

Early Childhood Classrooms

Reimagined



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Early childhood classrooms have thoughtfully arranged independent work stations for each student.

There is always a sense of energy before the school year begins when teachers return to campus to prepare their spaces for students. They spend countless hours staring at classrooms from all angles, imagining students working in the spaces, playing with different lighting and textures, and arranging then rearranging furniture again and again, to create a warm atmosphere.

This August the teachers were met with a different challenge: how do we carry out our early childhood vision of building a strong community of learners who work together to complete student-driven projects during a time with COVID-19 restrictions? Teachers reimagined classroom spaces by moving from shared to individual materials, large collaborative spaces to individual centers, and a community circle time to a socially distanced gathering.

Work caddies became the new norm for holding and organizing individual student learning materials. Each child in the lower school has their own caddy, and the teachers include supplies that the students will need for that month. As the year progresses, students will receive new supplies to complement the ongoing work in the classroom. Students learning from home have the same caddies, and they pick up new materials each month mirroring the new materials the students are receiving in the classroom. This simple box has become a beloved item, and the students love having their own sharpened pencils, bright markers, and new glue sticks! The prekindergarteners are also very proud that they can open their boxes all by themselves - mastering independence.





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Circle time builds community between students learning on campus and from home.

Collaboration is an important piece of our program as students work together to complete their project work. Teachers brainstormed ideas on how to continue this important piece of our program and found that they could thoughtfully arrange independent work centers next to each other to encourage collaboration. A dramatic play area with kitchen-like items is next to the message center that includes menus, fancy markers, and paper. One student may work in the kitchen pretending to cook and plate food while interacting with a student in the message center who is pretending to take someone's order using the menus and paper. Although socially distanced and not sharing materials, the students are sharing a common storyline and engaging in cooperative play. As we learn even more about our students' interests, their voices will become even more present in the materials and spaces.

Community is at the heart of everything we do, and Wellington teachers have reimagined their spaces to create gathering areas where students have adequate distance but can still see each other and their teacher. There is a large screen that displays the smiling faces of friends learning from home, and the placement of that screen is really important so that the students at home can see their teachers and classroom. Including the students learning from home, the entire class can engage in morning meeting, closing circle, and everything in between, together. [W](#)