

A Children's Model Classroom

A Ministry of the Cooperative Program



Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
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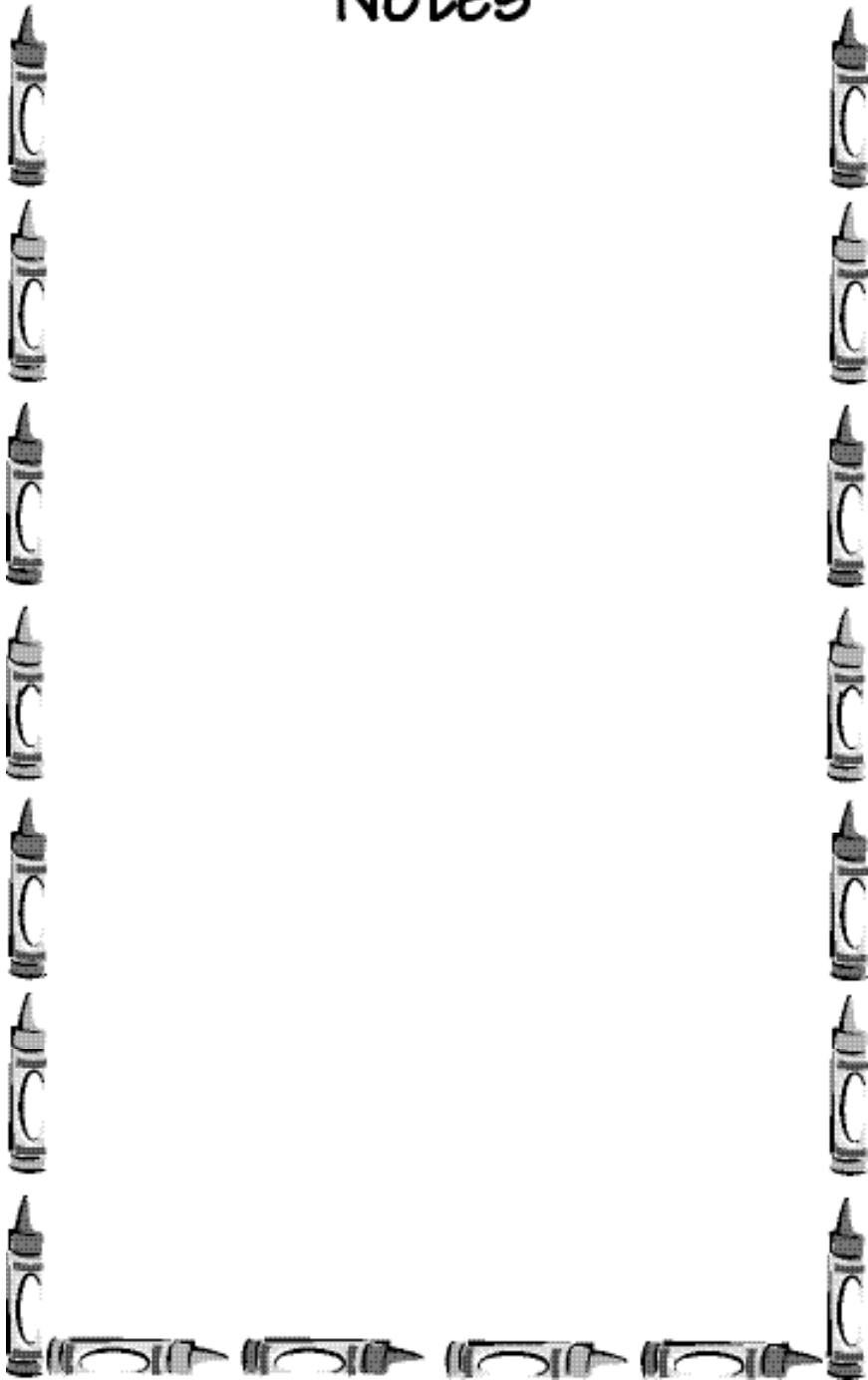
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"Changing Mississippi – One Child at a Time"



Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Notes



Foreword

Dear Pastor and Church Leaders:

Thank you for wanting to create a Model Classroom in your children's area at church. The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Preschool/Children's Ministry Team will make every effort to assist you in this admirable goal.

This booklet will help you with specific guidelines and detailed information on setting up a classroom. Keep in mind that you may encounter structural or furnishing challenges that you cannot overcome. Please note these exceptions to the guidelines and indicate your solution to the situation.

Children in your church deserve the very best. Thank you for being willing to give them the best.

Sincerely,

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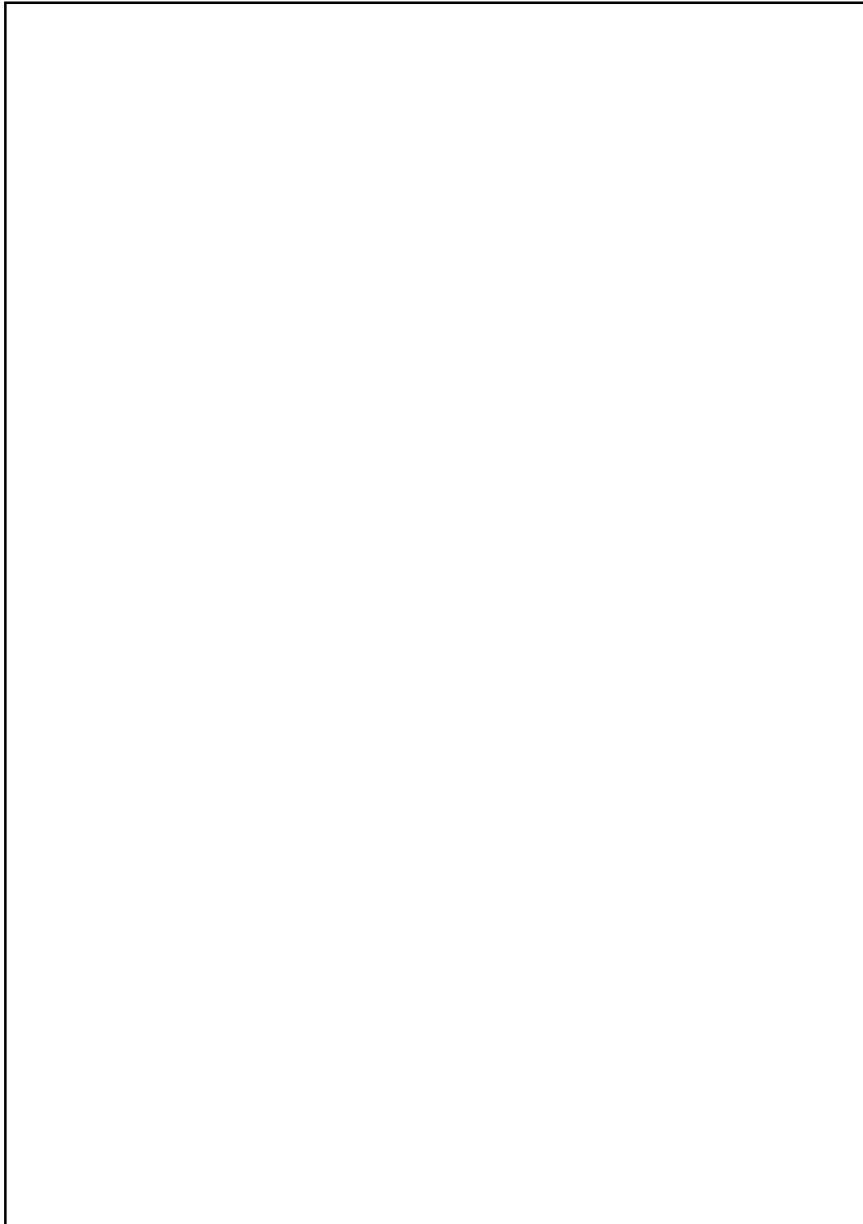
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The environment of the tabernacle was so important that God spent six chapters in Exodus telling His people exactly how it was to be. Extravagance is not the issue here but the proper attitude. That attitude is reflected by our surroundings. Negative surroundings create negative learning experiences. Positive surroundings generate positive learning experiences.

My Teaching Room – What it is like now

Pretend that this space is your teaching room. Draw exactly what a child would see if she were standing at the door. Put in doors and windows and all the furniture. Draw all the piles of stuff and everything you don't like. Don't leave anything out.



Setting Up the Children's Area

Sharing a Room

Rooms at church are often shared by Sunday School, Discipleship Training, choirs, missions groups and other activities. Each organization deserves the whole room. It is important to share with all who use it. This means careful planning is needed. Therefore, meet with others who use the same room and together decide on a room arrangement. Remember to treat others as you would like to be treated.

You and your teachers should take your teaching materials into the room, teach the session and remove your materials as you leave. Please remove all materials including items you have placed on the walls so the next organization can have access to the whole room. To help you resist the urges to carry too many supplies and materials with you, keep in mind that psychologists say we are bothered by clutter, if not consciously, then unconsciously. Visual aids should be current and used for a specific purpose.

General Guidelines

Facilities

- Is the room in a good location in the church building? Children's rooms should open into a hallway, be close to a rest room and to an outside entrance, especially for younger children. First floor rooms work best if there should be a fire or other emergency.
- Not every church has ideal space for children, so making the best of what you have is important. At least 25 square feet per enrolled person is suggested. If you cannot arrange your department room according to the suggested specifications, make adjustments.
- Rest rooms should be accessible, clean and safe.
- Good ventilation and good lighting are essential.
- Walls should be clean and painted in a light color using washable semi-gloss, no lead paint. (Bright colors and patterns may cause hyperactivity.)
- Windows need to be clean, clear and uncovered to aid in teaching about nature as God's creation. Drapes and curtains are unnecessary because they collect dust which can cause allergy problems for some children. Shades may be used if sunlight is a problem; however, remember that long cords to raise and lower blinds can be hazardous to children. Provide proper holders for cords to prevent harm.
- Is there storage nearby? When there are several children's department

rooms, a storage area (a large walk-in closet is great) with shelves and cabinets can provide storage space for everything children's workers may need. Or one or more large cabinets with shelves also work well.

- Carpet is good in children's rooms because it cuts down on noise and cold floors.

Furnishings

- Remove all unnecessary furnishings and equipment. If space is limited, replace chairs and tables with a clean floor and squares of carpeting for sitting.
- Chairs can double as tables if you have the children sit on the floor and use the seats of the chairs as tables. Squares of well-sanded plywood or heavy cardboard make inexpensive lapboards. (Have the children decorate the lapboards then cover with clear ContactTM plastic.)
- A CD or cassette player may replace a piano.
- A chalkboard can be made by placing Chalkboard ContactTM on heavy cardboard or the side of a box. Dry erase tablets with sheets that cling to the wall may be purchased at school supply stores.
- Coat racks can be placed outside the room.
- Window sills may be used for bookshelves. (Remove the books after each session as sunshine can cause damage.)
- Storage space should be clean, organized, up-to-date and adequate for all the groups that use the room.
- Computers may be added for small group work.

Room Arrangement

To avoid distracting glare, children should not face a window during group time. Use a focal wall for group time.

Teaching Materials

- Teaching items in the room should relate to the session. Outdated materials need to be recycled, filed, or given to a mission church.
- Any pictures, posters, and banners should be at a child's eye level. They should be used for a reason, then removed when the session or unit is over. Too many items, items too high on the wall, and outdated items are of no value.
- Children should have access to various versions of the Bible, especially the King James Version and New International Version.

Evaluation

After the area is set up according to the guidelines, ask yourself these questions:

- Does the room look confining or inviting?
- Does it look cluttered or calming?
- Does it look clean?
- Would you want your child to be in this room for Bible-centered teaching?

Grade and Age Combinations

	Dept.	Dept.	Dept.	Dept.	Dept.	Dept.
Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6

OR

Department	Department
Grades 1-2-3	Grades 4-5-6

OR

	Department	Department	Department
Grade	1-2	3-4	5 - 6

Age grading: Children are assigned to a particular class or department.

Grouping: Children are placed in groups according to ages or grades. The ages are six through 11; the grades are one through six.

Suggestions for Equipment

Space Specifications: children grades 1–6*

- 25 square feet per person
- Maximum recommended group size: 30 (including leaders)
- Room size: 750 square feet
- Leader pupil ratio: 1:6

Recommended Equipment:

- Chairs (Grades 1 & 2: seat is 12–13 inches from floor)
(Grades 3 & 4: seat is 14–15 inches from floor)
(Grades 5 & 6: seat is 16–17 inches from floor)
- Tables (Tabletops for children should be 10 inches above the chair seats.)
- Coat rack
- Resources cabinet
- Shelves (14–19 inches deep, 42–46 inches high, and 3–4 feet long, with shelves 12–14 inches apart)
- Book racks (42–46 inches high and 30–42 inches long)
- Tackboard or bulletin board (The bottom edge of tackboards or bulletin boards should be 24–30 inches in height. Lengths can range from 6 to 10 feet.)
- Wastebasket
- CD/cassette player combination

Optional Equipment:

- Sink
- Piano
- Picture rails (30 inches above the floor and 6 to 12 feet long)
- Chalk/marker board
- TV/VCR**
- CD player ** (or CD/cassette player combination)
- Video camera**
- Computers

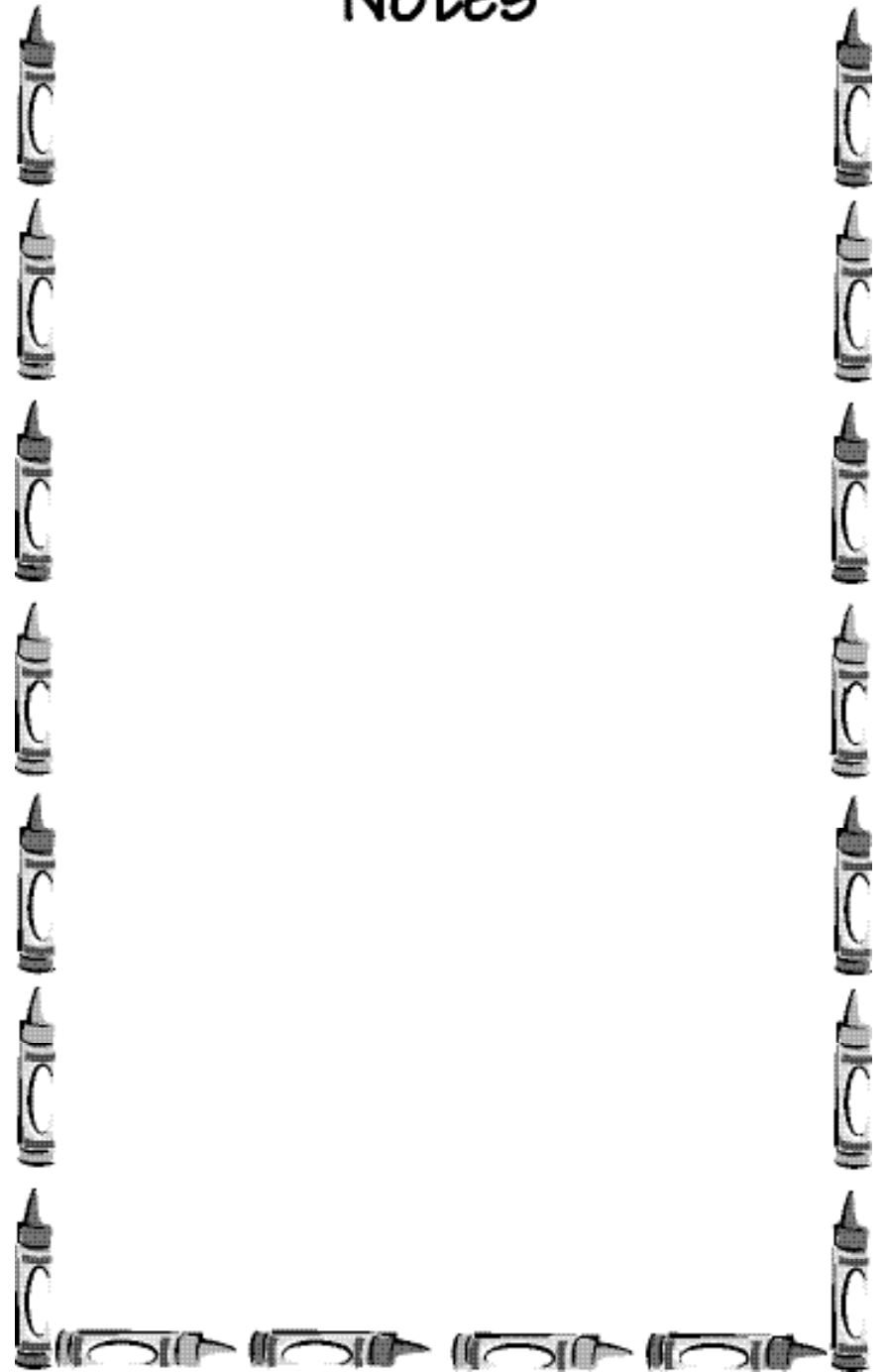
Supplies:

Children's rooms need a variety of supplies as suggested in the curriculum, however, you will almost always need large sheets of paper, non-permanent markers, and basic art/writing supplies in each room.

* Measurements are intended only as suggestions/guides.

** Optional equipment can be shared by several departments. They should be stored elsewhere and brought to rooms as needed.

Notes



Furniture Needs and Arrangements for Teaching Children

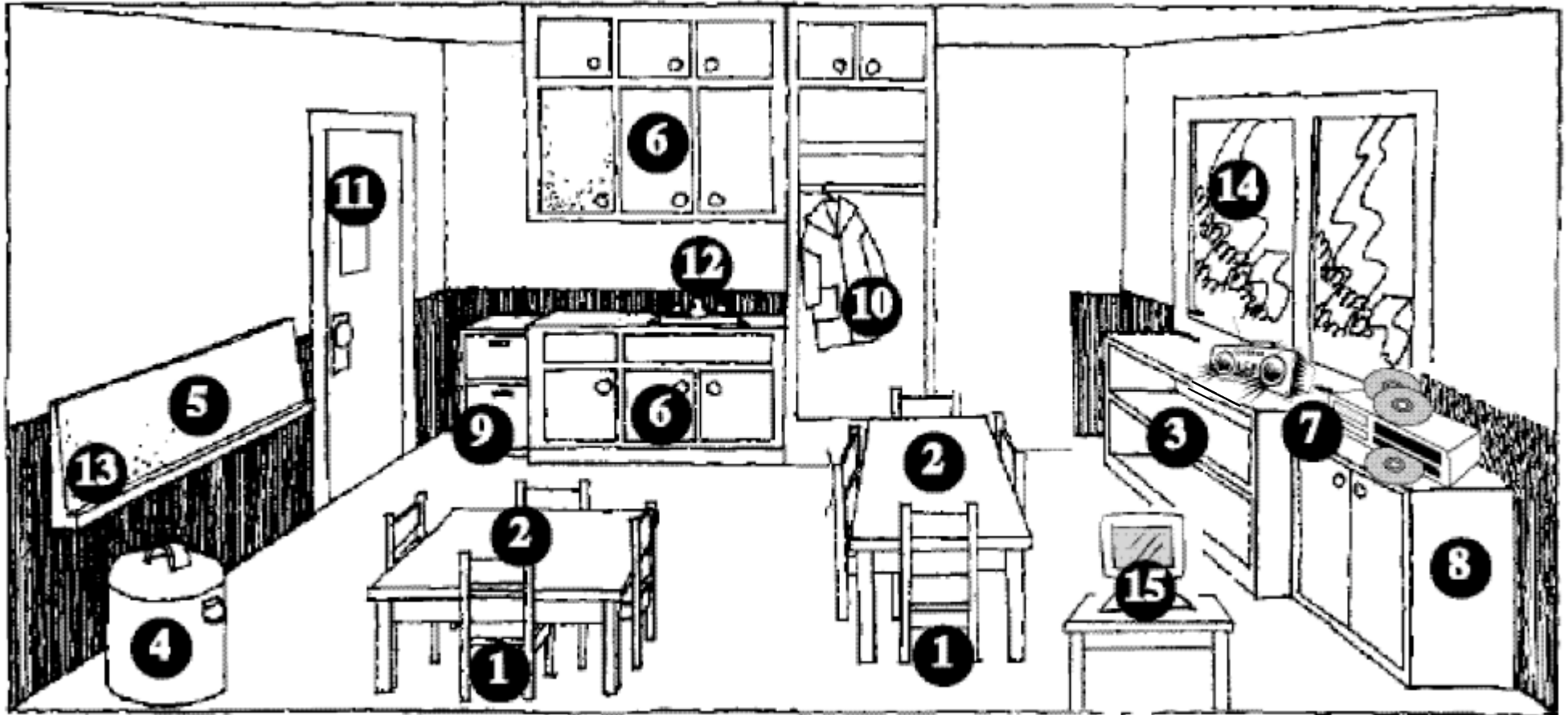
This illustration depicts an ideal teaching room. If your room is less than ideal in space, proportion, furnishings, or equipment, use what you have in the best way you can. A good room arrangement enhances the teaching/learning experience; has materials easily available; provides for free movement around the room; takes into consideration lighting and ventilation.

Basic

- 1 - Chairs
- 2 - Table(s)
- 3 - Portable open shelves
- 4 - Wastebasket
- 5 - Tackboard
- 6 - Supply cabinet
- 7 - Tape player/ or CD player

Suggested

- 8 - Small equipment cabinet
- 9 - Picture file
- 10 - Coatracks
- 11 - Window in door
- 12 - Sink
- 13 - Picture rail
- 14 - Windows
- 15 - Computers/plugin-connections



Safety

Take A Safety Walk

All teachers of children should take a "Safety Walk" through all areas — rooms, hallways, stairwells and outside play areas. Include the following:

1. Search from ceiling to floor for these and other hazards:
 - Protruding nails (or other sharp objects)
 - Sharp corners
 - Broken tile
 - Damaged carpeting
 - Leaky ceiling or asbestos in ceiling
(if ceiling is leaking, asbestos must be removed.)
 - Unsafe structure
 - Lead paint in any area
 - Unsafe or unsecured windows
 - Mold, mildew, or dampness – Keep areas clean and dry, as allergens lurk in dampness.
 - Check for cords that raise and lower blinds and shades as they can be hazardous to children. Provide proper holders for cords.
2. Remove unnecessary equipment, supplies, trash, and clutter out of each room, hallway, and stairwell. Use a closet or empty room for a "Resource Room" for supplies.
3. Doors and hallways should be easy to get through quickly in case evacuation is necessary.
4. Stairwells
 - Safe
 - No loose railings
 - No loose carpeting
 - Other hazards
5. Closets and storage areas need to be clean and free of junk or fire hazards.

Safety – Continued

6. Each electrical outlet and fixture needs to be in good condition and appropriate for its place and intended use.
7. Periodically ask the local fire department to make routine inspections of the whole church building.
8. Emergency Precautions:
 - Post emergency routes in each room.
 - Train teachers to know what to do in case of a fire, tornado or earthquake.
 - Have a fire drill that includes the entire church.
 - Disposable gloves are available for teachers to use to prevent contact with blood or body fluids.
 - Secure entrances and exits where there can easily be an adult supervisor.
 - "Rule of 2" observed. Two adults in every room at all times.
 - Exit doors have "crash" bars so door can be easily pushed opened from inside but not easily opened from the outside of the building.
 - Windows in all doors so teaching can be easily observed from hallway.
9. After the "Safety Walk," make recommendations for any necessary corrections. Follow up to be sure changes are made.



Effective Teaching

Teaching is most effective when:

- ☞ the teacher helps the learner see that what he/she is learning is personally meaningful
- ☞ learning activities and goals are both challenging and achievable
- ☞ teaching is appropriate to children
- ☞ when teaching addresses differences in learners
- ☞ the teacher engenders participation and involves the children actively in the learning process
- ☞ there is appropriate review and repetition and when learners can build on what they already know
- ☞ when it recognizes the importance of social interaction
- ☞ the teacher provides feedback
- ☞ the environment supports intended learning
- ☞ the teacher builds relationships with children and creates a positive emotional climate
- ☞ the teacher helps the child go beyond just factual information
- ☞ the teacher's life matches what is being taught

Because Children ...

We ...

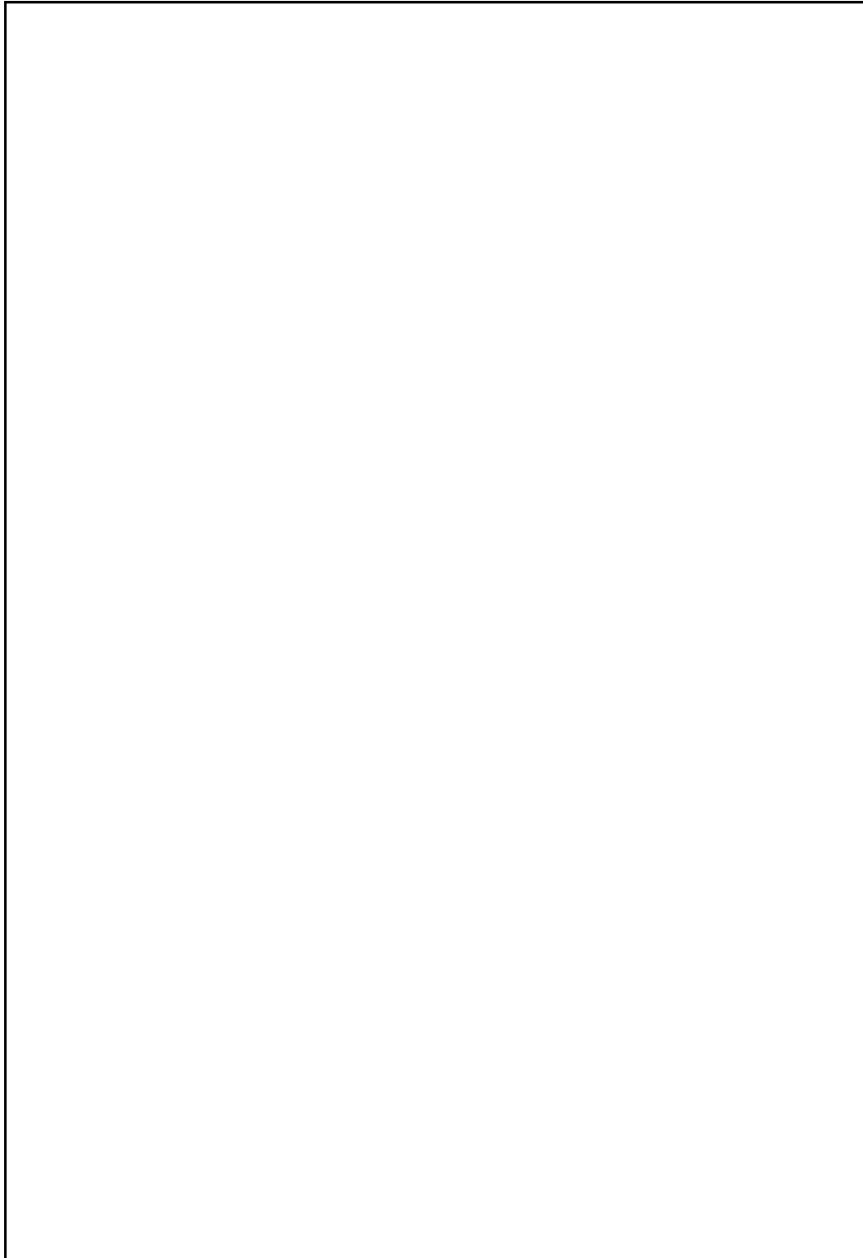
Are active.	Provide for movement and activity.
Have short attention spans.	Change activities often.
Are developing at different rates.	Provide a variety of activities and adapt teaching to individual needs; allow children to work in activities in which they can find success.
Think concretely.	Speak and teach in words that are not abstract.
Like to do stuff.	Provide interactive learning experiences to keep everyone involved.
Need structure.	Keep a regular and predictable schedule.
Need variety.	Provide choices of activities and try new and different learning approaches and methods.
Have different attendance patterns.	Provide weekly and/or month-long learning activities.
Are naturally creative.	Allow children to create and do things with their hands and involve their senses in learning.
Need security.	Are regular in our attendance, arrive before children arrive, and are consistent in our expectations.
Need guidance.	Establish realistic guidelines for behavior and enforce them consistently.
Need independence.	Allow children to sometimes work alone.
Are becoming sensitive to God.	Encourage children to pray and read their Bibles, lay foundations for Christian conversion and living.
Need to interact with peers.	Encourage cooperation with and acceptance of others and provide learning and social settings for interaction.
Need to develop a Christ-like personality.	Love and accept each child, and affirm each child's unique view of self, gifts, talents, and abilities.

Rate your room for each of the following factors which indicate a positive physical learning environment.	On Target	Needs Work
<p>1. Children need space in which to move around.</p> <p>(Recommended: Twenty-five square feet per person based on 80 percent of enrollment.) Adequate space is required to allow children who are active learners to move around. Freedom of movement also tends to lessen tension, fatigue, and irritability.</p>		
<p>2. Children's space should be designed for flexibility.</p> <p>This will allow children to work in small groups, large groups, and individually.</p>		
<p>3. Children's space should be clean and attractive with adequate lighting and good ventilation.</p>		
<p>4. Walls are best painted in soft, neutral colors.</p> <p>Light yellow works well for rooms without much natural lighting. Soft blue is effective when natural lighting is adequate.</p>		
<p>5. All visible teaching materials should be from the current units of study.</p> <p>Many learners find it difficult to focus in clutter and behavior problems may result.</p>		

	On Target	Needs Work
<p>6. Only necessary pieces of equipment are in the room.</p> <p>Too much furniture or equipment may give the children a fenced-in feeling which is counter-productive to learning.</p>		
<p>7. Adequate lighting is necessary.</p> <p>Rooms with natural lighting are preferable. Adequate lighting provides a much warmer, more cheerful space.</p>		
<p>8. Temperature should be comfortable—neither too hot nor too cold, about 70 degrees.</p> <p>Many learners find it challenging to concentrate when the temperature is extreme.</p>		
<p>9. Carpet is the preferred floor covering.</p> <p>Carpet in children's room helps to muffle the noise level and allows children comfort when working on the floor.</p>		
<p>10. Special needs are taken into consideration.</p>		

My Dream Room

Draw here what your room could look like. Rearrange the furniture, if you want. Take out any furniture you do not want. Add furniture you would like to have. In other words, draw your dream room.



Notes

