

# How to Zone your Preschool Classroom

Zones are a great way to organize centers in your early childhood classroom!

Here are 6 basic rules of thumb for setting up zones successfully and making them work for you and your students ★★ ★



- ★ *Divide your classroom into four zones*, each containing several activity centers.
- ★ *Zones should be marked off clearly* with colors, animals, shapes, or something similar to help you with classroom management and transitions.
- ★ Within each zone, it's best to *array the centers throughout the area using zone-separating pieces of furniture*, instead of lining them up against the wall. In classrooms with wall-hugging activity centers, most nonengagement happens in the wide-open shared space in the middle of the zone.
- ★ When you're scattering centers throughout zones, *be aware of the activity levels associated with each center*. For example, the book center (generally a quiet area) should not be located near the sand and water table (generally a more noisy, active area). Different kinds of engagement happen in different types of centers. If they're too close together, you'll probably notice your students are disturbing each other's activities.
- ★ *To help children prepare for a transition from one activity to another, give them a heads-up*: "In 2 minutes, everybody will go to the giraffe zone for circle time!"
- ★ *Avoid placing tables in the middle of the room*. Putting tables rather than toys in the middle area forces you to arrange centers around the edges of the room. And having tables and chairs in the center gives the room an academic feel, which implies that kids are doing table activities for a large portion of the day.

Adapted from *Engagement of Every Child in the Preschool Classroom* by R.A. McWilliam



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