What is the manager role?

The manager role is a flexible approach to assisting with the maintenance of a busy preschool learning environment. It is not a role specific to a staff person such as a teacher or assistant teacher or director. It is an assigned task within the daily workings of the classroom that can be filled by a number of staff persons, most frequently the teacher or assistant teacher.

It is suggested that there be a staff person identified as the manager throughout the day, but that the responsibility be shared by changing roles frequently.

What is the Rationale for using a manager role approach?

- A quality early childhood program requires high ratios of adults to children. This is frequently a challenge for many programs. The use of a classroom manager approach provides the supervision needed to maximize the efficiency of staff as well as utilize volunteers within a program. Note that this does not discount the importance of having qualified early childhood educators.

- The use of an environmentally based curriculum relies heavily on creating a supportive environment in which children self-select activities. This support includes adults available to facilitate children’s exploration within interest centers, assisting children to make choices, assisting less independent choice makers to become engaged, and modeling language and social interactions. Using a manager role approach allows adults to become fully engaged with children while ensuring the broader needs of classroom management and supervision are being met.

- Using a manager allows for the active supervision of the entire classroom and the provision of support and training to staff including volunteers.

What are the Specific responsibilities of the manager role?

- The manager actively supervises and rotates attention throughout the classroom with the following goals:

  1. Being available & responsive to staff, child, and parent needs.
  2. Setting a pleasant and positive tone for the classroom.
  3. Supporting social skills for children such as facilitating the inclusion of less social children, problems solving, and talking with children about their emotions.
4. Supporting staff and children with transitions.

5. Keeping volunteers on task and on schedule.

6. Assisting children to make a selection of a center and become involved in an activity. This may be an individual program goal for some of the children with special needs (i.e., they may need to spend a specified time period in a center or move through certain centers).

7. Identifying and preventing potential problem situations in the classroom.

8. Providing training and support to adults within the classroom, particularly volunteers.

What else might be important to know about the manager role?

It is of prime importance for a successful manager to move between centers and be aware of what is happening in the classroom. It is not appropriate for the manager to sit at a center and work individually with one child for more than 5 minutes without being able to supervise the whole room. The manager should assist a child to get started at a center and briefly comment on efforts and time on projects that other children are working on. Pointing out positive social skills children are using is also important, such as skills used to enter a group or problem solve. The manager role does not allow for sustained interactions with a child. We recognize that it is important for adults to build relationships with all children and recommend that the same person not have exclusive responsibility for the manager role.

What is an example of how the manager role might look in a classroom?

**Example of Manager Role**

- Cassie, the head teacher in this classroom is in the manager role. While moving around the room the manager interacts with a child in the art area. One role of the manager is to ensure children are engaged in activities.

- She also answers a volunteer’s question regarding the art materials available. Assisting staff, especially volunteers, is a key role of the manager.

- The teacher continues observing the classroom and moves to the circle area and interacts with children. She gives the children a warning that it is almost clean-up time. She also speaks with the parent who is assisting in the classroom.

- She then moves on and goes back to the art area. She sits with the children for a short time. The person in the manager role only focuses on a small group for short periods of time, the primary responsibility is supervision of the entire classroom, allowing other adults to give undivided attention to children.

- The manager uses indirect language stimulation techniques with the children in the same way that a
teacher facilitating a small group would.

- The manager interacts with a child that is not involved with an activity and supports him to make a choice of where to play. This is also a responsibility of the manager.

- The manager is the classroom teacher, however this role is shared and exchanged throughout the day. She now asks the assistant teacher to take over the manager role. Now watch Doris in the manager role.

- She subtly corrects a boy playing rough with blocks.

- Doris also checks to see where all the children are, making sure everyone is accounted for.