

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS

Classroom Environments Initiative

St. Luke's Day School has established 3 important values to guide our decisions for ongoing design changes in our classrooms.

Child-Centeredness

Thoughtful selection of materials, equipment, furnishings, and lessons that support our mission;

Visual Order

Uncluttered space to set the tone for appropriate play & learning and peaceful interactions;

Natural Elements

Physical reflections of our Creator, God, who made all this beauty with great love for us!

The Director, Program Coordinators, and Facility, Events and Resources Manager will offer guidance as our plan continues to develop.

COMMON CLASSROOM DESIGN ELEMENTS

Child-Centeredness Checklist

- Large photos of children will be displayed in one area of the Lambs, Bunnies, and Honeybees classrooms
- All classrooms will incorporate photos of children in action as appropriate for documentation of activities, class books, etc.
- Children's artwork will be thoughtfully and respectfully displayed (no curled edges or out of season artwork) in one area of classroom (chosen in collaboration with Resource Coordinator) and should include documentation.
- Family photos will be included in one area of classroom. Possibilities include class books, placemats, crib photos and framed displays.
- A Birthday wall celebrating each child will be displayed in one area of the classroom; location chosen in collaboration with Resource Coordinator.
- Cubbies will be labeled attractively with child's name and photo.
- All equipment, toys and books will be chosen and thoughtfully arranged according to the age/stage of children assigned to the classroom.
- Special postings (who's here, pictorial daily schedule, etc.) are limited and placed in collaboration with Resource Coordinator.

Visual Order Checklist

- Countertops will remain free of clutter. Teacher materials should be organized attractively and purposefully. Use enclosed storage efficiently.

- Tops of manipulative shelves will remain free of teacher clutter and only hold items which enhance classroom environment or pertain to curriculum (plants, natural objects, lamps, photos, manipulatives).
- Nothing is to be stored on top of or behind cabinets, furniture, or doors.
- A Parent Communication bulletin board, issued by the Resource Coordinator, will be located near each classroom entry door.
- Items posted for parents are limited to Daily Schedules and, if applicable, the monthly Big Luke's Place snack calendar. Additional pertinent information may be posted if it fits neatly on your Parent Communication Board without hanging off the edges.
- All other parent communication will be kept in the Parent Communication Binder.
- A Communication Crate, including children's folders and Parent Communication Binder, will be located near classroom entry for parents' easy access.
- No postings or decorations on exterior of classroom door except for Sign-in sheet/Today We.
- Centers will remain open and inviting for children; please do not cover with cloth or turn them to indicate centers are closed. (See Resource Coordinator for suggestions)
- Window of classroom door will not be obstructed.
- Rest mats will be stored out of sight.
- No Teacher Supply Store or similar "store bought" decorations will be used in classroom; see the Resource Coordinator if you have questions.
- No items with logos, product placement, cartoon, or Disney characters are to be used in classrooms.
- Classroom rules are not posted on walls.
- Lunch box notes are not posted; instead make a binder that can be kept in your Book Nook.

Natural Elements Checklist

- Natural elements will be used liberally throughout your classroom environment (creative uses for baskets and light as well as materials for children to explore including shells, rocks, water, sand, and plants).
- Windows will be accessible to children; do not block with furniture without approval.
- Window blinds will remain open until nap time to allow for natural light.
- Include lamps or alternative light sources in classroom when possible.
- Manipulatives and materials will be shelved in open, natural baskets or neutral colored containers (not plastic tubs). Limit choices so as not to overwhelm or clutter, and rotate materials frequently.
- Please incorporate at least one live plant in your classroom. You may enhance other areas with a limited number of approved artificial plants.
- Neutral colored soft elements and textiles should be used throughout your classroom and must be washable.

Classroom Set-up Checklist

- ▶ Arrange the room attractively in a variety of developmentally appropriate learning centers. The centers are arranged to accommodate children individually, in small groups, and in large groups. Private areas where children may play alone are available.
 1. Assess your furniture needs. Speak to your program coordinator about furniture ideas before turning in an official request. Make sure all furnishings are clean and in good repair. Request maintenance as needed.

2. Check out toys, manipulatives, puzzles and books for your classroom. Make sure they are all in good repair and no pieces are missing.
 3. Wash dramatic play and baby doll clothes as necessary.
 4. Get crayons, markers, paper, etc. from the Teacher Work Room (B136).
 5. Complete a final safety check: no sharp edges; no pinch, crush, or shear points. Toys for children two years and under must be checked to insure that they are large enough to prevent swallowing and/or choking.
 6. The room is arranged so that adults can supervise children at all times.
 7. Diverse, nonsexist, non-stereotypical pictures, dolls, books, and materials are available.
 8. The environment includes soft elements.
- ▶ Organize your closet space to best meet your needs. Due to our extremely limited storage space teachers may not keep large amounts of personal teaching items at school. See the Resource Coordinator with specific questions.
 - ▶ Make sure storage areas (i.e., cubbies, hooks, closets) are ready for each child's personal belongings.
 - ▶ Create photo/name labels for cubbies, hooks and diaper bag storage for younger children.
 - ▶ Prepare your classroom Parent Communication Binder (see example binder in the Resource Coordinator's office)
 - ▶ Ready your approved bulletin boards with appropriate displays, or make them ready to post children's work. No pre-packaged bulletin board sets or borders from the teacher supply store! Be creative.
 - ▶ Make sure the Emergency Procedure Plan and Evacuation Map are posted near or on the back of the classroom door.
 - ▶ Hand-washing and Diaper Changing Rebus Charts are posted by the Resource Coordinator. Please notify the Resource Coordinator if yours is missing.
 - ▶ Children's Name/Birthday List is kept nearby for reference.
 - ▶ Allergy information will be posted inside the cabinet near your sink area (Any rooms without a sink area will see the Resource Coordinator for alternative)
 - ▶ Notes for a Substitute are kept in an easily accessible folder in the teacher area of the classroom.
 - ▶ Obtain "Where Are We?" sign from Resource Coordinator
 - ▶ Determine the type of "Today we..." sign you will use to communicate the day's activities to the parents. See your Resource Coordinator for instructions.
 - ▶ Locate all necessary diaper changing supplies, including wipes, gloves, changing paper, soap and water bottles, and disinfectant. The diapering area and covered trash can are clean.
 - ▶ All chemicals and potentially dangerous products are stored in labeled containers out of the reach of children – preferably in locked cabinets.

- ▶ Check that a broom and dustpan are available and stored appropriately for use in your classroom.
- ▶ Each room has two trash cans, lined with plastic bags. Plastic trash cans are clean. Food items and diapers go in the cans with lids. All paper and other non-food trash goes in open cans. Materials contaminated with blood or bodily fluids should be sealed in a plastic bag before disposal in a can with a lid.
- ▶ Comfortable arrangements for rest time are planned. The school provides mats for all Toddler classes. Parents of Twos-K purchase mats from the school and bring to the class. If a mat is torn, it must be replaced. Bedding (cover sheets, blankets, etc.) may not be stored with mats. Parents may not send cloth covered mats. Blankets are not allowed for infants under one year old.

A FEW MORE THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR DAY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Housekeeping

At days end:

1. Toys are back on shelves
2. Blocks are put back according to size
3. Tables are wiped clean and sprayed with disinfectant
4. Messy art areas are cleaned up
5. Floors are swept of food
6. Glue is removed from tables
7. Paint brushes are cleaned
8. Paint cups are wiped clean or disposed of; paint should never be poured down a drain
9. Chairs pushed under tables (downstairs classrooms) or stacked on top (upstairs classrooms)
10. Countertops are cleared of clutter and teaching materials are put away
11. Lights are turned off
12. Doors closed and locked

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Please make every effort to make our school an environmentally friendly place. Look for ways to “go green” in your classroom and teach the children appropriate practices for reducing waste while reusing and recycling classroom materials. Children and adults are to bring re-usable cups, containers, and utensils that will be sent home daily for washing/disinfecting. Watch for the DS newsletter for occasional environmentally friendly tips.

Maintenance Requests

Maintenance requests for classrooms or DS equipment should be submitted to the Resource Coordinator as per current instructions. Do not make requests directly to the building managers or custodial staff.

No Postings on Day School Painted Hallways

Do not use staples, tick-tack, tape, or any other materials on painted hallway walls – ever! Notices may be placed on a clipboard or standard inside your room, or on designated bulletin boards.