**Classroom Arrangement**

A classroom should be inviting, exciting, well organized, and a safe place for students to explore and learn. While creating our pre-k classroom arrangement, we took into consideration all of these important factors. We also made sure our classroom was handicap accessible and spacious so it would be easy for students with disabilities to get around safely. Having a spacious and handicap accessible classroom is not only important for students with special needs, but it is also important for the teacher. The teacher needs to be able to access students quickly if necessary. Our classroom is arranged into centers: an art center, a reading center, a dramatic play center, a writing center, a sensory area, a calendar/large group meeting area, and a bathroom. Through this paper, we will give a more in depth explanation of our classroom arrangement and explain why we arranged our classroom the way we did.

As you walk into our classroom, you will see the student’s cubbies on the left side wall. There is also a designated area for resources and information for the parents. Next to the students’ cubbies are the dramatic play area and the sensory table. We included a sink, stove, refrigerator, toy trunk, broom, dinner table and chairs, puppets, and other miscellaneous props in our dramatic play center. Parents are also able and encouraged to donate clothing items and/or other props to enhance their child’s play experiences. It is important to have a large variety of props for the students to explore and play with. All the props in our classroom are child sized because the students need to be able to manipulate and access them. Students can take on adult roles in the dramatic play center to improve social skills, imagination, develop creativity, and develop language skills. Students also have the opportunity to explore the adult world through dramatic play and learn how to express their emotions and feelings. When students are engaged in dramatic play, it is important not to interfere with their exploration. However, it’s important to guide them when needed or invited. If students have a difficult time getting along during dramatic play or sharing props, give them an opportunity to try and resolve the issue themselves first. If this does not work then step in and guide them through the process.

The next area in our classroom is the small motor skills area. This is the area containing the loft. The first level of our loft is handicap accessible because we created a ramp for the entrance. To access the second level of the loft, the student(s) will have a ladder with railings on each side. In the loft area, there are pillows, bean bags, a couple of chairs, a street rug, and a regular rug for the students to sit on. This area is well padded and cushioned so it will be safe for the students. There are stacking blocks, foam blocks, puzzles, legos, gears, cars and trucks for the street rug underneath the loft. Books and many other items are also available to help students develop fine motor skills. Exploring and playing in the small motor skills center will help prepare students for holding a pencil, concentration, and developing concepts of patterns, sequencing, matching, and order.

The arts and crafts area is next to the loft area and is located next to the door that leads to the outside play area. Our arts and crafts area has three regular easels and one easel for a student in a wheel chair. The easel for students with special needs is hanging on the bathroom wall. Our arts and crafts area has a variety of supplies such as markers, crayons, paints, oil pastels, pencils, and a variety of paper. There are also pom poms, pipe cleaners, glue sticks, scissors, and much more. We also have natural supplies for the students to create arts and crafts with such as leaves, pine cones, sticks, wood, etc. The arts and crafts center is located by a window so students will have natural lighting and are close to nature.

Next to the arts and crafts center is our bathroom and sink area. We have three toilets with three dividing walls. There are no doors on our bathrooms because students are just learning to be independent and go to the bathroom by themselves. No doors in the bathroom also allows for easier access for students with disabilities. There are two sinks located outside the bathrooms. The sinks and toilets are appropriately sized to fit the students. Students will learn good hygiene habits such as washing their hands frequently and they will also learn to brush their teeth at the sink. There is a large mirror located above the two sinks which helps students develop their self portraits.

On the other side of the bathroom wall is our reading center. We have e-readers (one source of technology) available for the students on the bookshelves. There is also a variety of books available for students to look at and read. Parents are again encouraged to donate books and/or other reading materials to help improve their child’s literacy abilities. E-readers allow students to listen to stories, play reading games, and begin developing a strong vocabulary. E-readers can really help stories come to life for kids. In our reading nook center, we also have comfy chairs, bean bags, and pillows. There are two windows in this area which allows for natural lighting. We felt that having natural light while reading was the best option because it is a lot easier on your eyes. It is also more relaxing to read next to a window.

Our large group area is along the same wall as the reading center. In the large group area, there is a large alphabet rug. The alphabet rug is especially nice because it makes assigning seats easy. You can simply assign a student a letter to sit on. It could also be a fun way to practice the alphabet with the students. There is a SMART board in our large group area, which is our second source of media in our classroom. We would use this SMART board for many things such as listening to stories, participating in shared readings, playing games, taking attendance, etc. There are also two computers (a third source of media) in this area because the SMART Board needs to be connected to a computer. These computers are also available for the writing center. Students can work on writing or playing educational games on these computers. We would also use this large group area for calendar time and other daily activities. We also have a CD player (our fourth source of technology) available in the large group area so the students can listen to music, stories, and participate in movement activities.

We placed the large group area next to the reading area because these two areas are quiet areas. Our goal was to keep the quiet centers located next to each other and the louder areas (the dramatic play, art, and loft centers) located by each other. This way, when students are scattered about and are utilizing the entire classroom, they won’t be as distracted as they would be if play areas were next to quiet learning areas.

Lastly, we have three tables in the center of the classroom. We have six chairs assigned to each table. However, both the tables and chairs can be rearranged to accommodate the number of children in the classroom. We would use the tables for independent work time, group activities, snack time, and other activities where a table is appropriate. For the most part, we want to keep students up and moving throughout the day. Students learn so much through exploration and interaction amongst peers.

This classroom arrangement would be wonderful for a pre-k class because it is spacious, safe, inviting, and well organized. We made sure that our classroom was handicap accessible and offered a variety of technology. When we created our layout, we also took into consideration the location of each center. We wanted to make sure that the quiet work areas were located next to each and that the more active and loud areas were located next to each other. We think it is important to have designated quiet areas in the classroom so students can escape the classroom chaos if necessary. Overall, we felt this was a great project because it really made us stop and think about how we will arrange our own classrooms in the future. There are so many factors you need to take into consideration when creating a classroom setting, and this gave us a good idea for what to expect when we have classrooms of our own.