

A Safe and Attractive Room

Some behavior problems may be avoided by the way you prepare the room. Clutter in the room causes accidents, takes up space which could be used by the children, and provides too many choices. Preschoolers need open space in which to move and explore. And while preschoolers need choices, too many options cause confusion and frustration. The older the preschooler, the more options he can handle. Only those materials which relate directly to the lesson should be in the child's sight.

Remove any broken or hazardous toys or furnishings. Replace or repair the items before placing them in the room again. Cover all electrical outlets.

Open shelves provide easy access to remove and to return toys, blocks, and nature items. Open trays or boxes provide good storage space for art materials.

New materials offer new experiences to the child; yet, some familiar materials need to be available to the child. The familiar gives him a sense of security.

Careful preparation of the room can save time and lead to a more relaxed and enjoyable teaching session.

Discipline

Discipline helps the child learn to control himself. The strongest method of teaching discipline is example.

Some general guidelines for discipline are:

- Remembering the child's age and needs, set acceptable limits. Enforce these limits consistently.
- Notice and praise acceptable behavior.
- Accept a child's feelings, but stop unacceptable behavior. Correct behavior with love and respect.
- Don't force a child to say "I'm sorry" or to give up toys as a means of sharing. Neither action has meaning unless it is done voluntarily.

- Avoid threatening and embarrassing a child.
- Guide with lots of encouragement and little criticism.
- Provide stimulating and friendly surroundings.
- Let the child learn from the natural consequences of his actions. (If Mark hurts another child, remove him from the rest of the children for a short time.)
- Look for good in each child; help him feel good about himself.

Above all else, provide the child with an adult who loves him unconditionally. After all, that is how God loves us.

How a Child Learns

As you plan the Bible-learning experiences for the preschoolers in your room, consider these ways children learn:

- Pretending is important to Matt. He develops skills and learns more about how he feels about himself and others through play.
- Satisfaction. "I did it. I put the puzzle together," laughed Tia. The teacher smiled. "You are learning, Tia. Thank you, God, for Tia."
- Relationships. Jennifer smiles when she sees her teacher. Her teacher loves her. Jennifer loves her teacher. Jennifer is learning through relationships.
- Senses. Eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and hands. Daniel wants to experience everything firsthand. "Look at the bird's nest, Daniel," said his teacher. "Feel the grass. Taste the apple." Daniel is learning through his senses.
- Imitation. The teacher put her hand on the window pane. "Br-r-r, cold," she said. Amie put her hand on the window. "Cold," says Amie. Amie has learned through imitation.
- Curiosity. Jesse watches a bug crawl on the ground. It goes under a rock. Jesse picks up the rock. "Bugs! Lots of bugs!" Jesse squeals with delight. Jesse has learned through curiosity.
- Repetition. "Read it again. Read it again," said Jason. Jason learns through repetition.
- Doing. "I can do it!" Eric says as he builds with the blocks.
- Play. A child's way of working and learning.



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