

Classroom Clean Sweep™

How to Examine the Level of Independence of Classroom Materials

1. Start by considering materials (toys, objects, etc.) that are age and/or developmentally appropriate. This means considering what children of a certain age or ability tend to play with. For example, six month olds often play with busy boards, blocks, and push cars, basically things they can reach/grasp and then perform simple motor actions upon (e.g., banging, patting, pushing, pulling, shaking). Whereas preschoolers tend to play with materials that are more complex, allow for representational and symbolic play, and allow for interactions with others.
2. Next, select or compile a list of classroom materials and compare each to the six characteristics of self-correcting (see table below).

Six Characteristics of Self-Correcting Toys, Objects, and Materials:

- Allow for independent practice by the child
- Control of error is built-into the materials
- Ensure the child can perceive (through their senses) when an error occurs
- Provide multiple opportunities with immediate feedback from the materials
- Include easy to understand directions and logical actions
- Include a sequential or multi-step component

3. Consider if you need to modify and/or add something to increase independence and the self-correcting ability of the materials. Keep in mind, not all materials will meet all characteristics of self-correcting. In some instances, only meeting a few characteristics is sufficient to obtain the desired result of independence.

How to Examine the Function and Relevance of Classroom Materials

1. Create three piles in the classroom: (1) *Keep*, (2) *Share*, and (3) *Toss*
2. Sort toys and materials into the piles using the following criteria:
 - **Keep:** Clear to children what to do with the materials and clear to teaching staff what is being taught/supported. Easily accessible by children with a wide range of abilities. Relevant to the children currently served, and aligned with their interests.
 - **Share:** Meaningful, however, not a match with the skills, abilities, preferences, and/or interests of the children currently being served.
 - **Toss:** Unclear what to do with the materials, what could be learned, and/or have too many missing or broken pieces to be useful. Children with diverse abilities struggle to access and use the materials, and they represent the interest of publishing companies more than children.

For additional helpful resources to promote quality teaching go to <http://prekteachandplay.com>
For training, coaching, and other transformative PD products go to <http://kristiepf.com>