

Ideas Into Practice

Segment 2: Arranging the Classroom

Option A: Rearranging the Classroom

Step 1: Study the arrangement of your classroom, applying ideas from this segment. On a sheet of paper sketch a redesign of the classroom that you feel would be ideal. Be sure to consider:

- Softness and coziness
- The partitioning of learning centers
- The adequacy of pathways
- The placement of quiet away from loud activities
- The inclusion of a getaway space

Step 2: After you have redrawn your classroom, write a brief report on your new floor plan:

- Which of these changes can actually be implemented in your classroom?
- If some changes cannot be made, what are the barriers to making them?
- What resources, equipment, and help from others would you need to transform your existing classroom into your ideal one?

Option B: Creating a Getaway Space

Based on ideas from this segment, create a getaway space in your classroom—a private and cozy spot where only one or two children can go for some quiet “down time.”

Step 1: Working with your colleagues, select a location for the space that is out of the way of active play. Create the space with borrowed materials (e.g., an old cardboard box, a blanket and table, or a tent) or use existing furnishings (e.g., the upper level of a loft, a corner partitioned with a divider and filled with pillows).

Step 2: After creating this space, observe for several days. Write anecdotal records of what children do there. Take photographs of your getaway space.

Step 3: Write a brief report on the success of the project:

- Did children choose to go to this space when they needed a break?
- Did particular children go there more often than others? If so, why?
- Were there challenges in keeping the space quiet and limiting the numbers of children at any one time?
- What modifications might you make to improve the effectiveness of your getaway space?

Option C: Solving a Classroom Problem through Spatial Arrangement

- Step 1: With your colleagues, identify an on-going classroom problem that might be solved through an adjustment in your classroom arrangement. The problem might be over-activity or aggression in a certain center. It might be a problem of too many conflicts over materials. Your problem might involve crowding as children get ready to go outdoors or as they squeeze into more popular areas. It might be a problem of quiet and loud centers being too close together and clashing. It might be that some children simply don't use a certain center.
- Step 2: As a group, discuss how to solve the problem through changes in the way your classroom space is arranged.
- Step 3: Make the alterations you decide on and observe the effects, writing anecdotal records.
- Step 4: Write a brief report that states the original problem and the impact of the change in space in solving it:
- Was the modification effective?
 - What was its overall effect on children's behavior?
 - What additional changes will you make, based on your observations?