

3 CHILDREN'S SPACES

Each group of children and their teachers (as defined by NAEYC guidelines) should have its own distinct classroom space with walls to provide acoustical separation from other classrooms. Although some connections between classrooms through windows or shared bathrooms or changing areas can facilitate teacher communication and provide children with views beyond their own room, it is critical to provide a distinct space for each group.

Each classroom should also have its own individual identity with colors, décor, equipment, display and materials that differ from other classrooms, rather than creating a uniform institutional appearance. Colors should be in tones that will blend harmoniously with the multitude of shades found in children's toys and materials. Find opportunities to use natural materials rather than plastic, to create order instead of clutter, and to create a space that reflects the lives and work of the teachers and children using the space.

Please note that this section does not cover classroom toys and materials. When assessing your center's physical environment, keep in mind that equipping the classrooms with appropriate educational toys and materials is essential to providing a quality program. Information on this is included in the Appendix.



Note: This section should be completed for each classroom in the center. Please photocopy or make an electronic copy if additional copies are needed.

CLASSROOM

3.1

ALL GROUPS OF CHILDREN (as defined by NAEYC guidelines) ARE IN DISTINCT CLASSROOM SPACES ACOUSTICALLY SEPARATED BY WALLS

CLASSROOM 1	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 2	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 3	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 4	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!

COMMENTS: _____

3.2




CHILDREN'S LAVATORY IS LOCATED DIRECTLY ADJACENT TO CLASSROOM

- Opens directly into classroom
- Location and design provide good sightlines into lavatory from the classroom
- No-touch fixtures and dispensers are provided

CLASSROOM 1	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 2	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 3	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 4	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!

COMMENTS: _____

KEY

0 Does not exist in the center, but should	1 Inadequate: requires improvement or repair	2 Fair: should be improved	3 Good: good quality or in good condition	4 Excellent: first-rate or top quality	N/A Not applicable: doesn't apply to the home	PR! Priority! Don't forget to identify priority items	 Health & Safety	 Center Quality	 Maintenance, Repair & Aesthetics
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3.3

CHILDREN'S LABORATORY IS WELL-DESIGNED FOR CHILD CARE USE

- Fixtures, soap, paper dispensers correct size and height
- Ventilated with mechanical exhaust fan
- Drain in floor

CLASSROOM 1	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 2	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 3	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 4	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!

COMMENTS: _____

3.4

CLASSROOM OFFERS AMPLE SPACE

NOTE: Early childhood experts agree that more than the minimal licensing requirement of generally 35 sq-ft. per child is needed to support a high quality learning environment. Optimal square footage is generally considered 50-70 sq-ft. per child depending on the age and number of children.

- Activity area exceeds licensing minimum
- Allows for flexible use as children's needs change
- Space does not feel crowded

CLASSROOM 1	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 2	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 3	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 4	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!

COMMENTS: _____

TIP: When measuring classroom square footage make sure to subtract the area occupied by large furniture such as cubbies, refrigerators, and cabinetry.

3.5

CLASSROOM ENTRY IS WELL-DESIGNED

- Provides for a distinct and separate area that allows families and visitors to enter without disrupting classroom activities
- Each child has his or her own cubby for all personal belongings Parent notice board and sign-in
- Transition area/seating for removing outdoor clothes, etc.

CLASSROOM 1	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
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CLASSROOM 3	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 4	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!

COMMENTS: _____

3.6




ARRANGEMENT OF CLASSROOM SPACE IS FUNCTIONAL

- Clear pathways through the space
- Mix of floor surfaces: non-skid resilient flooring and carpet
- Not crowded or cluttered
- Sufficient space for cots when children are napping
- Room arranged for wheelchair access if needed

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3.7

CLASSROOM SPACE IS SAFE

- Pillars and posts wrapped with soft covering
- Space easily supervised
- Heating units and pipes securely covered
- All outlets are child-safe or covered
- Cords secured out of children’s sight and reach
- Hazardous substances and sharp objects stored out of children’s sight and reach
- Doors have view panels for safe entry or exit from rooms
- Protective barrier/shatterproof glass on windows at child-height
- Operable windows have secure screens
- Operable windows above the first floor have child-safe barriers
- Shelf and cubby units anchored to wall or floor

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CLASSROOM 4	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!

COMMENTS: _____

3.8

ARRANGEMENT AND LAYOUT OF CLASSROOM SPACE SUPPORTS PROGRAMMING

- Separate zones for quiet, active and messy play
- Interest areas well-defined using furnishings, room dividers and architectural features
- Compatible activities adjacent to each other
- Materials displayed and accessible to children
- Interest areas placed near resources to support the activity (art near water, computer near electric outlet, blocks on rug)
- Room organized to promote independence and exploration

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COMMENTS: _____

3.9

SPACE SUPPORTS TEACHERS

- Adult-height sink in classroom (other than diaper sink)
- Adult-height work surface
- Telephone and/or intercom system

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COMMENTS: _____

3.10




AESTHETICS AND MOOD CREATE A COMFORTABLE AND SOOTHING ENVIRONMENT

- Harmonious color scheme
- Furnishings and rugs create a unified look
- Muted color palette
- Many soft elements in the space
- Emphasis on natural materials and nature

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3.11

CHILDREN'S FURNISHINGS ARE SUFFICIENT, APPROPRIATE AND CLEAN

- Sturdy, well-made, in good repair
- Cubbies, tables, chairs and shelves have a unified appearance
- Appropriate size and scale for age group
- Each child has chair, cubby, storage for individual work, and a cot or crib
- Soft furnishings available

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COMMENTS: _____

3.12

CLASSROOM IS IN GOOD REPAIR

- Ceiling, floor, floor coverings and walls free of splinters, peeling paint, water stains or excessive wear
- Windows, heating units, other fixed features intact and in good condition
- Air circulation allowing for ventilation
- Regular maintenance of HVAC system

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CLASSROOM 4	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!

COMMENTS: _____

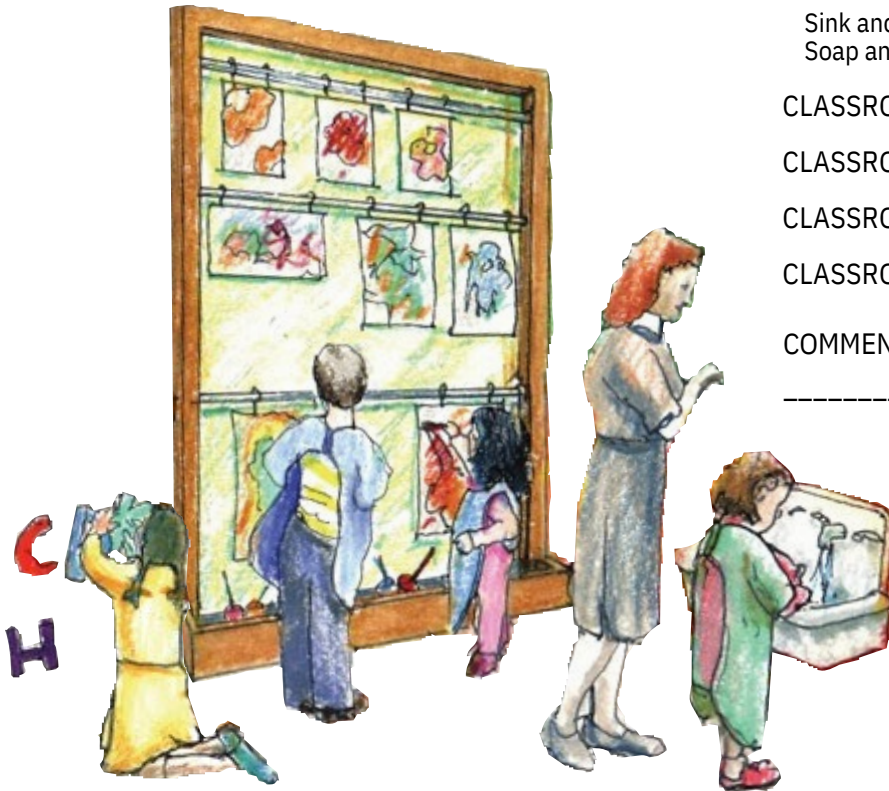
3.13

CLASSROOM HAS ACTIVITY SINK FOR CHILDREN




- Sink and counter at child-height
- Soap and paper towels flush-mounted at child-height

CLASSROOM 1	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
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3.14

SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF EXTERIOR WINDOWS PROVIDE GOOD AMOUNT OF NATURAL DAYLIGHT AND VISIBILITY TO OUTDOORS

- Access to child-height windows to the outdoors
- Lofts or raised platforms up to higher windows
- Window coverings adjust to control level of natural light

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COMMENTS: _____

3.15

INTERIOR WINDOWS ALLOW FOR VISIBILITY AND SECURITY BETWEEN CLASSROOMS WHILE STILL PROVIDING ACOUSTICAL SEPARATION




- Windows to other classrooms and/or corridors
- Windows or observation spaces allow parents, staff and visitors to see into classrooms
- Safety glass used where glass is child-height

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3.16

CLASSROOM OFFERS AMPLE STORAGE SPACE

- Sufficient space for children's materials and supplies used on a regular basis
- Closed storage space available in classroom for children's supplies and teacher materials
- Individual storage for children's belongings
- Easily accessed storage for cots/mats
- Secure storage of medicines/hazardous materials

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CLASSROOM 4	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!

COMMENTS: _____

3.17

HEATING AND COOLING SYSTEM IS SAFE AND RESPONSIVE

- Temperature controlled within individual classroom
- Air temperature consistent and comfortable
- Depending on climate, radiant heating in flooring, especially in infant/toddler rooms

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CLASSROOM 4	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!

COMMENTS: _____

3.18

LIGHTING IS VARIED AND ADJUSTABLE

- Balance of natural and artificial lighting in each classroom
- Fluorescent lighting not the only light source of artificial light
- Different lighting used for different activity areas
- Light level can be adjusted by turning some fixtures on and off Classroom lighting has dimmer switches

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CLASSROOM 2	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
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CLASSROOM 4	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!

COMMENTS: _____

3.19

ELECTRIC SERVICE IS AMPLE

Sufficient number of outlets to avoid use of extension cords
 Circuit breakers are not thrown because of overloads to system

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CLASSROOM 4	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!

COMMENTS: _____



3.20

APPROPRIATE ACOUSTICAL FEATURES REDUCE NOISE LEVEL OF CENTER

- Absence of ambient noises such as buzzing lights, electronic hums, ventilation system motors, etc.
- Limited transmission of sound from adjoining rooms or outside street noise
- Efforts made to soften and absorb excessive noise – use of acoustic tiles and panels, fabric, cushions, rugs, upholstered furniture
- Absence of high ceilings that would contribute to poor acoustics

CLASSROOM 1	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
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CLASSROOM 3	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
CLASSROOM 4	0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!

COMMENTS: _____

OTHER CHILDREN'S SPACES

3.21

THERE IS A WELL-DESIGNED INDOOR GROSS MOTOR SPACE




Designated space for active indoor play available
 Suitable climbing, jumping, crawling and balance equipment
 Safety mats or protective flooring
 Suitable wheeled toys for different age groups
 Convenient storage for gross motor equipment
 Depending on the need of children, space is accessible for all abilities

RATING:

0	1	2	3	4	N/A	PR!
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COMMENTS: _____

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INFANT AND TODDLER ROOMS

In addition to the information above, there are further considerations for infant and toddler rooms. Infants and toddlers spend much of their time on the floor so it should be soft, warm, and clean. Equipment should be sturdy, age appropriate and scrupulously clean.

3.22 FLOOR SURFACE IS VARIED

FOR INFANTS:

Well-padded carpet, low carpeted risers in crawling spaces
Easily cleaned, resilient flooring in eating areas and at changing table

FOR TODDLERS:

Mix of carpet/area rugs and washable flooring
Floor level changes with carpeted risers or steps

RATING: 0 1 2 3 4 N/A PR!

COMMENTS: _____

3.23 DIAPER CHANGING AREA IS ACCESSIBLE AND HYGIENIC

- Location of diaper area allows teacher to continue to supervise classroom
- Sink location is separate from food prep area
- Diaper sink separate from other sinks and adjacent to diaper area
- Changing table has safety rail and non-porous surface
- Storage of soiled diapers convenient, hygienic and air-tight
- Diapering and sanitizing supplies stored securely
- For toddlers, changing table has steps
- Area is ventilated with mechanical exhaust fan
- Diaper and wipe storage accessible with one hand while teacher still has one hand on child
- Sink features wrist-controlled faucets
- No-touch fixtures and dispensers are provided

RATING: 0 1 2 3 4 N/A PR!

COMMENTS: _____

3.24 SPACE FOR INFANT AND TODDLER ACTIVITIES IS SUFFICIENT AND APPROPRIATE

- Sufficient usable floor space for crawling, climbing, and other activities (after subtracting floor space used for cribs, feeding and diapering activities)
- Well-defined napping area such as an alcove or separate crib area (if this meets licensing regulations for supervision and visibility)
- Available space for children to get out of the group, rest or watch the activities

RATING: 0 1 2 3 4 N/A PR!

COMMENTS: _____




3.25 INFANT AND TODDLER FURNISHINGS ARE APPROPRIATE

- Comfortable adult seating, suitable for holding or rocking children
- Soft surfaces: futons, water mattress, other textures if allowed by licensing
- Secure railings and surfaces for children to pull themselves to standing position
- Pictures and non-breakable mirrors at crawler's eye level
- Low open shelves for toys
- Bins to isolate toys that have been in a child's mouth
- Equipment to sanitize infant toys
- Sturdy furnishings designed for use with these age groups
- Cribs and evacuation crib(s) as required by licensing
- Individual feeding chairs
- No use of walkers
- Limited use of "containment" equipment such as Exersaucers, swings, etc.
- Elevated enclosed play platform

RATING: 0 1 2 3 4 N/A PR!

COMMENTS: _____

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