



# Respects School Environment and Materials

## What does “Respects School Environment and Materials” mean?

This skill relates to how a child treats spaces and things at school. The school environment includes all school spaces like classrooms, the lunchroom, the gym, the bathrooms, and the playground. School materials include all school supplies such as tables, chairs, books, puzzles, and art supplies. Everyone at school shares these spaces and things. Respecting the school environment and materials means taking care of spaces and things so that others can also use them. For example, a child shows respect for the school environment and materials by using classroom books gently so they don't tear out any pages and by throwing garbage away in the trashcan. This skill shows that children are learning to treat shared spaces and things with care and are considerate of others.

## TIPS for TEACHERS

### How can I explain this skill to children?

You can explain this skill to children by talking about safety. We must treat shared things and spaces in the classroom with care so that they are safe for everyone to use. For example, if we leave books or toys on the floor, someone could trip and get hurt. Or if we damage or break things, like a chair, it would be unsafe for someone else to use. To make sure everyone has safe spaces to learn and safe things to learn with, we must take good care of all the shared spaces and things at school.

### What are some examples of best practices from educational experts and fellow teachers?

#### TIP1

**R-E-S-P-E-C-T.** Ask children to think about what respecting places and things means to them. To do this, it can be helpful to have them imagine how they would want their things or spaces to be treated. For example, ask the class to imagine how they would want a friend to take care of their favorite toy. For example, they might want their friend to use their favorite toy gently instead of throwing it.

Once children start thinking about how they would want their things to be treated, you can model how to treat things in the classroom. You can help children understand what respect looks like by talking about and modeling examples of people respecting or not respecting places and things at school. Write a few situations that show people respecting or not respecting places and things at school on note cards. Some ideas for scenarios are listed below. Place all the note cards in a hat or bag and ask a child to pick a card. Read the card aloud, act out the scenario, and then ask the class “Is this person taking good care of this place/thing?” Wait for the children to respond.

- If the answer is yes, discuss how the person in the scenario is taking good care of the place/thing.
- If the answer is no, discuss how the person is disrespecting the place/thing. Then discuss what the person could do to fix the situation and be respectful.

### EXAMPLE SCENARIOS

Emma is playing with blocks and leaves them on the floor when she is done.

Ramon finishes his lunch and then wipes up the crumbs on the table with a napkin.

Alma is doing an art project and does not clean up the glue she got on the table.

Theo reads a book and doesn't draw in any of the pages.

## TIP2

**The disrespected book.** You can show children what happens when we do not respect the school environment and materials by reading from a book from past classes that's been damaged. The book may have ripped or missing pages or someone may have drawn on it. Before you begin reading to the class, let them know that the book has not been well taken care of. As you read the book stop to point out missing or torn pages or pages that have been written on. Explain to the class that these things make it hard to read the story, learn from the book, and have fun looking at the pictures. Ask the class how they feel about what was done to the book. Recognize children's feelings and ask them what they could do to make sure none of the class's books look like this one. Acknowledge children's ideas about how to show care and respect. Do this activity at the beginning of the year and throughout the year to remind children of how to treat shared spaces and things so we all can enjoy them.

## TIP3

**Share responsibility for shared things.** You can help children learn how to respect things by creating a shared object in the class that requires everyone's care and attention. For example, get a classroom plant that everyone is responsible for. Explain to the children that the plant belongs to everyone in the class and that we all must take care of it so that it can grow. Let them know that each week one child will be responsible for the plant. Each child will need to water the plant and make sure it is getting enough sunlight. If everyone in the classroom does their job and treats the plant with respect and care, then the whole class will have a beautiful plant to look at all year.

## TIP4

**Use simple organization structures.** One way that children can show respect for things is by putting them back where they belong after they use them. To help children learn to do this, set up an organizational structure for your classroom at the beginning of the year and review it with the class. Create designated areas for different types of materials, such as putting all of the books in one area of the classroom. It is also helpful to label designated areas with both words and pictures and create a color-coding scheme for different types of materials. For example, all labels for art supplies can be in one color and all labels for toys, like puzzles, can be in

another color. It may also be helpful to take pictures of children using classroom supplies and post the pictures next to your labels. Below are some examples of labels for the classroom:

**PENCILS**



**CRAYONS**



**PUZZLES**



**BLOCKS**



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### How can I encourage children when I see them trying to learn this skill?

**Acknowledge children for their efforts!** For example, say, “Samaya, I think it’s great that you are putting all the classroom art supplies back where they belong.” or “I love how hard you are working to clean up the mess you made, Marcus!”

To learn more about the tips and where they came from, please visit our references page: [ckphilly.org/citations](http://ckphilly.org/citations)