

Classroom Redesign Cheat Sheet

A practical guide for redesigning one existing classroom area with intention, consistency and care.

"We are the architects of the atmosphere in our classroom."

When adults present learning materials with care, children are more likely to use the space with care and return it for the next child.

Use the Stop, Pause and Reflect approach. Start with one shelf, one corner or one table, not the whole room.

1 Stop, choose one small area

Take a before photograph. Notice what feels inviting, hidden, crowded, visually noisy, inaccessible or unclear for children.

2 Pause, define the intention

Name the purpose of the space. What behaviour should it invite, construction, reading, mark-making, sensory play, retreat or collaboration?

3 Reflect, audit the resources

Keep only what belongs. Remove duplicates, broken items and unrelated materials. Check if children can see, reach, choose, use and return each resource.

4 Redesign, present with care

Use matching baskets, natural textures, open shelving, fewer colours and clear visual labels. Present materials as an invitation, not storage.

5 Return, observe and adjust

Add a photo label such as "Return me to my spot". Watch how children use the area. Adjust after one week of real use.

Remember: A beautiful learning space is not decoration. It is pedagogy made visible. **Start small. Keep it practical. Let the environment teach.**

One-Area Redesign Planner

Use this page as a quick planning, documenting and reflection tool. Photograph the process and observe how children respond before you redesign another area.

Plan the redesign

Selected area: shelf, reading corner, table, construction zone

Current concern: clutter, colour noise, hidden materials, unclear purpose

Intention: the learning behaviour this area should invite

Keep: materials, furniture or routines that already work

Remove: duplicates, broken items, unrelated objects

Redesign actions

- Group like with like, then reduce the amount on display.
- Choose natural or matching containers. Avoid stacking resources on top of one another.
- Use open shelving and clear visual labels so children know where materials belong.
- Create a small "Return me to my spot" photograph or label.
- Invite child voice, then observe what happens in real use.

Document the process

Before

What does the space communicate now?

During

What changed, moved, reduced or softened?

After

How does the space invite children to engage?

Design details to remember

- Match containers where possible. Consistency makes the area calmer.
- Keep materials visible, accessible and low enough for children.
- Leave breathing space. Empty space can be an invitation too.

Inclusive design reminders

- Consider every learner, not only the majority.
- Provide a quiet retreat away from busy communal areas.
- Offer headphones, a focus board or a privacy screen when needed.

After one week, ask yourself

- Are children using the area more independently?
- Do they know how to return materials to their place?
- What is the next small adjustment, not the next big overhaul?

Remember to have fun - the goal is an environment children want to care for, use and return to.