

## SETTING UP YOUR CLASSROOM

*NOTE : These suggestions are made taking into consideration the parameters outlined by the Ministry of Education and Public Health officials*

### Before the beginning of the school year

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make contact with your new group of students:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Telephone contact with each student</li> <li>b. "Welcome video" sent to each parent's email addresses</li> <li>c. Gentle reminder that each student needs to come to school with a mask (if so required for their age group).</li> </ol> </li> </ol> |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Invite challenging or highly anxious students to come and visit you at school, during a Ped Day. These 1:1 visits helps you to get to know each other, reduce anxiety and for the student to know where their classroom will be. This goes a long way to easing into the new school year!</li> </ol>   |  |

### Preparing the classroom

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Determining the physical layout of the class and desk/table configuration</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Set-up your "Teacher Area" in a corner of the room - delineate the space with tape on the ground</li> <li>b. Set-up a hand sanitization station at the entrance of your classroom - have a sign that will prime students to use it each time they enter and leave your room.</li> <li>c. Create a desk/table configuration that will have students sitting side-by-side instead of face-to-face.</li> <li>d. Set-up a table that will serve as a "handing out/picking up" of materials. Include baskets that are labelled for each purpose.</li> <li>e. Ensure that students have a space to keep their personal belongings (ex. school bag, lunch box, etc.) in their physical proximity to help reduce traffic in hallways.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. <b>Color-code and/or label materials that can be accessed by students (<i>think Executive Functioning</i>). Keep things clear, simple and organized.</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A group Community Basket is suggested even though students are expected to have their own materials.</li> <li>b. Fidget items, sound reducing headphones and disco-sit cushions (for those who need them)</li> <li>c. Alternate work station options - clipboard, standing station option, etc.- where possible</li> <li>d. Alternate seating options - stools (Ergoergo, Hokki), sit &amp; surf, foam tiles</li> <li>e. Quiet time activities</li> <li>f. Building &amp; Creating community activity</li> </ol> </li> </ol>   |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <b>Cover up any area that will not be accessible to students.</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. We recommend using light, solid colors (plastic tablecloths or fabric) as these will provide less visual stimulation than bright colors and busy patterns.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>   |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <b>Remove as much clutter as possible</b> - think of it as increasing the size of your room from the inside. Everyone will benefit from more floor and air space!</li> </ol>  |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. <b>Have a "Welcome" sign on your classroom door</b> with each child's name on it. We recommend having your picture, in the middle, as a great way to welcome them into this new year with you!</li> </ol>   |  |

## Setting the Stage for the Year

### 1. Determine the routines that will be essential - these will NEED TO BE TAUGHT

- a. Travelling in the building
- b. Accessing the bathroom
- c. How and when mask wearing is required
- d. Hand hygiene within the building - explicitly name when and where this will take place - model, practice, practice and practice
- e. Morning Message & Morning Entry Routine
  - i. Have a message on the board that is awaiting their arrival
  - ii. Have a task (or a few) for them to do upon arrival
- f. Handing out and collecting materials - identify that the table in the middle of the room will be the "Zone" where this will take place.
- g. Use of alternate seating and alternate work stations - What is available, how does one access them?
- h. Eating in the classroom
  - i. Snack and Lunchtime -Establish the routine
  - ii. Establish the routine for garbage handling.
- i. End of day - getting ready to go home routine
  - i. School bag preparation
  - ii. Walkers/Picked-up by parents
  - iii. Bus
  - iv. Daycare

### 2. Other adults coming into the classroom - Introductions are very important

- a. Identify who will be coming, for which reason and what time of day
  - i. Specialists
  - ii. Support Staff
  - iii. Resource Teacher
  - iv. Professionals from the school board
  - v. Administration

### Note:

Every new school year means a new group of students. This is NOT new; however, the pandemic has rendered the beginning of THIS school year PARTICULARLY NEW AND DIFFERENT.

**STRUCTURE, ROUTINES and CONSISTENCY** will be the greatest tools for school teams.

It will be key that ALL adults are practicing the same procedures for the same behaviors - this will not only help the children do what you are asking, it will help them feel safe in your care. The more they feel safe, the easier the groups will be to manage. Teamwork is of the essence, all aligned together giving a consistent message.