



A **Preschool**

MODEL CLASSROOM



Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Setting Up the Preschool Area

General Guidelines

The following models are best for organizing preschool Sunday School. Choose the model that best fits your church.

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
All Preschoolers in one class (no more than 12 including teachers)	Births-Twos	Babies	Babies
	Threes-Kindergarten	Ones-Twos	Ones
		Threes-Pre-K	Twos
		Kindergarten	Threes
			4/Pre-K
			Kindergarten

The correct number of teachers is crucial to provide consistent Bible teaching for each age group.

	Children	Recommended Teachers	Max Enrollment
Babies-Kindergarten	9	3	12
Babies-Twos	9	3	12
Threes-Kindergarten	12	3	15
Babies	8	4	12
Ones-Twos	9	3	12
Threes-Pre-K	16	4	20
Kindergarten	20	4	24

- 35 square feet per child is recommended, based on 80% of enrollment. 20 square feet per child is the absolute minimum.
- Rest rooms should be accessible, with child-level facilities if possible. For best results, rest rooms should be connected to the classroom.
- Acoustical ceilings are recommended.
- Solid doors with windows are recommended. Doors should be 36" wide and should open to the outside of the room.
- Good ventilation and good lighting are essential. Florescent lighting works well in a preschool room. In rooms for infants, lights should be on a dimmer switch or designed so that some lights can be turned on while leaving other lights off.
- Floor coverings should be durable, fire retardant and sanitary. Tile or vinyl flooring with rugs is recommended. Vacuum after each use and shampoo often.
- Walls should be clean and painted with washable semigloss, no-lead paint, or papered in washable vinyl.
- Windows should be clean and clear. Window coverings such as drapes 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 preschoolers. Windows located 18 inches from the floor are best for preschoolers.
- Electrical outlets in rooms for babies through twos should be 4¹/₂ feet from the floor.

Sharing a Room

Rooms at church are often shared by Sunday School, Discipleship Training, music, missions, and weekday programs. Establishing printed guidelines for facility usage will help all who use the room. Include the following:

- Schedule of when room is used
- List of persons responsible for activities in the room
- Use of a resource room for all shared materials
- Designated storage space within room for each group
- Keeping use of room limited to similar age group

NOTE: Space used for weekday programs licensed by the state must be evaluated and approved by the State Department of Health and the local fire department.

Room Arrangement

- Avoid having any blind spots where children cannot be seen.
- Strategically arrange the furnishings so that long, straight paths are eliminated and running is discouraged.
- Define learning center areas with shelving units, area rugs, etc.

Preschool Centers

- Place noisy centers (blocks and home living) near each other. Also place them in view of the door.
- Place quiet centers (books and puzzles) near each other and in a quiet area.
- The art center needs to be near a water source or near a door leading to a water source.
- Place the nature center near a window.



Babies

- Place heads of cribs are against the wall, leaving easy access to both sides.
- Create a play area away from the cribs and main traffic areas with ample space for mobile infants to move around.
- You might hang a mobile approximately 10–12 inches from a baby's eye level on each crib. A picture, book, or a Bible might be placed in the crib.
- Use adult-size rocking chairs or gliders.
- If a nursing room is not available, place a sturdy folding screen in a corner of the room for nursing mothers. Place an adult-size rocking chair and a small table behind the screen.

Furnishings



- Remove unnecessary furnishings and equipment. Chairs and tables are expendable if space is limited. A clean floor is sufficient for group time for 3 through 5-year-olds.
- No adult furnishings (chairs, desks, tables) are needed in preschool rooms except rocking chairs in baby departments.
- Chalkboards and bulletin boards are not recommended. Thumbtacks and chalk can be health hazards to preschoolers. Bulletin boards can be useful in hallways.
- Book racks are unnecessary if space is at a premium.
- Speakers which transmit live worship are not recommended. Children deserve our full attention.

Guidelines for Selecting Toys

- A few good, durable, safe toys are better than many of lesser quality. Too many toys cause chaos and hyperactivity.
- Toys or any removable parts must be too large to fit into a child's mouth. Any piece that can go through a toilet tissue tube is a choking hazard.
- Be wary of stuffed animals and plush toys. They are carriers for germs and allergens and cannot be readily sanitized.
- Pictures, toys and books need to be as realistic as possible. Mixing fantasy and theology is confusing; children need fantasy but not at church.
- Choose dolls carefully; those with hair and blinking eyes cannot be easily sanitized.

Teaching Materials

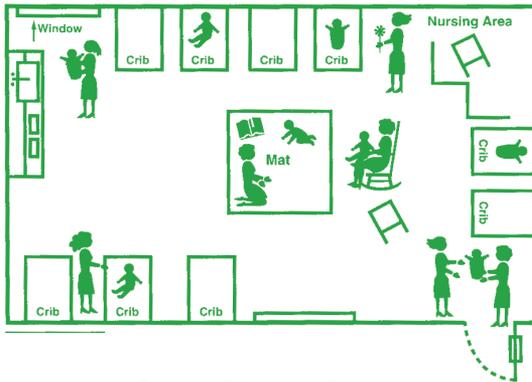
Teaching items in the room should relate to the session. Outdated materials need to be recycled, filed, or given to a mission church.

- An alternative to hanging pictures is to mount them on cardboard, laminate, and place where the preschoolers can see and handle them. Few pictures, rather than many, are more meaningful to children.
- Books and puzzles which focus on the session's aim can be arranged on the floor in an out-of-the-way area if there are no bookshelves.
- Bibles should be visible and used in each preschool room. The Holman Read-To-Me Bible for Kids is most recommended.
- Shared materials should be located in a designated cabinet or resource room.
- All toys must be able to withstand thorough cleaning.

After each department room is set up according to the guidelines, sit on the floor at the entrance to the room and ask yourself these questions:

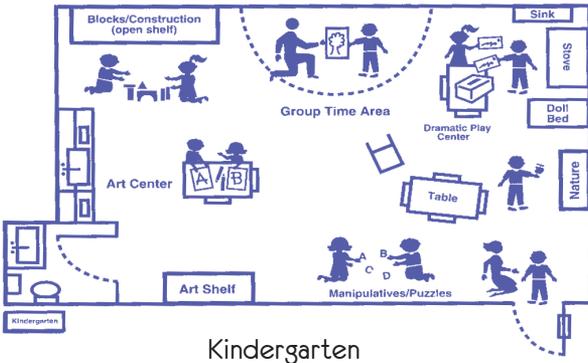
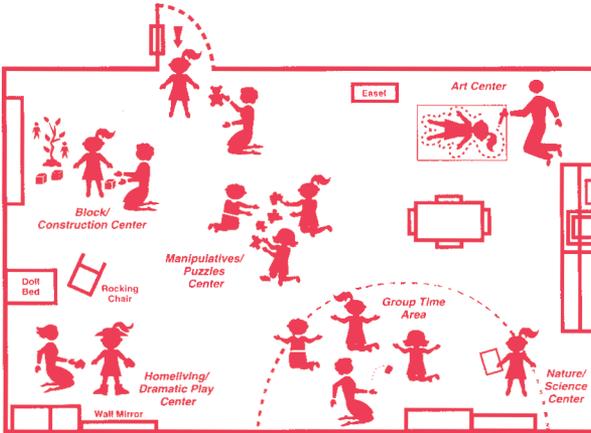
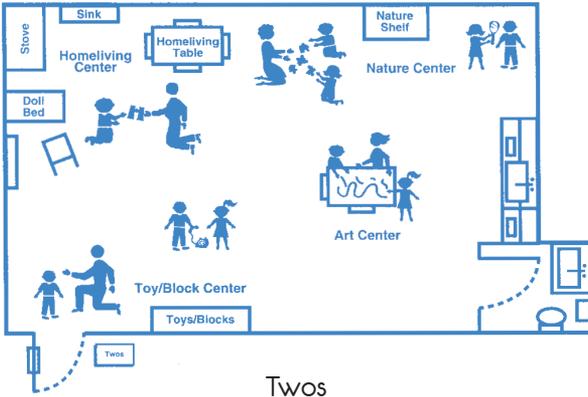
- Does the room look confining or inviting?
- Does it look cluttered or calming?
- Does it look clean?
- Would you want your own child to learn in this room?

Model Rooms ● ● ●



Babies (Birth to One)

Model Rooms





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
- Toys with small parts or sharp corners
- Lead paint in any area
- Unsafe or unsecured windows
- Mold, mildew, or dampness—allergens lurk in dampness
- Unsecured cords for drapes or blinds
- A crock pot, not a microwave, is recommended to warm bottles

2. Remove unnecessary equipment, supplies, trash, and clutter out of each room, hallway, and stairwell.

3. Doors and hallways should be easy to get through quickly in case evacuation is necessary.

4. Check all stairwells for:

- Loose railings
- Loose floor covering
- Other hazards

5. Closets and storage areas need to be clean and free of clutter or fire hazards.

6. Each electrical outlet should be in good condition and out of children's reach - covered with a safety plug if not a grounded outlet.

7. Emergency Precautions:

- Periodically ask the local fire department to make routine inspections of the church.
- Post emergency routes in each room.
- Train teachers of babies to place babies in beds and push to safety in case of fire.
- Have a fire drill that includes the entire church.
- Train teachers to know what to do in case of a fire, earthquake, or tornado.

Preschool Hygiene Practices

1. When in contact with tears, nasal discharge, urine, stool, or blood, the use of disposable gloves is recommended. Follow with careful hand washing and sanitization of potentially contaminated surfaces.
2. Wash hands frequently, using water and liquid soap, and properly disposing of towels.
3. Diluted bleach water is a good inexpensive sanitizer. One tablespoon of bleach added to one quart water, prepared daily. (For blood spills, a solution of one part bleach to 10 parts water is needed.)
4. A mouthed toy should be gathered when a child is finished with it and before another child decides to mouth the toy. A bin labeled “soiled” can be kept on a shelf to hold contaminated toys until they can be washed and sanitized. Toys with smooth surfaces can be washed with dishwashing liquid and warm water followed by a rinse in water, a dip in diluted bleach water (one tablespoon to one quart of water), and air drying.
5. Any surface (crib rail, eating tray, or infant seat) which has been contaminated must be cleaned and wiped with a bleach solution before another child comes in contact with it.
6. Adequately dispose of soiled diapers by wrapping them in waxed paper and placing them in bags before putting them in proper container.
7. Teach good hygiene practices such as handwashing to preschoolers.

How to Set Up a Preschool Resource Room



Storing resources in a central location can encourage good stewardship of materials. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Find a central location that is accessible to the preschool departments.
 - Enlist someone to maintain the room on a weekly basis.
 - Use varying dimensions of openings to aid in storing different types of materials.
- 1. Art:**
 - Some papers need shelves 18" deep.
 - Art papers are more easily accessible from shelves designed to hold fewer packages of paper to a stack.
 - 2. Blocks and accessories:** Can be stored in dishpans on shelves.
 - 3. Books:**
 - A 12" depth is adequate for most books.
 - Preschool books vary considerably in size, so openings 15" high are desirable, with dividers every 12" to prevent books from falling over and to provide space for organizing by topic.
 - Shelve books under categories such as God, Jesus, Bible, church, family, self, others, and natural world.
 - 4. Home living:**
 - Materials can be stored in dishpans on shelves.
 - Hats and shoes can be placed in laundry baskets on deep shelves or hats hung on pegs.
 - Dress-up clothes can be hung on plastic hangers from a clothes rod installed in an 18" shelf unit.
 - 5. Miscellaneous:**
 - Include shelf space for miscellaneous items.
 - Provide a special shelf for teacher resources (study course books, etc.).
 - 6. Music:** Use a CD shelf and be sure to include space for musical instruments.
 - 7. Nature:** Provide a variety of tall and short shelf openings for nature objects.
 - 8. Pictures:**
 - May be stored in a box on a waist-high shelf.
 - Cardboard dividers are useful for cataloging in biblical foundation areas: Bible, Church, Family, God, Jesus, Natural World, Others, Self.
 - Other subjects may be added as needed.
 - 9. Puzzles:**
 - A stack of 15 wooden inlay puzzles can be heavy, so make several shelves with openings about 5" high.
 - Add shelf dividers about every 10" to prevent stacks from sliding into each other.
 - On the puzzle edge, write the name of the puzzle and the number of pieces in it.
 - 10. Storage Containers:** These can be purchased or salvaged.
 - Baby-wipe boxes with hinged lids
 - Cardboard or clear plastic shoeboxes
 - Dishpans
 - Round, five-gallon commercial ice cream containers
 - Zip-closure plastic bags

"Changing Mississippi - One Child at a Time"

Dear Pastor and Church Leaders:

Preschoolers in your church deserve the very best! They are blessed to have dedicated leaders like you. Thank you for your interest in creating the best possible environment for them.

We hope this booklet will help you. Please give us a call if we can help you in your ministries.

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A Ministry of the Cooperative Program

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