/lego tables
<b>Science &amp; Sensory</b>	Tabletop shallow tray, large clear storage container for water/sand play, tabletop light table, mirrors	Sensory table, light table, ball pit, indoor swing, trampoline, slide
<b>Art Exploration</b>	Tabletop caddy of art materials (coloring utensils, scissors, glue, and crafts materials) & paper	Tabletop easel, standing easel, shelving unit to store, organize, and offer art supplies/materials
<b>Manipulatives</b>	Rotating shallow baskets and/or clear containers of Magna Tiles, legos, bristle blocks, links, loose parts, natural & recycled materials	



## Indoor Materials: Preschoolers

- Shelving Units
- Small Table with Chairs
- Baby Dolls / Plush Dolls
- Tabletop or Standing Easel
- Art Supplies
- Open-ended Materials
- Blocks
- Toy people/Animals/Cars
- Tracks & Trains
- Dollhouse
- Cozy Corner/Tent/Teepee
- Library of Accessible Books
- Indoor Stepping Stones
- Rocking Horse
- Wooden Play Arch
- Wooden Rocker
- Wooden Climber/Ramp/Slide





LEARNING AREAS

# Learning Areas

The learning environment is carefully designed to promote exploration, creativity, and collaborative learning. Areas are flexible, dynamic spaces where children can engage in hands-on experiences, investigations, and projects. The specific learning areas can vary, but here are some common ones often found in Reggio Emilia-inspired classrooms:

- **Atelier (Art Studio):** The atelier is a central feature in a Reggio Emilia-inspired classroom. It's a dedicated space for artistic expression, where children have access to a wide range of art materials such as paints, clay, markers, and collage materials.
- **Dramatic Play Area:** This area is designed to stimulate imaginative and dramatic play. It includes costumes, props, and accessories that allow children to take on various roles and create narratives. The dramatic play area often changes to reflect different themes or scenarios based on the children's interests.



## Learning Areas (Cont'd)



- **Construction and Building Area:** This area is equipped with materials like wooden blocks, magnetic tiles, and other building materials. It encourages children to engage in open-ended construction and problem-solving activities, fostering spatial and mathematical skills.

- **Nature and Science Exploration:** This area is dedicated to exploring the natural world. It might include live plants, terrariums, microscopes, shells, rocks, and other objects from nature. Children are encouraged to ask questions, make observations, and engage in hands-on scientific exploration.
- **Reading and Writing Center:** A space with a variety of age-appropriate books, writing materials, and comfortable seating where children can independently explore books, practice writing, and engage in literacy activities.



## Learning Areas (Cont'd)

- **Math and Manipulatives:** This area is equipped with math-related materials such as counting objects, puzzles, scales, and measuring tools. It encourages mathematical thinking and problem-solving.
- **Sensory Tables:** Sensory materials like sand, water, play dough, or textured objects are available for children to engage their senses and explore different tactile experiences.
- **Music and Movement Space:** A dedicated area for music and movement activities, including musical instruments, rhythm instruments, and a space for dancing and expressing themselves through music.
- **Quiet and Reflective Areas:** These spaces provide a peaceful retreat for children who may need some quiet time for reflection or relaxation.



# Documentation

- **Documentation and Display Spaces:** Walls and bulletin boards are used to display children's work, projects, and documentation of their learning. This reflects the Reggio Emilia emphasis on valuing and making children's thinking and experiences visible.





**OUTDOOR SPACE**



## Outdoor Materials: Small Yard

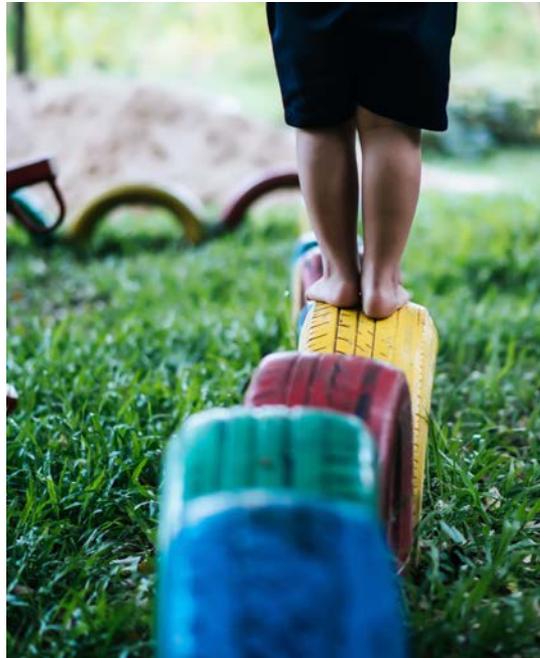
- Sensory Table: Ideal for water or sand play
- Musical Wall - Hang spare pots, pans, xylophone, chimes, etc. for sound exploration
- Gardening Pots & Corresponding Supplies
- Small Mud Kitchen
- Easel & Coloring Utensils
- Cozy Nook with Books
- Blocks & Toy Figures
- Binoculars, Magnifying Glass, & Natural Materials
- Spray Bottles
- Bubbles/Bubble Machine
- Chalk / Chalkboard



# Outdoor Materials:

## Large Backyard

- Climbing/Play Structure with Swings, Slide, etc.
- Sandbox / Wood Chip Box
- Large Mud Kitchen
- Wheelbarrow
- Trampoline
- See-saw
- Tires and/or Hula Hoops
- Sound/Music Wall: Pots, pans, xylophone, etc.
- Water Wall: PVC pipes, funnels, bottles, etc.
- Variety of Balls
- Easel & Coloring Utensils
- Binoculars. Magnifying Glass, & Natural Materials
- Spray Bottles
- Bubbles/Bubble Machine
- Chalk / Chalk Wall





## Things to Keep In Mind:

- The classroom is the children's workspace. It is going to get messy - and that's okay! Remember, the mess is where the learning happens. But of course, responsibility, accountability, and collaboration are all important traits. Therefore, designate enough time for children to help clean up their messes, too!
- Aim to keep the environment calm and warm. This is accomplished through neutral colors (as oppose to primary colors), less charts, "busy" carpets, "busy" borders, and walls, windows, and doors covered in papers. Less visually distracting environments are associated with greater attention span.
- Be receptive to the children's engagement in different areas. If you notice one area is barely utilized, think of ways to "shake up the space." If children are bustling to one particular area, consier expanding it so more children can join in and work together. Rearranging centers to meet the needs and interest of the children can go a really long way!