

# Early childhood education and classroom management education essay



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Early childhood classrooms are wonderful places for children to learn the social skills necessary for entry into kindergarten and later school success. Research indicates that the structure of the classroom environment, paired with planned instruction, supports the development of social emotional skills as well as prevents behavioral issues.

Teachers can be proactive and prevent misunderstandings by employing management techniques that help make the early childhood classroom an exciting, enjoyable, comfortable place for both children and teacher. These techniques include setting and keeping the appropriate mood, establishing clear expectations, using songs and other transitions for procedures, using literature as examples of behaviour, being positive, keeping it fair, and, perhaps most importantly, having a sense of humour.

Vygotsky (1978) states that, children's learning begins long before they attend school and that any learning a child encounters in school always has a previous history. According to the Harvard University Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2007) the excellence of a child's early environment and the accessibility of proper experiences at the exact stages of development are vital in formatting the strength or flaw of the brain's architecture, which, consecutively, verifies how well he or she will be able to reason and to control emotions. It is significant to get a comprehension of the preschool surroundings about the way the children study and that the social and intellectual qualities of teachers and parents have a persuasive power on the children (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky (1978) further argues that there is a difference in the way preschool and school children learn. Children are born as being inquisitive, energetic, passionate motivated, risk taking, thinking and do the impossible, creative, can see the end product, try over and over again and can learn through mistakes. Conezio & French (2002) states that many early childhood teachers are hesitant about introducing science in their classrooms, often because of their own unpleasant science education experiences.

The potential for enhancing child outcomes by improving the environments in which they are supported and in which they learn in early childhood is implied in the key finding that the differences between school types were more noticeable than between social status groups. This gives impetus not only to the understanding about what makes the difference to children's outcomes but also to the action that is required based on that understanding - namely, that we can make a difference if we construct the learning environments children need. The follow-up to the profiles study demonstrated what happens if these changes are not made. Sixty-nine per cent of the sample was followed up and assessed in 2003

Children need to know what is expected of them. Teachers should make sure that everyone knows what to do, how to do it, and when to do it by setting clear expectations. Vacca and Bagdi (2005) state, " Knowing what to do and when to do it helps all participants feel secure, comfortable, and confident".

Modelling and practicing classroom procedures help children actually see how the procedure should look and what the teacher expects. After teachers model the appropriate behaviour, children should role play or practice

procedures and expected behaviours. For example, children could role play choosing a learning centre, going to the centre, participating in the activity, and cleaning up the centre, so everyone will know what is expected of them during centre time.

The same principle is applied for activities outside the classroom. For instance, if the class were going to the zoo, children could practice what it will be like to get on the bus, ride the bus to the zoo, and get off the bus when they get there. They could also role play what it will be like to walk around and look at animals.

Role playing and practicing procedures help children understand and internalize classroom expectations and provide the proper venue for teachers to hold children accountable for their behaviour. Children want to have responsibility over their actions, and we expect them to accept this responsibility as they mature.

When children are held accountable for following classroom procedures, they feel empowered and begin to mature in this area. It is advisable to keep classroom procedures the same. Children feel comfortable and safe when schedules and procedures stay the same from time to time (Warner & Lynch, 2004).

Children and teacher should establish classroom rules together. As they work cooperatively with the teacher, children realize they have ownership over the rules and the classroom. The teacher should guide children to establish only a small number of rules, so they will be easier to remember and follow. In

addition, rules should be stated positively, rather than including phrases such as “ no” or “ do not.”

After establishing classroom rules, teacher and children need to discuss the meaning of the rules and why it is important to have and follow rules.

Discussions could be followed with role-playing the various rules established for the class. (Warner & Lynch, 2004). Children are more likely to follow rules when they understand the purpose of certain rules and why it is important to follow them.

I would be establishing, posting, and teaching rules and routines. Organize the environment to avoid behaviour problems. Being aware of what is happening at all times, monitoring classroom activities and the use of materials, and intervening when necessary. Ensure that an ample number of educational activities and materials are available to prevent unnecessary conflict among the children. Plan transitions between activities and keeping those times as minimal as possible. Plan transitions and routines (including toileting and hand washing) so that they are well-planned, are efficient, and limit the amount of time children spend waiting. Use visual cues, including gestures, written labels, pictures, or objects, to assist children in understanding routines and managing time as needed. Encourage and assist children in identifying problems and developing solutions, using incidental or spontaneous situations as teaching opportunities

Mood and setting include physical elements of the classroom and an atmosphere of mutual respect. It is the teacher’s responsibility to set and keep this atmosphere. To create a sense of mutual respect, the teacher must

show the children that she supports their learning endeavours, trusts them to do what they know is appropriate, and cares for their well-being.

Children will learn from the teacher's example and will, in turn, show respect for the teacher and for classmates. Another aspect of respect is for the teacher to actively listen to children as they talk to her. One way a teacher can demonstrate this respect is to physically place herself at the level of the child with whom she is talking.

This helps children understand that the teacher values them and is interested in what they say and think. Similarly, it is important to take time to explain things in ways that children can understand, such as using appropriate vocabulary for the age of the child and giving easily understood directions.

Playing soft background music sets a pleasing mood and is soothing to children (James, 2000). According to Gipe (2002), " Played as soft background music, the sonatas, etudes, concertos, and symphonies add an ambience of peacefulness, unity, and creativity" to the classroom.

Playing recordings of various classical pieces has the added benefit of exposing children to a wide variety of music. Creating a print rich environment is a way to set the appropriate mood for learning (Templeton, 1995; McGee & Richgels; 2004)

Tables, chairs, learning centers, doors, cubbies, pet cages, etc. can be labeled so children will become familiar with print and learn that print carries a message. Books, magazines, and big books can be displayed within easy

reach of children. Writing implements and paper can be arranged in a writing center so children will have easy access to many rich reading and writing experiences.

An aspect of creating a print rich environment is displaying children's work. One teacher displays children's work underneath their photographs with their names printed on sentence strips, which has the added benefit of making children feel valued and important. Reading several times daily will add to this print-rich environment and show that reading is an important part of the day.

It is also very important for children to feel ownership of the classroom. This can be accomplished by letting them help organize and decorate the room, which engenders feelings that it is their classroom, not just the teacher's. One teacher has a bulletin board with a large tree cut-out. All children have nametags in the shape of apples, and they place the apple on the tree with Velcro when they arrive each day.

When children are absent, their nametags are placed on a heart cut-out, and the children sing " We'll keep you in our hearts, we'll keep you in our hearts, Sarah, Thomas, Amber, We'll keep you in our hearts." Children who are absent know their classmates are singing to them and thinking about them, and this helps provide a nurturing, caring environment in which they feel comfortable and secure.

Children are never too young to learn about fairness. Children in an early childhood setting will first learn fairness from their teacher's example. One way teachers can demonstrate fairness is to be consistent in the

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enforcement of rules. Teachers can also demonstrate fairness through the materials they have available for children to work with. Using people colours for crayons, markers, and paper help children recognize different skin colours represented in the classroom and in the world and makes them feel valued because the materials match their own skin colours. Dolls and other figures that represent people should also reflect multiple skin colours.

Children learn tolerance by being made aware of others who are different than they. Open and frank discussions about cultural and ethnic differences and differences in ability help children feel comfortable with these differences and learn tolerance at an early age. Derman-Sparks (1989) introduces her children to persona dolls which represent children of different ethnic groups and different abilities. These dolls are good props for stories and excellent springboards for conversations about acceptance and tolerance.

Parents from various cultures may visit and discuss customs, culture, foods, and dress of their families (Derman-Sparks, 1989), and teachers can read multicultural literature or folktales and teach folk songs from various cultures.

A most important thing to remember as an early childhood teacher is to have a sense of humour. When teachers enjoy their work and enjoy the children, the early childhood classroom becomes a much happier place. Laughing with the children makes the day enjoyable and strengthens relationships between teacher and child (Warner & Lynch, 2004). Teachers are encouraged to look for humour in situations and jot down funny things children say. Perhaps



most important of all, remembering humorous stories, instead of dwelling on frustrations, goes a long way towards making teachers' jobs enjoyable and helps teachers look forward to returning to school.

The students whose behaviour most irritated teachers he classified as "immature and inattentive," while the teachers who were most irritating to students were described as "unempathetic and poor communicators". One of the most important conclusions coming out of this study is that poor behaviour on the part of a teacher can result in poor behaviour of the students, and vice-versa. By making students aware of the effect of their behaviour on the teacher and the classroom, in addition to teachers making an effort to eliminate negative behaviour of their own, instructors can improve the environment and the classroom experience.

To successfully manage early childhood classrooms, teachers have to first recognize their crucial role. Teachers set the mood and determine whether interactions in the classroom will be positive or negative and guide children into appropriate school behaviours. This article has presented key ideas that enable teachers of young children to be successful in creating a classroom that runs smoothly, considers the importance of children's collaboration in establishing classroom climate, and is conducive to learning. When expectations are clear, routines and behaviour management are consistent, and children feel valued and respected, the early childhood classroom becomes a happy, healthy environment in which young children flourish.