



How can we make our 'Socially Distanced' learning environments friendly and in line with the Foundation Phase ethos?

Learning environment:

Due to the smaller number of children attending each day we have the opportunity to set up a range of different experiences both within our indoor and outdoor learning environments. The use of the outdoors will be vital.

Within your classroom you will need to think carefully about how you can move your furniture in order to enable the children to be safely distanced without feeling confined. Creating 'Bubbles' where the children can socialise safely. This may involve removing furniture and using units to provide natural divides.

The children will need their own writing pencils/colours etc if you are to avoid the need to clean the items each time the children move on from an area. You may wish your children to bring a pencil case with them to school each day to alleviate this concern or provide them with one.

Look at the possible floor space you might have by moving furniture back to create a socially distanced carpet time. This could be done by placing rubber spots on the carpet.

It will be vital that when the children return that our focus is wellbeing. Some children will return as if nothing has happened whereas others may be very apprehensive and find returning to school after such a long time very stressful.

Learning experiences:

Practitioners will need to direct the flow of play and activities in areas to ensure social distancing. This needs to be subtle and not a constant bark of 'move away, social distance!' Will need to introduce new rules in areas as the children will want to follow the original organisation-They will think it's fine for four to play in the construction!

Limiting resources so that they can be cleaned and rotated but not packing everything away so it is bare and unwelcoming! Introduce the cleaning regime into part of tidy up time-Make it fun! Sing a favourite song! It's about introducing new routines and organisation but with training, children will pick up on it very quickly.

Malleable materials cannot be easily cleaned so unless they all have their own this is out of bounds.

Some possible experiences we can provide within the learning environment could be.....

Within....

Outdoor Learning environment

Creative

Imaginative

Construction/Small world

Writing area

Number area

IT

Focused experience

Think about what resources you will need and which will be easy to clean throughout the day.

Once you have set up your environment:

Share the way in which the class has been set up with parents prior to the children starting so that they can look at it together.

Explain how the day will work from drop off to pick up.

Detail the handwashing routines, access to the toilets and how your school is organising lunch times.