

# Assessing Your Centers

## Common Mistakes in Classroom Design

Stand in center of your room and decide:

	Yes	No
1. Is there a clear entry to each center?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is each center clean, organized, and inviting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are there enough materials to support the number of children who will be in the center (3 play units per child)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are materials/shelves labeled? Will children know where materials go?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are there clear physical boundaries for each center?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are the materials prepared before children arrive at the center or activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Are there an adequate number and variety of centers of interest to children and to support the number of children (at least 4 centers; 1 center for every 4 children)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*\*\*If you have checked "No" in any row, decide how you can make changes.*

## Common Mistakes in Classroom Design

Sometimes teachers will:

- Put everything up high so children can't reach/destroy it.
  - But what good is the manipulative if children can't see or touch it?
- Provide a poster, book, or visual for every little thing that could possibly happen.
  - Cluttered classrooms often feel very chaotic and can be overstimulating
- Provide lots of toys, books, and paper pencil activities to fill the learning day
  - But neglect to incorporate natural materials (crystals, fossils, feathers), objects, and visual elements that children can touch, smell, and taste to engage different types of learners
- Think, "if I do it for them then they will learn the right way to do it."
  - But children need you to guide them but they can grow confident and gain independence through creative exploration
- Think that children need their space; if they are too close together they will fight
  - Yet, having spaces where children must work together (e.g., double easel, bench seating for working at the computer, double swing) will promote peer relationships and help build friendship skills