

Make the Most of Your Room

While you are teaching, your classroom is also teaching. You may have been given a beautiful, large, well-lit classroom in which to teach. Or you may have been given a dingy, small basement classroom in which to teach. Or maybe your classroom is somewhere in-between. Try a few of the following ideas to make the most of your classroom.

The less-than-big-enough classroom

- Install wall-mounted cabinets to save floor space.
- Use folding chairs and tables that can be moved out of the way for activities.
- Use a rolling cart for supplies.
- Try rearranging the chairs to create more space.
- Hang a large mirror or mirror tiles to create the sense of a larger room.

The less-than-beautiful classroom

- Keep the room clean and orderly.
- Try a different kind of lightbulb. (Remember that fluorescent lights can be distressing for children with visual or audio sensitivities.)
- Paint the room a bright color.
- Hang a colorful mural on one wall.
- Display on the walls and hang from the ceiling seasonal items and/or items that correlate with the curriculum.
- Display banners, crafts, and posters that kids create.
- Change the classroom decorations when beginning a new unit and/or a new season.

The less-than-comfortable classroom

- Use the appropriate size of chairs and tables if at all possible.
- Too hot? Bring a fan. Too cold? Bring a heater.
- Provide a place for kids to keep papers and belongings; make sure it is in the same place each week. Label storage bins with kids' names so kids use the same one each week. Provide coat hooks; label with names if desired. Keep an offering container, tissues, trash cans, and other supply bins in the same locations week to week.

The less-than-safe classroom

- Have a first-aid kit readily available for mishaps. It's helpful to have adhesive bandages in the classroom. Do you need to report any accidents? Know what to do in case of serious injury. Never give any medicines to children without written permission of parents.
- Remove loose rugs that kids could slip on.
- Don't use extension cords. If you must, make sure that cords are securely taped down. Unplug the cords when leaving the room.
- Make sure that chairs and tables don't have splinters or rough corners.
- Know any special needs of children, including allergies or sensitivities children have to smells, sounds, and food.
- Know what to do in case of fire, tornado, hurricane, or other emergencies.