



Transcript for the [Video](#):  
***Redesigning the Toddler Room***

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**Teachers:** Hi, I'm Amie Theriault, and I'm Carrie Woodward, and this is the story of how we redesigned the toddler classroom.

### **Planning the Redesign (0:37)**

**Amie Theriault, Toddler Teacher:** So one of our main goals was to make the centers more defined spaces. We found that a lot of the children were kind of wandering from center to center; they didn't have a real focus. And we kind of brainstormed where would we want all the individual centers, and then we just started moving. We started moving furniture, and that's always a really long process.

**Amie (to Carrie):** I think if we pull a few chairs over we can... they can either use things cooperatively if they bring them over, or learn from each other and do some parallel play.

### **Block Area (1:13)**

**Amie:** One of our biggest goals was to move the block center away from the center of the classroom. There's a louder, noisier center right in the center of class, so we often had children there building big, elaborate structures. It's a walk way, an area where children are constantly passing through. It's now off in the corner of the room, and we're finding much less conflict.

**Child 1:** What are you going to do?

**Child 2:** I'm driving my car.

### **Music Area (1:44)**

**Amie:** We had music in the room; it was always available, but it was more or less a basket of instruments. We created an entire center just for music, and so they have their instruments, they have their dancing scarves, but they've been utilizing it more intentionally now, so it hasn't been actually as loud as it was just as having the basket there. We added a large mirror to the area and we're seeing that children are actually performing in front of it. They'll have us put

scarves on them and pretend that they're dressing up, and use the instruments as microphones and sing and dance in front of the mirror.

**Child:** Ahhh, ahhh, ahhh.

### **Writing Center (2:28)**

**Amie:** One of the issues that I noticed with our writing center was that children were writing, but they were hearing all of the noise in the classroom and they weren't staying there very long. So we now have a very defined space in the corner. It's actually located right next to the family bulletin board because if there's ever an instance where a child is thinking about mom or something they can write a letter; they can look at the pictures of families. We made it more inviting by adding mailboxes for the children. Every once in a while we'll come over and say, "Let's check our mailbox. Let's see if there's anything in our mailbox." And I'm finding them going over there much more often now.

**Carrie:** Are you going to write a letter to me?

**Child:** Yeah.

**Carrie:** "Dear Ms. Carrie." Want to tell me what you did in the great room while I was planning today?

### **Math and Science Centers (3:14)**

**Amie:** Our math and science center...they were kind of a combined center before. And I saw a couple of challenges with that because a lot of the science materials that we have out on a regular basis are ones that we want the children to use around the classroom. Magnifying glasses, and color wands, and binoculars—we want them to walk around with those, and look around the classroom, and do observations. So, when there are children trying to focus on things in the math center, it got kind of loud and there was a lot of commotion going on with people walking back and forth. So we defined those two spaces as well. They're near each other, but separated spaces now. We added a small book shelf to the science center specifically for science related books so they can actually sit and read there. In the math center we also added a small table, and they are utilizing that all the time. They're bringing the shape sorters over to the table, or they're matching at the table, doing patterns. So they really, really enjoy having the table there to sit and concentrate on their work.

**Child:** Look it, look it. Circle.

**Carrie:** Two circles?

**Child:** One, two.

**Carrie:** One, two. You're right. You have two circles.

## Reflections (4:29)

**Amie:** I think that the room is working out really, really well the way that it is. I think that the children are staying engaged in centers much longer—having the more defined spaces is helping them with that. They're really focusing on their work more. Materials aren't traveling as much from one end of the room to the other. The furniture is extremely important. Not just for placing materials on shelves, but actually using them as boundaries. Really look at what you have. Think outside the box: okay, this is a great shelf for this, but it can also be used to define this center. Because clearing out those large walk ways and runways really does help to eliminate some of the running and the problematic challenging behavior that can occur when you have too big of an open space. Use the furniture to your advantage the best you can.