
Classroom Set-Up

Considerations

Returning to school following the COVID-19 quarantine requires flexibility and extra attention to the environment. When considering how to set up the environment for a successful return to school, consider the various persons involved (e.g., student, teacher, paraprofessional), and the array of tasks and occupations (e.g., learning, playing) performed in the environments. Below are some tips that teachers and other school staff may consider to enhance access, efficiency, and safety.

Evaluate and Organize Materials

- Purge items that are old, out of date, broken, and/or damaged to allow for a clutter-free environment.
- Remove materials that are porous and cannot be easily disinfected.
- Place cubbies or storage containers in alternate locations outside of the classroom to allow more space for social distancing.
- Store additional supplies in containers under desks or chairs to decrease sharing and maintain social distancing.

Modify or Change the Environment

- Rotate use of cafeteria, gymnasium, or auditorium space for individual classrooms to allow social distancing and change of environment.
 - Work with the custodial team to ensure sanitation between use.
 - Consider prioritizing larger spaces for children with special needs who may have challenges social distancing.
- Create visual reminders on vertical (e.g., boards, walls) and horizontal (e.g., floors, table tops) surfaces to promote safe social distancing.
- Utilize Plexiglas dividers to shield table tops, computer stations, or room sections.
- Arrange tables and desks to allow peers to see each other, staff, and audiovisual equipment while maintaining a safe distance to decrease feelings of isolation.
- Ensure ventilation systems are fully operational and increase air circulation as much as possible.
- Open doors and windows as much as possible.

Promote Effective Cleaning and Hygiene Practices

- Scan the environment for frequently used spaces and ensure access to hand sanitizer in those areas.
- Set up sanitization stations at the entry of the classroom and towards the back of the room; assess the height of these stations to ensure ease of access
- Use hand-free pumps, or instruct all individuals to use their elbows, to dispense soap or hand sanitizer.
- Create signage that includes friendly images to remind students of proper hygiene routines.
- Provide, or request parents to supply, individual hygiene kits in a plastic container or bag
- Develop a plan for cleaning and disinfecting (see [CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)).
- Establish a safe and locked location, which is easily accessible, to store cleaning supplies and chemicals.
- Incorporate a cleaning routine between use of shared items.

Enhancing Comfort

- Choose comforting materials for the classroom that are non-porous and can be easily wiped with an approved disinfectant.
- Place items in the classroom space to provide a sense of comfort and feelings of home, such as floor lamps, plants, and floor coverings that can be disinfected.
- Change the lighting periodically by opening window coverings or using floor lamps to reduce overstimulation via florescent lights.
- Promote seating opportunities such as beanbag chairs, physio balls, and standing tables to allow for movement.
 - Ensure seating can be disinfected frequently.

Resources

- [AOTA Tip Sheet—Successful Participation at School: Strategies for All Students](#)
- [AOTA School-Based and Early Intervention Occupational Therapy Decision Guide for COVID-19](#)
- [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)
- [CBS KPIX 5 San Francisco Bay video showing newly converted Marin County classrooms adapted for COVID-19](#)