

A Biblical Worldview: The Foundation for a Christian Philosophy of Education

Introduction

A biblical worldview provides a strong foundation for a philosophy of education that is grounded in the belief that every individual is created unique in God's image with a purpose to be fulfilled. A biblical worldview begins with the holy scripture. Dr. Kenneth O. Gangel (1987) defines a Christian worldview as "a belief system based on Scripture which affects both a believer's perception of the world and his or her interaction with it." p. 23).

Biblical Worldview

The Bible can be trusted, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. There is no other book like the Bible. The Bible can be trusted to give us guidance in every situation. If we have a biblical worldview it is important to know that we believe the Bible to be a special book that can be trusted to be true from the beginning to the end.

There is one divine God who made everything and rules over everything. This holy, merciful, and creative God exists in three persons known as the trinity. The three persons of the trinity are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

God the Father is the creator of all. He is perfect in all areas. He is all knowing, processes all wisdom, and he is everywhere. He loves all men and women, cares about our affairs, hears and answers prayer. He saves from sin and spiritual death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

God the Son is the second person in the trinity. Jesus is God's only son, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus walked the earth and faced all the temptations that any man would, but he never sinned. During his life on earth he taught like no teacher ever had, he performed many great miracles. He was Crucified for the sins of all humankind. He rose from the dead and now is in heaven making intercession for us.

When Jesus ascended to heaven he gave a command to his disciples to tell everyone about Him and to make disciples of all. He also gave a promise that he would come again to take all who believe to live eternally with him. We are waiting for his return which is called "the blessed hope" "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;" (King James Bible, 1769/2017, Titus 2:13).

God the Holy Spirit came to Convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment and to

change and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. He lives inside every believer and is our helper, teaching us and guiding us in every walk of life.

Man is created in God's Image. Genesis 1:26 reads "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..." (King James Bible, 1769/2017). This is a significant truth! Every individual has inherent value and worth as a unique creation of God.

The dominant view for most of the history of the church has been that the image of God is substantive— it is some definite characteristic or quality within the makeup of the human characteristics such as intelligence, rationality, and spirituality, for example. (Smith, 2015, p. 15).

Humankind was created differently from animals. We are created with a larger capacity to learn and rationalize. We are created with a desire to know the truth. Like God, we can be creative, loving, and kind. Humans were also created with a free will. This free will was demonstrated with the first man, Adam. Adam sinned and because of his sin we are all born sinners. This sinful nature is now part of every human's character. Although we have a sinful nature we also have many characteristics of our divine God.

Sin has brought physical and spiritual death; (King James Bible, 1769/2017). Romans 6:23a, Revelation 20:14, Luke 13:5. These passages clearly talk about death being a consequence of sin and in the end there is punishment in hell for the sinner who does not repent.

Life is found in Jesus. We are sinners because of Adam, but because of Jesus we can be made righteous. Romans 5:19 reads. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (King James Bible, 1769/2017). The Bible refers to Jesus as the "second Adam" Jesus never sinned, but he died so that we can have everlasting life. This everlasting life can be ours by believing in Jesus, his death, burial and bodily resurrection. The words of Jesus "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (King James Bible, 1769/2017, John 10:10). A Christian can and should have a fulfilled life that comes from knowing and living like Jesus.

The Bible teaches that our life has purpose. The purpose in life is to give God glory. John MacArthur (1997) wrote.

God's glory must be our primary goal in everything, you will never glorify God in your life until you aim at it. The command in I Corinthians 10:31 is "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." We are commanded to glorify Him even when we eat and drink! How much more should we seek to glorify Him in the important things in life? (p. 39).

The Bible teaches us that we should let our light shine so that God will be glorified. (King James Bible, 1769/2017, Matthew 5:16). We are created to bring glory to God through our good works. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,” (King James Bible, 1769/2017, Ephesians 2:10), He has created us to do good. There are many scriptures in the Bible that tell us what good works we should be demonstrating. We should treat others the way we would like to be treated. (King James Bible, 1769/2017, Matthew 7:12). This is commonly known as “the Golden Rule” With a biblical worldview we know that we should show kindness, be honest, dependable, consistent, work hard, as well as many other character traits that demonstrate “good works”.

Christian Philosophy of Education

Philosophy is a way of reflecting on everything in the universe. It is deeply thinking about what is real, false, good, evil, right, wrong, good and ugly. It is a way of making meaning of our world and life. (Gutek, 2013). A Christian philosophy of education steams from a Biblical worldview. Dr. H Gene Garrick put it this way.

The entire process of education is seen as a means used by the Holy Spirit to bring the student into fellowship with God, to develop a Christian mind in him and to train him in godly living, so that he can fulfill God’s total purpose for his life personally and vocationally. (Glover, 1987 p. 136)

Our overall goal should be to develop our students to be the best that they can be in every area, spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically etc. so that they can glorify God with their Life.

Implications for Educational Practice

The student is a special creation of God, created in his image and has great potential for good. Just like God, the student has intelligence and creativity. The student has many strengths and talents. We can help the students discover their special talents and the plan God has for them. Just like God desires a relationship with us, students desire to connect to their teachers in a meaningful way. A wise teacher will foster positive relationships with the students in their class so that a student will have a desire to work hard and please their teacher. We know each student has a sin nature therefore must be taught that their sinful actions are not aligned God's will.

As teachers, we should glorify God by demonstrating Christian values in our interactions with our students and others. By modeling the "golden rule" treating others the way we would want to be treated so our light will shine so that our students will see Jesus in us. Knowing that our students are made in God's image will guide us to showing respect for the

student as a person and their individual strengths and weaknesses. As a special education teacher I know that God wants me to treat my students as I would want to be treated. He would want me to focus on their abilities and talents instead of on their disabilities. Their little lives are created for a special purpose. God is glorified in their lives. As christian teachers, we should set a high standard, knowing that God desires the best from us and from our students. The Christian teacher should be humble and open to change. The Christian teacher should be a student as well, humble enough to learn from his or her students as well as other teachers in his or her life. A Christian teacher will reflect on all aspects of teaching and critique them according to God's word, incorporating all the best practices available so that our students will be equipped for the world in which we live.

Our curriculum should include the basics so that students will be prepared for life. Students should be taught to read, write, and mathematics. Whenever possible, the curriculum should incorporate Christian values. Students should learn science to better understand the magnificent nature of our creator. The students should learn that we are more than just animals, but a unique creation of God. Our curriculum should be organized in a way that the children are able to learn the skills expected by our society so that they can shine as lights in our world. As changes occur in our society a Christian teacher should reflect and change the curriculum when appropriate.

The methodology of a Christian teacher should be varied as to consider all the learning styles of the students. We know that God created each student unique in every way. Learners are diverse in their abilities and style of learning, For this reason teachers should use creativity in planning their lessons. Studies show children learn best from doing. Teachers should take this knowledge and incorporate hands-on learning when possible. A Christian teacher should be open to any methods that will help their student learn the skills being taught.

Conclusion

God has created every man, woman, boy, and girl with a special uniqueness and purpose to bring glory to God in everything we do. This worldview is the foundation for our philosophy of education and for a fulfilled life.

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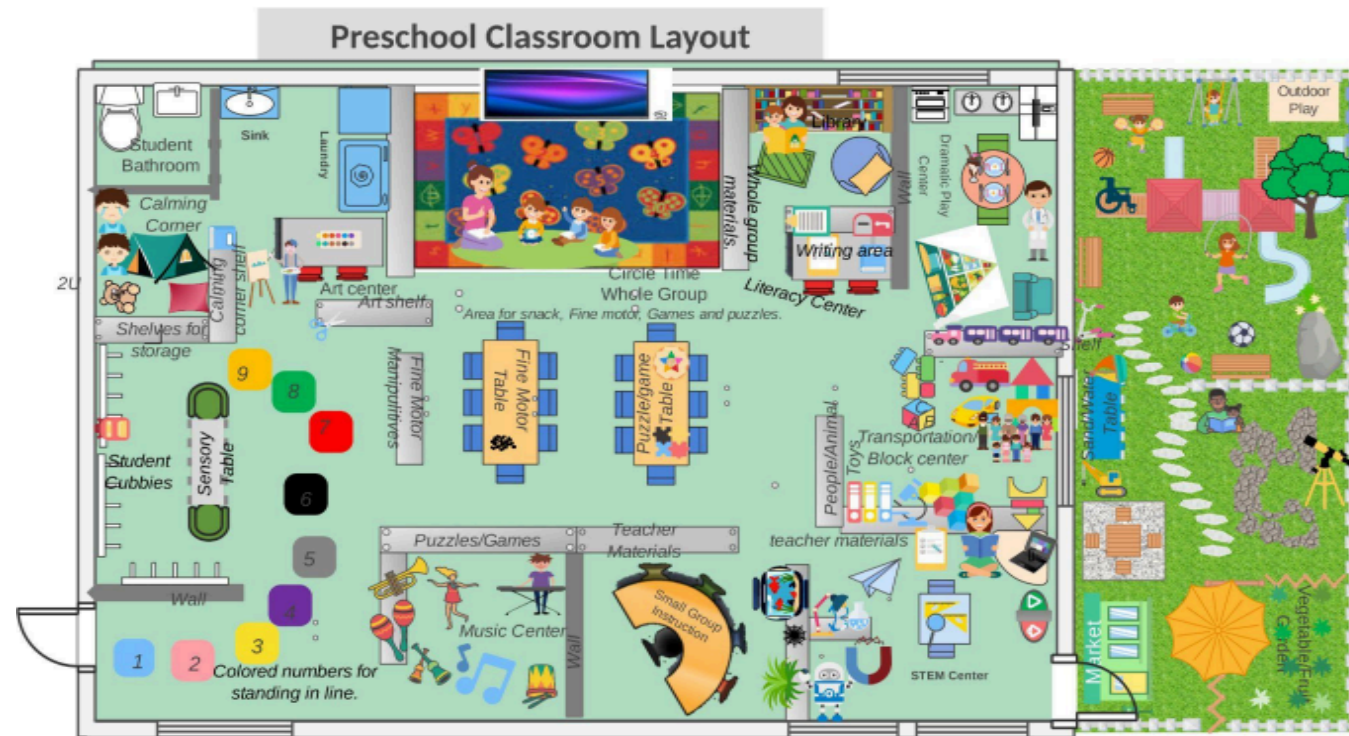
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Preschool Classroom Design and Philosophy of Early Childhood Education



Area's included: Dramatic Play Center, STEM Center, Sensory Table, Art Center, Transportation/Block Center, Calming Corner, Fine Motor Table, Puzzle/Game Table, Literacy Center, Circle Time/Whole Group, Small Group Instruction, Student Bathroom, Storage, Student Cubbies, Outside Play Area, Garden area, Lunch/Snack Area, Laundry Area.

Play is Essential for Early Childhood learning and Development

Play allows children to safely experiment, take risks, negotiate, and build self-control. Research confirms play's vital role in early development, enabling children to practice skills, connect ideas, and understand concepts more deeply (Bredekamp & Joseph, 2024).

“A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.” Ecclesiastes 3:4 (KJV)



Throughout the classroom layout children learn through play.

- **Dramatic Play:** Social-emotional & language growth •
- Puzzles & Games:** Cognitive skills
- **Fine Motor:** Dexterity development
- **Music:** Sound & rhythm exploration
- **STEM:** Scientific inquiry
- **Blocks/Transportation:** Concept integration & narratives •
- Literacy:** Language & pre-reading skills
- **Sensory:** Multi-sensory exploration
- **Art:** Creative exploration

Cultural Competence is Vital for Effective Early Childhood Education

Culturally competent educators cultivate inclusive and equitable learning environments where every child feels valued, respected, and understood, recognizing that culture profoundly influences all facets of a child's development and learning (Gay, 2018).

Cultural competence is evident throughout every area of the classroom

- **Walls:** Displaying diverse representations of people.
- **Walkways/Bathroom:** Ensuring accessibility for all.
- **Student Cubbies:** Encouraging personalization with culturally significant items.
- **Lunch/Snack Area:** Respecting diverse food preferences and discussing cultural significance.
- **Block/Transportation Center:** Offering multicultural materials for exploration.
- **Dramatic Play Center:** Providing diverse cultural props for imaginative play.
- **STEM Center:** Highlighting diverse contributions and tools.
- **Art Center:** Supplying multicultural materials and displaying diverse art.
- **Music Center:** Featuring global instruments and music.
- **Literacy Center:** Including diverse narratives and multilingual resources.
- **Circle Time/Whole Group:** Sharing diverse cultural expressions and traditions.



“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” Colossians 3:10-11 (KJV)

Meeting Basic Needs is Essential for Effective Learning and Development

Meeting children's basic physiological and safety needs is a foundational prerequisite for effective engagement in learning (Maslow, 1943).

"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" James 2:15-16 (KJV)



Throughout the classroom layout children's needs are met.

- **Physiological needs:** like hunger, thirst, hygiene, and comfort are met through the lunch/snack area, bathroom, and overall classroom environment.
- **Safety and security:** are addressed through clear organization, routines, supervision, a calming corner, and safe outdoor play.
- **Love and belonging:** are fostered through social interactions in group activities and dramatic play, supportive teacher relationships, and personal spaces like cubbies.
- **Esteem needs:** are met by providing opportunities for accomplishment in learning centers, displaying work, and through positive teacher feedback.
- **Self-actualization:** is supported by offering open-ended activities that encourage exploration, creativity, and the pursuit of individual interests across different learning areas.

Outdoor Engagement Enriches Early Childhood Learning and Development

Engaging with the natural world offers unique sensory experiences, promotes physical activity, enhances cognitive development, and fosters social-emotional growth, all crucial for holistic learning (Louv, 2008; Wells & Lekies, 2006).

This is shown throughout the outdoor play area.

Swings, Slides, Balls, Bikes: Gross motor development, spatial awareness, social-emotional growth, risk assessment.

Large Rocks: Problem-solving, gross motor skills, imaginative play, sensory exploration.

Grassy Area: Sensory exploration, gross motor skills, imaginative play, nature connection.

Trees: Observation skills, sensory exploration, imaginative play, gross motor skills.

Flowers: Sensory exploration, observation skills, nature appreciation, scientific inquiry.

Vegetable Garden: Scientific inquiry, responsibility, sensory exploration, nutrition awareness.

Sand and Water Table: Sensory exploration, scientific inquiry, fine and gross motor skills, creative play.



"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying..." Jesus often chose natural settings like mountainsides to deliver important teachings, such as the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5:1-2 (KJV)

Collaborative Partnerships are Important for Effective Early Childhood Education

Effective early childhood education necessitates a collaborative partnership, defined as a cooperative effort, between teachers, parents, families, and other professionals like therapists and specialists, all working together to understand each child's unique needs (Turnbull et al., 2015).

"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (KJV)



Through this collaboration, teachers can:

- Enrich learning centers with culturally relevant materials, activities, and perspectives.
- Personalize learning to address each child's individual needs and interests.
- Build connections between home and school, fostering a sense of continuity and belonging.
- Gain deeper insights into children's backgrounds, preferences, and developmental patterns.
- Strengthen the support network for each child's well-being and success.

Parent-teacher partnerships enhance every area of the classroom by bringing valuable insights, resources, and cultural understanding from home.

Ultimately, these partnerships create a more inclusive, responsive, and effective learning environment for all children (Bredenkamp & Joseph, 2024).

Area in Classroom	Reason for Location	Area Importance	Other Details not Observed
Dramatic Play Center	To manage noise levels, the dramatic play center is intentionally situated away from quieter zones. Recognizing its similar activity level, it's placed adjacent to the block area.	Fosters social-emotional development (empathy, social navigation), language and communication, social skills (cooperation, conflict resolution), problem-solving, and cognitive development (symbolic thinking) (Berk & Winsler, 1995).	Features diverse dolls and food with cookbooks/menus for pretend "restaurant" play, fostering language development.
STEM Center	The STEM center's location near the outdoor door facilitates the easy collection of natural materials for student exploration. Abundant windows in this area provide ample sunlight for any live plants.	Cultivates scientific exploration, basic science concepts, vocabulary, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and perseverance, aiding in understanding the world (First Discoverers, 2018).	Offers regularly changing books on science, a computer for research/documentation, and broken electronics for mechanical exploration; includes activities like observing life cycles, robotics, and math integration.
Sensory Table	Located away from other activity areas and conveniently close to cleanup facilities, the "Sensory Center" offers ample workspace and simplifies tidying for children.	Encourages scientific processes through play, creation, investigation, and exploration, strengthening brain connections for sensory processing (Educational Playcare, n.d.).	Regularly changes items to maintain engagement and provide new sensory experiences.
Art Center	The art area is positioned near the sinks, providing easy access to water for watercolor paints and simplifying cleanup procedures.	ISupports development and creativity through self-expression, material experimentation, fine motor skills, problem-solving, decision-making, and imaginative thinking (NAEYC, n.d.).	Displays student art. Children are asked open-ended questions; art materials are changed periodically to encourage exploration.

Music Center	To minimize noise disruption in quieter parts of the room, the music center is located away from those areas. Additionally, a dividing wall further isolates the music center from the small group area, enhancing sound containment.	Provides an outlet for emotional expression through listening, singing, or playing instruments (Omega Pediatrics, 2024).	Provides multicultural instruments and a CD player for diverse musical experiences.
Transportation/Block Center	Given the typically active and potentially noisy nature of the Transportation/Block center. This area is strategically placed together and away from quieter zones to help manage sound levels effectively.	Fosters problem-solving (building structures), understanding of shapes and patterns, and social skills through collaborative play (Masterson & Bohart, 2019).	Provides varied materials such as little people and animals.
Calming Corner	To cultivate a truly peaceful environment, the calming corner is situated away from all other activity centers. Inside, a tent offers an even more secluded and quiet retreat for students needing a moment to de-escalate and find calm.	Helps children identify and manage their emotions using tools like a mood meter and emotion wheel (NAEYC, 2017).	Offers sensory items (pillows, fidgets, weighted blankets) and calming music for emotional regulation.
Fine Motor Table	The fine motor table is conveniently located right next to the fine motor manipulative shelf, making it easy to access materials for detailed activities. As snack time occurs at a different time, using this table for both fine motor work and snacks is practical.	Develops fine motor skills through activities like stringing beads and playing with manipulatives (Masterson & Bohart, 2019).	Occupational therapy works with children in this space when needed.

Puzzle/Game Table	The puzzle/game table is also placed right by the fine puzzle/game shelf, providing a convenient surface and easy access to materials for these focused activities. Since snack time is separate, the table can serve both purposes.	Fosters cognitive skills, problem-solving, math concepts, and turn-taking (Masterson & Bohart, 2019)	Games from home are encouraged to be brought. family connections are encouraged.
Literacy Center	Nestled in a quiet corner and further buffered by a dividing wall from more active areas, the literacy center, encompassing both writing and listening spaces, fosters a peaceful environment conducive to focused reading and writing.	Strengthens early literacy skills: concepts of print, comprehension, vocabulary, phonological awareness, and letter recognition (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).	Features class-authored books, name labels for emergent writing, magnetic letters for word building, and a listening area for phonemic awareness; materials are regularly updated.
Circle Time/Whole Group Area	Positioned strategically in front of the whiteboard and projector screen, the whole group area is designed to support seamless teaching. A comfortable carpeted space invites children to gather, while nearby shelves keep circle time supplies readily accessible. An easel is also conveniently placed to encourage active student participation during lessons.	Develops number sense, math concepts, phonemic awareness, attention skills, and question/answer participation (Masterson & Bohart, 2019).	Provides accommodations for attention (e.g., seating squares, beanbags, sensory objects, visual timer, picture schedule).
Small Group Instruction Area	Located in a low-distraction zone, the small group instruction area features a table oriented so students face away from their peers, while the teacher maintains a clear line of sight for supervision. This arrangement minimizes distractions, promoting focused learning.	Supports focused individual work and assessment (Masterson & Bohart, 2019).	Contains name references and various teaching/assessment materials.

Student Bathroom	The bathroom's location, easily visible from the whole group area, allows the teacher to monitor the door and supervise students during instruction.	Fosters self-help skills and fine motor skills related to dressing (Masterson & Bohart, 2019).	There are extra supplies for the children such as diapers, extra clothing this is in case a child runs out of personal belongings.
Storage	Storage is thoughtfully distributed throughout the space. "Toy storage" is conveniently located near the play area, "teacher storage" is situated near teaching zones, ensuring easy access, and other supplies are stored on shelves near their point of use.	Promote classroom organization (Masterson & Bohart, 2019).	Clearly labeled with pictures and words to aid in student clean-up.
Student Cubbies	The "student cubbies" are conveniently located right by the door, allowing students to quickly store their belongings upon arrival. Each cubby provides space for extra clothing and includes hooks for book bags. Situated in an open area, students have ample room for managing winter gear.	Help students practice self-help and organizational skills and develop a sense of belonging (Masterson & Bohart, 2019).	Display visual routines for arrival and departure, promoting self-help and organization.
Outside Play Area	The "outside play area" is a spacious, open environment designed for running, playing, and tricycle riding. It also features a climbing structure with slides and swings. This large area offers ample room for outdoor activities and is conveniently located close to the building for easy student access.	Promotes physical health (activity, motor skills), mental well-being (stress reduction, mood enhancement), cognitive development (exploration, problem-solving), social skills (collaboration), and environmental awareness (Wells & Lekies, 2006).	Periodically changes toys, offers specific activities (bubbles, kites), ensures accessibility (playground, swing).

Garden Area	The outdoor garden area is located directly outside the STEM area, enabling students to easily bring natural materials indoors for exploration.	Enhances fine and gross motor skills and encourages healthy eating habits (Gowrie NSW, n.d.).	There is family engagement activity in the spring for planting and in the fall for harvesting.
Lunch/Snack Area	The snack tables are located near the sink area for easy cleanup and are also positioned within view of the circle time area, allowing for supervision of students who may need more time to finish eating during whole group instruction.	Develops self-help skills, social-emotional skills (communication, manners), cognitive skills (basic math, science, problem-solving), language and literacy skills (vocabulary, listening, conversation), and introduces cultural awareness (Virtual Lab School, n.d.; Bredekamp & Joseph, 2024).	Students practice hand washing before eating.
Laundry Area	The laundry area is conveniently situated near the student restroom, the art area, and the snack area, allowing students to easily deposit soiled clothing for washing.	Fosters self-help skills (Virtual Lab School, n.d.).	Used for washing clothing (coats, bookbags, soiled items) as needed.

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MY CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

By Jeannie Shaffer

CLASS DESCRIPTION

With 20 students, we have a wonderful mix of abilities, backgrounds, and experiences. Some students have specific learning disabilities, while others may demonstrate characteristics of ADHD. We also have a high-functioning student on the autism spectrum, and students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Enriching this mix even further is a classmate from Puerto Rico who is still acquiring English.

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EXCEPTIONALITIES IN OUR CLASS

Specific Learning Disabilities (LD): Students with LDs may struggle with specific skills like reading, writing, or math. This can impact their overall academic progress and self-esteem. For example, a student with dyslexia might have difficulty decoding sounds and blending them to form words, hindering their reading fluency and comprehension (Heller et al., 2009).

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): Students with ADHD might have challenges with focus, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. This can make it difficult for them to stay seated during lessons, complete assignments on time, or follow instructions. For instance, a student with ADHD might find it hard to resist blurt-outs during class discussions or struggle to stay focused on a worksheet with minimal movement breaks (Heller et al., 2009).

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Students with ASD may have difficulties with social interaction, communication, and repetitive behaviors. This can affect their ability to connect with peers, understand social cues, and participate in group activities. For instance, a high-functioning student on the spectrum might excel academically but struggle to understand the social dynamics of group play or have trouble transitioning between activities, leading to anxiety (Heller et al., 2009).

DIVERSITY IN OUR CLASS

English Language Learners (ELLs): These students may struggle to understand spoken and written instructions, express themselves clearly, and participate actively in discussions. This can create a barrier to their academic progress and social interactions (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Socioeconomic Background: Students from different socioeconomic backgrounds may have varying levels of access to resources and experiences that can impact learning (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Values and Beliefs: Students' cultures may have different values and beliefs that may impact their behavior and learning. They come to school with their own moral beliefs learned from home (Korb, 2012).

BALANCED PHILOSOPHY ON WHOLE GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Effective behavior management isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. It requires fostering a positive group environment and addressing individual needs. This is done through

- Proactive Management
- Establishing and teaching of rules including consequences.
- Motivate with various positive reinforcements

PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT

“The best behavior management techniques are those that anticipate and prevent behavior problems from occurring” (Magg 2018, pg. 172).



ELEMENTS OF PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT

Proactive management is a preventative approach which focuses on antecedents rather than consequences of behavior. The idea is that, if we can alter the antecedent conditions under which behavior occurs we can prevent it from occurring again (Magg, 2018). There are three areas I focus on to be proactive: preparation, structure, and relationship building. When I address these areas, I create a foundation for a positive learning environment where students are more likely to behave appropriately.

PREPARATION

- **Preparation:** I sequence the curriculum carefully, making sure it builds on itself logically. Of course, I also adapt it whenever needed to meet the diverse learning needs of my students. Every lesson starts with clear objectives that I communicate upfront. Having everything prepared beforehand, from materials to activities, keeps things running smoothly. But the most important part? Engaging my students! I design lessons that turn them from passive listeners into active learners (Maag, 2018).

STRUCTURE

- **Structure:** I find that a well-organized classroom with clear designated spaces makes a huge difference! When students know exactly where they're supposed to be and what they're supposed to be doing, there's less confusion and disruption. That's why I create clear spaces for different learning activities, label learning centers with pictures and words for easy identification, and establish routines for transitions and using materials. It all helps things run smoothly (Overland & Sackville-Ford, 2020).

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- **Relationship building:** Building positive relationships with each student is the foundation of my classroom management strategy. Fostering trust and respect leads to a cooperative learning environment, which aligns perfectly with the principle that strong student-teacher relationships are key to good behavior management (Yassine et al., 2020).

“Every child deserves a champion; an adult, who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best they can possibly be” (Overland & Sackville-Ford, 2020, p. 132).



Relationship Building is Key

While traditional behavior management methods have limited impact, research shows building positive relationships with students is a powerful tool for reducing challenging behaviors (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

ESTABLISHING AND TEACHING RULES

From the start, I establish clear rules in my classroom. This empowers students by letting them know exactly what's expected for successful participation.

- I keep the rules few and easy to understand, focusing on core concepts like active listening and respectful behavior (curran, 2021).
- Students also have a voice! Involving them in creating the rules fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility (curran, 2021).
- Establish and communicate consequences both positive and negative for following the rules (curran, 2021).
- Finally, fairness is key. The same rules apply to everyone, creating a predictable and consistent learning environment where all students can thrive (curran, 2021).

RULES MUST BE TAUGHT TO THE STUDENTS



Teachers often assume students automatically understand classroom rules. This is a mistake! Moral expectations can differ greatly between home and school. Recognizing and addressing these differences is crucial for motivating students to learn (Korb, 2012).

MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO LEARN AND BEHAVE

In my classroom, I strive to create a world where motivation fuels both learning and positive behavior.

- **Behavior specific praise:** I highlight specific behaviors I want to see more of. For example, "Great job listening attentively while Sarah shared her story!" lets students know exactly what earned them recognition (curran, 2021).
- **Variety of rewards:** I keep things interesting by offering a variety of rewards. This might include tangible rewards like stickers or small prizes, social rewards like praise and high fives, or activity rewards like extra recess or choosing a learning game.
- **Catering to Individual Needs:** Every child is unique, and what motivates one student might not work for another. I take the time to get to know my students' interests and tailor my reinforcements accordingly.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** I believe in catching students being good rather than waiting for them to misbehave. Positive reinforcement builds confidence and encourages them to repeat the desired behaviors.
- **Encouraging Words:** I use encouraging language and positive affirmations to let students know I believe in their ability to succeed. Their confidence is key!
- **Celebrating Effort, Not Just Results:** The journey is just as important as the destination. I recognize and praise the effort students put in, not just the end result. This fosters perseverance and a growth mindset, where they believe they can learn and improve (Magg, 2018).

By incorporating these strategies, I hope to create a classroom environment where students are intrinsically motivated to learn and follow the rules.

PRINCIPLES

To create a safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive environment that fosters positive social interactions and individual well being.

- **Knowing My Students:** I'll take time to learn about my students' backgrounds, interests, and strengths. This builds trust and allows me to tailor teaching methods to their individual needs (American Federation of Teachers 2007).
- **Model respect for others:** I will show respect to each student and their families (American Federation of Teachers 2007).
- **Praising Respectful Behavior:** I'll actively praise students who demonstrate respectful behavior towards others. This reinforces positive choices (Curran, 2021).
- **Golden Rule Foundation:** Building on the timeless wisdom of Matthew 7:12 "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them", I'll explicitly teach the Biblical principle of the Golden Rule. This provides a strong foundation for respectful interactions (KJV, 2017).

BELIEFS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION, BEHAVIOR AND ACADEMICS

Motivated students are more engaged, focused, and willing to put in the effort to learn. However, even the most motivated student can struggle in a chaotic learning environment. The teacher plays a crucial role in creating a well-managed classroom where positive behavior thrives. This allows students to channel their motivation and reach their full potential.



TEACHING FAIRNESS

"Everyone Needs Something Different":

I will use relatable examples to explain fairness. You can say, "Just like some plants need more water than others, sometimes people need different things to be successful. Maybe someone needs help tying their shoes, while another person can do it themselves. That's okay! Fairness means everyone gets what they need to learn and play."

LAYOUT OF MY CLASSROOM

Children need to be shown how to interact well with others, they need to learn which social behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate. I believe the best way to learn is by doing! That's why I believe in creating opportunities for them to practice kindness, sharing, and communication (Edwards, 2018).

I will accomplish this by setting my classroom up in a way that encourages interaction. I will have a circle time carpet where we come together as a team. Here, we will connect, share ideas, and establish clear expectations for respectful and positive interactions. This is where I will directly teach social skills, helping them understand things like kindness, active listening, and collaboration.

I will arrange the classroom with diverse learning centers! students will practice their social skills as they work together on projects, share materials, and learn from each other. There's a wealth of research supporting the importance of play and social interaction for early childhood development (Edwards, 2018).

RULES/EXPECTATIONS

I expect my students to be respectful, responsible, and safe. We do this with a few simple rules.

1. We use listening ears when someone is talking.
2. We use kind words with our friends and teachers.
3. We keep our hands and feet to ourselves.
4. We use walking feet inside the building.
5. We take up after ourselves.
6. We raise our hand if we need help or want to ask a question.

TO ESTABLISH THESE RULES.

To create a classroom where everyone feels happy and can learn their best, we need some clear guidelines. Here's how we'll learn them together:

1. Unveiling the Rules:

First, I'll introduce the rules in a simple way, using words you can easily understand. We'll read them together and talk about them (Curran, 2021).

2. Why These Rules Matter:

We'll discuss why each rule is important. For example, using "walking feet" keeps everyone safe from getting bumped. **3. Seeing is Believing:**

I'll show what following a rule looks like by acting it out. For instance, I'll demonstrate how to walk quietly inside and how that's different from skipping or dragging feet.

4. Practice Makes Perfect:

We'll get to practice these rules together through fun role-playing activities. This helps us feel comfortable following them in real situations.

5. Reminders Throughout the Year:

Just like brushing your teeth, sometimes we need reminders about the rules. We'll review them regularly, especially after long breaks.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

Morning procedure:

- **Belongings:** Students enter quietly and put their belongings in their cubby.
- **Take home folder:** will put their take home folder in the bin on my desk.
- **Morning work:** may take a small motor bin and work with it independently
- **Clean up:** I play a clean up song so the students know to clean up and prepare for the morning meeting.

Instructional Time:

- **Raising Hands:** Students are taught to raise their hand to ask questions or get the teacher's attention, minimizing disruptions.
- **Active Listening:** Students practice listening attentively when the teacher is speaking or another student is sharing.
- **Participating:** Students are encouraged to participate in discussions and activities by raising their hands, volunteering answers, and contributing ideas.

Materials and Supplies:

- **Sharpening Pencils:** I will create a system for students to exchange dull pencils for sharpened ones. This helps minimize distractions. The dull pencils will be sharpened by the class helper.
- **Turning in Papers:** A designated tray or bin is established for students to turn in completed assignments.
- **Borrowing Materials:** Students learn the proper way to borrow materials from classmates or a designated area, such as asking permission and returning them promptly.
- **Name and number:** Each student is assigned a number which they will put beside their name on all of their papers.
- **Graded work:** All completed and graded work will go in the student mailboxes. Each mailbox is numbered with the student's number for quick sorting.

Dismissal:

- **Clean Up:** Students put away their materials and clean up their workspace before dismissal.
- **Pack Up:** Students gather their work from their mail boxes and put in their take home folder. The students put the take home folder and anything else that needs to go home in their book bag.
- **Goodbye Routine:** Students gather at the carpet for our goodbye song.
- **Lining Up:** Bus students line up first and car riders line up behind them.

Additional Procedures:

- **Restroom Use:** Students should wait until a class restroom break, but in case of an emergency the student may go to the restroom with a hall pass and be accompanied by a responsible student. When taking a class restroom break girls will line up together and boys line up together. Only 3 students in the restroom at a time.
- **Hallway Behavior:** While walking in the hallways, students will use quiet voices and stay in a line.
- **Fire Drills and Other Emergencies:** Students practice emergency drills regularly, learning how to evacuate the classroom safely and follow instructions. The students should be assured that we are all safe and should remain quiet.
- **Lining Up:** Students will line up quietly standing in a single file by assigned numbers. This ensures orderly transitions between activities and dismissal.
- **Class helper:** To teach responsibility and to help things run smoothly there will be a class helper. I will rotate the helper daily. The daily helper will be the one to sharpen pencils, turn on and off the lights, etc. The helper will be the line leader for that day.

Great teachers create clear routines and expectations (procedures) so students know how to behave. This reduces disruptions and allows teachers to focus on what matters most: teaching! These procedures also promote a positive learning environment where students act responsibly, treat each other kindly, and are excited to learn (Evertson et al., 2003).

Well-defined classroom procedures guide students and minimize disruptions. This frees up valuable time for focused learning (Evertson et al., 2003).

Procedures do this by:

- **Reducing disruptions:** Clear expectations, minimized downtime, and predictable routines keep students focused on the task at hand.
- **Increasing efficiency:** Smooth transitions, organization, and fostering responsibility allow for more learning time with less wasted time.
- **Creating a supportive environment:** Clear communication channels and respectful interactions create a positive atmosphere where everyone can learn.

Effective procedures are the foundation for a successful classroom, allowing students to thrive in a focused and engaging learning environment.

RECORDING AND TRACKING BEHAVIOR

To understand my students' behavior patterns better, I'll be using a technique called frequency recording. Here's how it works:

- **The Recording Sheet:** I'll create a simple chart with the target behaviors listed on one side. There will be space next to each behavior for tally marks.
- **Tallying Up:** Throughout the day, I'll mark a tally each time a specific target behavior occurs.
- **Tracking Over Time:** I'll keep these recording sheets so I can later transfer the data to a graph. This visual representation allows me to compare the behavior frequency over time (Magg, 2018).

MANAGING BEHAVIORS

When using praise and redirection in the classroom:

Instead of generic praise like "good job," I will use behavior specific praise. I'll highlight specific actions. For example, "I love how Sarah raised her hand and waited patiently for her turn!" This reinforces the desired behavior and encourages others to emulate it (Curran, 2021).

Sometimes, students need gentle reminders. Rather than focusing on what they're doing wrong, I'll redirect them towards a positive alternative. I can do this by using the strategy Contingent Instructions. This strategy combines redirection with clear expectations. For example, instead of simply saying "stop talking," I might use a contingent instruction like, "Please be quiet and listen to the lesson"

When appropriate, I'll offer students choices. If they are engaged in an undesirable behavior I will offer other acceptable choices for them to engage.

TIERED CONSEQUENCES

Here's a tiered set of consequences for my kindergarten classroom. It is important to focus on positive reinforcement and redirection. Also important to remember that every child is different and the consequences should reflect that.

- Proximity Control: moving closer to the student to offer nonverbal support and redirect their attention.
- Verbal Prompt: Using a kind and calm voice to remind the student of the expected behavior.
- Private Conversation: Take the student aside for a short, private conversation to discuss the behavior and the expected outcome.
- Loss of Privilege: This can be temporary, like a short time away from a preferred activity to reflect on their choice.
- Parent/Guardian Communication: The teacher informs the parent/guardian about the ongoing behavior and discusses strategies to work together for improvement.

COMMUNICATION ABOUT STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Open communication between school and home is essential for student success. Here's how I will work together with families.

The school year begins with an open house where I'll outline my behavior expectations and preferred communication methods. Each family will receive a packet that includes my behavior policy, preferred contact methods, and how I'll communicate with them throughout the year.

I will communicate with parents daily through a daily communication folder with a calendar. Stickers will mark days with positive behavior. For minor infractions, a brief, encouraging note will be included on the calendar day, prompting a conversation at home. Major infractions or repeat offenses will result in an email detailing the incident and offering collaborative solutions.

LAWS AND POLICIES THAT IMPACT DECISIONS ABOUT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law guaranteeing all eligible children with disabilities access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). This means schools must identify and assess students with disabilities, develop Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) tailored to their needs, and provide necessary special education and related services (Bateman & Yell, 2019).

IDEA emphasizes providing this education in the least restrictive environment (LRE) possible. This means educating students with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers whenever possible, with support services to ensure success (Bateman & Yell, 2019).

Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) is a crucial meeting held if a school considers suspending or expelling a student with a disability for more than 10 days. The IEP team reviews whether the behavior resulted from the disability (a "manifestation"). If so, expulsion is off the table, and alternative solutions or IEP adjustments are explored (Bateman & Yell, 2019).

In essence, IDEA, FAPE, LRE, and MDR work together to ensure fair treatment, appropriate education, and collaborative solutions for students with disabilities.

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