



Preschool Environment Checklist

This instrument aligns age groups with the CLASS tools; preschoolers are defined as 3-5 years of age.

Area	Indicator	Details	Score Yes=1; No=0
Learning Environment Arrangement	Learning environment is arranged so children have adequate space to move freely around the room.	Children have sufficient space to move in and out of interest areas, play alongside one another or independently, etc.	
	There is space for large and small grouping.		
	Learning environment arrangement allows for staff to see all children at a glance.	Furniture and shelving should be arranged to prevent blind spots.	
	All quiet and loud areas are separated.	Loud interest areas (like blocks or dramatic play) should be in a different area of the room or separated by buffers (like science or manipulatives) than quiet centers (like library or self-regulation).	
Materials	Materials are sufficient, accessible, and in good condition.	There should be enough materials for all children to engage at once, and children should be able to access materials independently throughout the day.	
	Learning environment has labels for materials.	The majority of materials are labeled with words and pictures. Labels help children understand where materials belong.	
Storage	Each child's individual cubby is labeled with name and picture of child and located in/ adjacent to the learning environment.	Cubbies may be inside the classroom or in the hallway directly outside.	
	There are <u>sufficient</u> shelves to store all needed materials throughout the learning environment, without clutter or overcrowding	Storage should be neatly organized so that all items are visible, materials can be removed and replaced easily, and shelf tops are free of unnecessary items (i.e. teacher supplies, stacks of paper, etc.)	
	Shelves are clean, free of residue, varnish is in	No visible dirt, peeling varnish/paint, tape	

	excellent condition, and shelves appear like-new.	residue, cracks, etc.	
Interest Areas	There is a <u>variety</u> of materials for children to utilize in at least one interest area(s).	Variety indicates that there are multiple types of play children can engage in within the area.	
	At least <u>five (5)</u> interest areas are identified and clearly defined.	Interest areas should be labeled and visually defined (e.g. use furnishings like shelves, rugs, etc. to define the area or store similar materials in the same area). Interest areas may include dramatic play, sensory play, library/book area, blocks, manipulatives, art, etc.	
Diversity	Diversity is represented throughout the learning environment in a positive way.	At least <u>one</u> positive depiction of diverse races/cultures, ages, and abilities must be represented in the classroom, respectively.	
	Diversity is shown in displays, books, and accessible play materials.		
Art	Art is a clearly defined interest area that consists of a <u>variety</u> of materials including: paper, collage materials, playdough, tools, and art supplies.	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collage materials: glue, yarn, pom poms, pipe cleaners, etc. • Tools: scissors, hole punch, stencils, tape, etc. • Art supplies: paint, paint brushes, crayons, markers, etc. 	
	Majority of children's artwork demonstrates creativity/free choice. Artwork should be visibly different, demonstrating that children have not been asked to complete the artwork in a pre-determined way.	Ex. display includes one child's line drawing, another's painting, and another's 3D sculpture vs. identical, pre-cut crafts	
	Children's artwork is displayed in the learning environment at children's eye level		
	Children's displayed art should include 3D or sculptural artwork	3D art is built up and goes beyond gluing 2D items to a 2D surface. Ex. clay sculptures, pipe cleaners inserted in Styrofoam, paper towel roll art projects, etc.	
Sensory	At least <u>three (3)</u> interest areas offer a variety	Ex. calming bottles with colorful liquids,	

	of sensory experiences related to sight, sound, or touch. (All three senses should be represented somewhere in the learning environment.)	musical instruments, pop-it fidget toys, etc.	
	The learning environment has a sensory table/tub that includes sensory materials such as sand, water, textured materials.	Sensory tub must be filled and accessible to children.	
Dramatic Play	The learning environment has a <u>variety</u> of materials in good condition organized into an interest area for dramatic play.	Ex. washable baby dolls and accessories, play phones or keys, play sets (barns, dollhouses), dress up clothes, play food and dishes, child-sized kitchen set, etc.	
	Items in the dramatic play are varied and allow for expanded use; items are accessible to the children.	Materials should allow the area to be used in more than one way. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menus, notepads, aprons, and cash register for restaurant play • Doctor kit, lab coat/scrubs, pretend X-rays, and stuffed animals for veterinary office play • Envelopes, mailbox, stamps/stickers, and carrying bag for post office play 	
Language & Literacy	Book area is clearly defined and accessible to children.		
	Examples of meaningful print are present in <u>multiple areas</u> of the classroom and paired with pictures or objects at children's eye level.	Ex. dictation paired with children's art or photographs, labels in classroom, environmental charts, materials labeled with pictures, etc.	
	Books are developmentally appropriate and in good repair.	For preschool children, books should include picture books, story books, etc. and books that support early reading skills like those with rhymes, repetitive phrases, etc. Books aimed at younger children (ex. board books) may also be included to support children in different developmental ranges.	
	Books are accessible in <u>multiple</u> interest areas (excluding library).		

	Printed names of children are used in <u>multiple areas</u> of the learning environment.		
	Dual language learners have access to books <u>and/or</u> environmental print representing their home language.	*Assessor guidance: To the extent possible, note the home language of children in the classroom. Mark “yes” if – to your knowledge – children’s home languages are represented in the environment. Ex. bilingual labels/signs/posters, bilingual books	
Fine Motor	There are a <u>variety</u> of materials accessible to children that encourage fine motor play.	Ex. puzzles, busy gears, stringing beads, lacing cards, pegboards, squeeze toys, stacking tower, connecting blocks, tweezers, play dough, matching games, nuts and bolts, bead/magnet mazes, drawing/painting implements, etc.	
	At least <u>five (5)</u> different types of materials are present in the learning environment, unique to fine motor.		
	The materials are complete and in good condition.	For example, puzzles should not be missing pieces.	
Gross Motor	There are <u>at least two (2)</u> different types of gross motor materials accessible to children.	Gross motor materials should be stored inside the classroom and easily accessible for use throughout the day. Ex. activity mats, push/pull toys, stepping stones, parachute, bean bags, bowling set, etc.	
	The indoor learning environment has an area that is large enough to encourage/accommodate gross motor movement.		
Natural Materials	Learning environment has <u>at least one (1)</u> living item.	Ex. non-toxic plant, fish, small pet (hamster, guinea pig, etc.)	
Family Representation	Learning environment has pictures of the children and of the children's families on eye level.		
Math	There are a <u>variety</u> of materials that encourage awareness of numbers, quantity, counting, shapes, or measurement accessible to the	Ex. sequencing toys, puzzles, sorting activities, cause-and-effect games, shape sorters, blocks, connecting blocks, linking toys, ball drop toys,	

	children.	magnetic toys, etc.	
	At least five (5) different types of materials are present, unique to math and number skills.		
Science	There are a <u>variety</u> of materials in the learning environment for science exploration accessible to children.	Ex. colored viewers, magnifying lenses, binoculars, flashlights, magnets, toy insects/reptiles/animals, simple body parts puzzles, nonfiction books about science/nature topics, sensory table with toys for scooping/pouring/measuring, etc.	
	At least five (5) different types of materials are present, unique to scientific exploration.		
Self-Regulation	There is <u>at least one (1)</u> age-appropriate area that promotes children's self-regulation with soft pillows or furniture and self-regulation materials. The area should be big enough for a caregiver to sit with the child.	Self-regulation materials may include: feelings books, visuals of emotion expressions, soft toys or dolls, posters of emotions or breathing techniques, choice charts, etc.	
	This area must be distinct from other areas of the classroom.	This area should be protected from active play and interruptions. Children should be able to use the self-regulation area without disrupting the play of others or having others' play interrupt their own regulation.	
Blocks	There are sufficient blocks, space, and <u>at least three (3)</u> different types of accessories for three or more children to build a sizeable structure.	Examples of accessories may include: play vehicles, plastic people and/or animals, farm or gas station toys, toy road signs, woodworking toys, construction hats and/or vests	
	Space is designed as a stand-alone center.	Blocks should not be combined with other interest areas like dramatic play. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other materials (music, gross motor, etc.) may be stored in the block area; however, they should not be used at the same time. 	
SCORING	Total "Yes"		
	% "Yes"/Total		

Definitions:

- **Accessible** – Children are able to reach and access independently, without adult assistance (i.e. stored on low shelves, in the classroom, unlocked, etc.); available throughout the full program day
- **Blocks** – Includes standardized wooden unit blocks and large hollow or homemade blocks that do not interlock
- **Cubby** – Space to store individual children’s items (e.g. hanging hook, bin, cabinet, locker, milk crate, etc.)
- **“In good repair”** – Clean and well-maintained; no broken pieces, cracks, tears, or missing parts; all parts functional; no signs of obvious wear (i.e. faded markings, stains, frayed edges, ripped seams, etc.)
- **Learning environment** – In a center setting, typically refers to the classroom; the area that children regularly utilize, are allowed to actively explore for the majority of the day, and have access to at all times
- **Multiple** – More than one (specific quantities may be specified in indicators)
- **Pre-determined** – Includes coloring sheets, pre-fabricated crafts, activity/workbook sheets, handprint/footprint crafts
- **Sizeable structure** – The size of a seated child or the length of a child’s body lying down
- **Sufficient** – Enough; adequate amount for all involved children to use simultaneously
- **“Unique to”** – For indicators that require different types of materials “unique to” a specific use (e.g. math), those items cannot be counted for multiple purposes
 - For example, if a set of measuring cups is counted as a math material, it cannot also be counted as a science material.
- **Variety** – Materials facilitate multiple uses, purposes, and/or types of play