

Supplement to the Administrators' Walkthrough Checklist for Prekindergarten Classrooms

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18. Teaching staff facilitates the development of social-emotional skills and encourages interactions among all children.
19. There is evidence that family involvement is encouraged in the classroom and at home.

Overview of Administrators' Walkthrough Checklist and Supplement for Prekindergarten Classrooms

TATS has developed an Administrators' Toolkit that contains resources to assist school administrators in evaluating and assessing the quality of their prekindergarten (Pre-K) programs. The toolkit contains resources and references on the importance of Pre-K education and its components. Three of the tools are the Administrators' Walkthrough Checklist (Level 1), the Supplement (Level 2), and Examples of Quality Classroom Settings (Level 3). The checklist includes the core items that administrators would expect to see as they spend a short period in a preschool inclusive classroom. The supplement provides more detailed examples by further defining the 19 items on the checklist and provides administrators with more information about what they might/should see. The examples of quality classroom settings may be used in conjunction with the first two levels. These photographic examples illustrate all the components in the Administrators' Checklist and Supplement and can be used as a teaching tool.

All items on the checklist and in the supplement are observable. They fall within three comprehensive categories: physical environment, curriculum, and teaching (instruction).

As a point of reference, curriculum in a Pre-K environment contains the following:

The curriculum used in an effective preschool program includes, *but is not limited to*, specific activities that are planned for children throughout their day. These activities include:

- Learning centers
- Large group times
- Small group activities
- Outside play.

Curriculum also includes other activities and routines, such as snack/mealtimes, toileting/diapering, rest time, and riding on the school bus. The curriculum is broader than the scope and sequence of a published curriculum, which a program may use. Curriculum also includes unplanned experiences, or teachable moments, that occur each day. Curriculum reflects all of the experiences that a child has within the program.

Environment

1. Furniture arrangement allows for staff supervision.

- a. Toys and materials are displayed on low shelves.
- b. Arrangement of furniture does not block adult view of children.

Notes:

2. Furnishings are appropriate for young children.

- a. All furniture is in good condition.
- b. Most furniture is child-sized, and there is an adequate number of chairs/tables to allow all children to participate.
- c. Adaptive furnishings allow children with disabilities to fully participate in the program's activities (e.g., adapted standers/seating).

Notes:

3. Health and safety procedures are implemented throughout the classroom.

- a. Hand washing is accessible to children. Child-sized sinks (or stepstools), paper towels, liquid soap, and water are available to children.
- b. Hand washing is promoted before meals and snacks and after toileting.
- c. Safeguards are used with all medications for children.
- d. Allergies are posted, with parental consent.
- e. There is a designated changing area with changing procedures posted.

| Environment <i>continued</i> |
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| f. Medications and cleaning supplies are out of reach of children. |
| g. Emergency contact information and emergency care plans are readily available and easily accessible. |
| h. Daily classroom attendance (using a checklist or attendance book) with emergency contact information is available to account for all children in case of emergency evacuation. |
| i. Teaching staff frequently scans room to observe children. |
| j. Teaching staff moves around during children's free play, interacting and providing ongoing supervision. |
| k. Health and safety rules are communicated to children. |
| l. Electrical cords are not accessible to children, and electrical outlets are covered. |
| m. Heavy objects or furniture cannot be pulled down by children. |
| Notes: |
| 4. The classroom displays examples of children's work. |
| a. Children's work is displayed at their eye level throughout the room. |
| b. Children's names are clearly displayed on their work. |
| Notes: |
| 5. The room is free of unnecessary clutter and extraneous stimulation. |
| a. Books, blocks, and toys are neatly stored and displayed, and there is adequate storage for all materials. |

| Environment <i>continued</i> |
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| b. Supplies — such as paint, paper, and crayons — are stored on shelves or in containers, and work areas are cleaned after each use. |
| c. An adequate, but not overwhelming, number of toys are available to children, and toys are rotated on a regular basis to maintain interest. |
| Notes: |
| 6. The classroom spaces are well organized, and learning materials are accessible to all children. |
| a. There is ample space to allow children and adults to move freely. |
| b. There is sufficient space for equipment. |
| c. Individual space is provided for each child's belongings. |
| d. Clear pathways are available for children to move without disturbing other children's work/play (furniture is placed so children walk around, not through, activities of others). There are no obvious runways. |
| e. Materials and equipment are available in sufficient quantity to occupy every child involved in activities (duplicate materials are available as needed). |
| f. Materials are labeled and on open shelves within children's reach to encourage them to select and use materials independently. If containers have lids, they should be easy for a child to remove. |
| g. Quiet centers and active centers do not interfere with one another (e.g., the quiet Book Area is separated from louder, more active areas, such as the Dramatic Play/Housekeeping or Block Area). |
| h. Space is set aside for privacy (for one or two children to play or rest) and is available to children. |
| i. Materials to support language and literacy are located throughout the various centers. |
| j. Technology is used to extend learning and enrich the curriculum (e.g., computers, tape recorders, microscopes). |

| Environment <i>continued</i> |
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| k. There are clearly defined interest areas. These may include: |
| Art Area → Paper, crayons, markers, pens, thick pencils, paints, playdough, clay, scissors, tape dispensers, staplers |
| Block Area → Wooden, plastic, or cardboard blocks (different shapes); accessories such as trucks, animals, toy people |
| Book /Listening Area → Wide selection of books, in good condition, adequate in number, and culturally and ability diverse. Additional language materials such as flannel board stories, puppets, recorded stories and songs |
| Dramatic Play/Housekeeping Area → Child-sized play refrigerator, stove, sink, etc.; dishes, pots and pans; dress-up clothes and props such as telephones (to enact play activities relating to a police officer, construction worker, firefighter, and others) |
| Fine Motor Area → Various puzzles (with/without knobs, large floor puzzles); small building toys (Legos®, Lincoln Logs™); manipulatives (different size beads for stringing, sewing or lacing cards, pegboards); rulers, measuring cups |
| Sand/Water Table → Different sized plastic containers, spoons, funnels, scoops, shovels, toy people, animals, trucks |
| Nature and Science Area → Collections of natural objects (rocks, insects, seeds, etc.); living things to care for (plants, pets); nature/science books and toys |
| Math Area → Materials for learning to count (small toys, play money); to measure (scale, rulers, tape measures, measuring cups/spoons); to compare (containers); to recognize shapes (puzzles, geo-boards); to write numbers (phones, clocks, calendars, cash register) |
| Notes: |
| 7. Language and literacy experiences are prominent throughout the classroom. |
| a. A rich assortment of age-appropriate children’s books as well as other meaningful print materials are available to children (big books, small books, magazines, popular restaurant menus/table mats, toy catalogues). |
| b. The classroom is equipped with a listening area that children can access on their own, which includes books and audiotapes. |

| Environment <i>continued</i> |
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| c. Teachers take dictations from children frequently and post them in visible locations. |
| d. Children use books independently, or teaching staff read to children in small groups throughout the day in addition to group story time. |
| e. There is a daily sign-in procedure where children are encouraged to experiment with printing their name. |
| f. All centers are equipped with various writing materials in order to encourage children to create print during play (e.g., blank paper with markers in several areas, shopping lists and pencils in the Dramatic Play/Housekeeping Area, clipboard with tickets for the “police officer” to write in the Block Area). |
| g. Visual supports are available throughout the classroom to enhance communication. This may include communication boards, a picture exchange system, picture schedules to learn sequence of the day. |
| h. Materials that encourage children to communicate are evident throughout the class (puppets and flannel board pieces in book area, toys for dramatic play). |
| Notes: |
| 8. Staff interactions with children are positive and promote the development of critical thinking skills. |
| a. Teaching staff is available to participate in activities; read books; encourage exploration, experimentation, and discovery; and to intervene, as appropriate, to encourage or redirect children’s behaviors. |
| b. Many times throughout the day, teaching staff spends time talking with children, through individual conversations or in groups, about what they are doing, giving directions, questioning, and elaborating on responses in a positive way. Staff use visual supports to assist in communicating with less verbal children. |
| c. Teaching staff assists children in developing skills needed to use equipment and materials, indoors and out, by introducing information, visual supports, and modeling skills. |
| d. Teaching staff promotes reasoning skills, language, and literacy through reading, interactive discussion, questioning, using open-ended questions, art, and other activities. |

| Environment <i>continued</i> |
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| e. Teaching staff responds to child-initiated questions, observations, and suggestions that occur during activities and uses them to extend learning both for individuals and groups of children. |
| f. Teaching staff shows recognition and appreciation of children's thoughts, interpretations, ideas, discovery, activities, and accomplishments. |
| g. Teaching staff interacts and guides children to help them develop physical and social skills during outdoor time. |
| h. Teaching staff shows affection by smiling, touching, holding, and speaking to children at their eye level throughout the day, but especially at arrival and departure time. |
| Notes: |
| 9. Diversity is reflected through the classroom environment and materials. |
| a. Displays (of photos/posters/art) and books reflect people of different professions, cultures, ages, genders, and abilities. |
| b. Books are available in languages spoken at home by children; books depict both men and women engaged in gender-neutral work activities (e.g., female firefighter, male sewing). |
| c. Music, decorations, and activities in the classroom reflect the variety of languages and cultures of the families in the program. |
| d. Pictures, puzzles, toys, and props (such as dress-up clothing) reflect people of different races, cultures, and ethnicities |
| Notes: |

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| Environment <i>continued</i> |
| 10. Outdoor space is safe, accessible for all children, and includes equipment and materials for a variety of activities. |
| A. Safety |
| a. Outdoor space is protected by fences or natural barriers from access to street or other dangers, such as pits, wells, parking lots, etc. |
| b. Walkways or stairs are free of obstruction and are in good condition. |
| c. Size and level of play equipment are appropriate for ages of children (not too high or large). |
| d. Play equipment is well maintained and anchored. |
| e. Play equipment does not pose danger of entrapment or injury from pinch points or projections. |
| f. There is sufficient cushioning under climbing equipment and other fall zones. |
| B. Space/Materials/Accessibility |
| a. Outdoor play area is designed to accommodate a variety of motor experiences, such as running, climbing, balancing, jumping, and swinging. |
| b. Space is organized so that different types of activities can take place at the same time and do not interfere with one another (e.g., play with wheeled toys is separated from climbing and ball play). |
| c. There is enough gross motor equipment so that children have access without a long wait. |
| d. Outdoor activities are accessible for all children and include experiences such as dramatic play, block building, fine-motor play, art activities, and exploring the natural environment. |
| e. Assistive technology to increase participation of children with disabilities is available outdoors, if needed, and may include: adaptive positioning equipment; switches and switch toys; toys adapted with hand splints/straps for grasping; adapted swing/tricycle. |
| Notes: |

Curriculum

11. The level of sound in the room is elevated, indicating that children and teaching staff are involved in communication and learning activities.

a. Children are actively engaged with materials, objects, and activities with peers and adults.

b. The sounds from the room reflect conversations, singing, music, and other activities.

Notes:

12. There is visible evidence of a developmentally appropriate planned curriculum, lessons plans, a posted schedule, and curriculum guidebook linked to state standards.

a. The lesson plans are open, current, and reflect activities consistent with the curriculum guidebook, if one is used.

b. Children are provided with well planned, meaningful, and fun experiences to develop basic concepts in math, nature/science, art, music, technology, understanding self/community/world, and physical education.

c. Children are provided early language and literacy experiences (including “read aloud” and phonological and alphabet awareness activities) in a meaningful, fun, and natural part of their day.

d. There is evidence of intentional teaching of social skills built into the daily plan with an attempt to individualize to children’s needs.

Notes:

| Curriculum continued |
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| 13. Throughout the day, there are opportunities for various activity groups and learning opportunities from individual to small or larger groups. |
| a. A picture schedule is posted at the child's eye level to reflect various activities and play groupings, including playing individually and in small or larger groups. |
| b. The schedule reflects a variety of activities within recurrent routines that provide structure for the children's day. |
| c. There are daily opportunities for children to freely choose activities indoors and outdoors. This self-directed play period allows time for planning, engaging in activity and/or materials, and cleaning up, thereby practicing various social skills. |
| d. During child-initiated activity periods, teaching staff provides help and encouragement to children when needed, guiding children when necessary toward an activity, or actively participating to help them gain additional learning. |
| e. Teaching staff is aware of the daily schedule and follows it but does not allow the schedule to limit spontaneous learning opportunities that arise with individual children or within small or larger group activities. Teaching staff allows for the needs of individual children. |
| Notes: |
| 14. There is evidence that accommodations are being made for diverse learners. |
| a. Literacy and writing materials are apparent at a variety of learning levels. |
| b. Toys and learning games are provided for children to promote learning at varying learning abilities and levels. |
| c. Materials can be adjusted for children's different ways of learning and may include accommodations to assist children in seeing, handling, or understanding the materials or activities. |
| d. Assistive technology (AT) is evident throughout entire classroom to increase the level of participation of children with disabilities in all activities. (Assistive technology is any tool or device that a student with a disability uses to do a task more easily, faster, or in a better way.) |

| Curriculum continued |
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| AT for Communication: single or multi-message voice output device (a voice output device is a piece of equipment with a programmed message); communication (picture) boards |
| AT for Art: adaptive tool grip, stabilized materials with clamps/tape, alternative tools for painting (paint rollers/dot markers); adapted scissors; computer software |
| AT for Books and Literacy: stabilization of books with Velcro, bookstand; adapted page turners (hot glue dots, page fluffers); tactile books |
| AT for Play and Participation: adaptive positioning equipment; switches and switch toys; toys adapted with hand splints/straps for grasping; computer with software for play/games with switch or adapted keyboard |
| Notes: |
| 15. Children are actively engaged in activities. |
| a. There are opportunities for children to work together. |
| b. Teaching staff provides supervision to facilitate children's activities and play, making sure all are involved. |
| c. Free play or free choice occurs regularly throughout the day and is reflected in the daily schedule. |
| Notes: |

Teaching

16. The adults in the classroom work collaboratively as a team (including teacher, paraprofessionals, therapists, and family), modeling cooperation and problem solving.

- a. Teaching staff uses problem solving in their interactions with children and one another and models the problem solving process in naturally occurring situations.
- b. Teachers provide direction or instruction to other team members about how to work within the classroom.
- c. Teaching staff speaks positively to and about other team members.
- d. A schedule of staff responsibilities is posted.

Notes:

17. Teaching staff uses positive classroom management strategies and discipline procedures.

- a. Teaching staff establishes, posts, and teaches rules and routines.
- b. Teaching staff organizes the environment to avoid behavior problems.
- c. Teaching staff is aware of what is happening at all times, monitoring classroom activities and the use of materials, intervening when necessary.
- d. Teaching staff ensures that an ample number of educational activities and materials are available to prevent unnecessary conflict among the children.
- e. Teaching staff plans transitions between activities and keeps those times as minimal as possible.
- f. Transitions and routines (including toileting and hand washing) are well planned, efficient, and limit the amount of time children spend waiting.
- g. Visual cues, including gestures, written labels, pictures, or objects are used to assist children in understanding routines and managing time as needed.

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| Teaching <i>continued</i> |
| h. Teaching staff encourages and assists children in identifying problems and developing solutions, using incidental or spontaneous situations as teaching opportunities. |
| Notes: |
| 18. Teaching staff facilitates the development of social-emotional skills and encourages interactions among all children. |
| a. The environment is designed to promote social interactions (i.e., opportunities to play in small groups; opportunities for cooperative activities; opportunities for dramatic play materials and toys, such as blocks; opportunities for children with disabilities to be grouped with typically developing peers). |
| b. The curriculum includes teaching specific skills, such as labeling and using feeling words, recognizing peers' emotions, friendship skills, turn taking, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills. |
| c. Teaching staff models, demonstrates, teaches, and gives direct feedback to children throughout the day regarding social-emotional skills. |
| Notes: |
| 19. There is evidence that family involvement is encouraged in the classroom and at home. |
| a. Teaching staff explains activities and classroom rules to family members and guides them in participating in the classroom, outdoors, and in other class activities and events, according to school rules. |
| b. There is evidence that teaching staff encourages family members to share cultural heritage and practices, stories, activities, and languages. |
| c. Teaching staff shares positive behavior strategies for consistency in addressing challenging behaviors both at home and at school. |
| Notes |