

FIRST YEAR TEACHERS: YEAR 2/3

Kim Simmons (teacher)

Before the year begins:

- Visit the school and gather as many curriculum documents as you can. They may be the last thing you want to read but policies and corresponding programs are important school documents. Be familiar with them.
- If you don't have your class list, get one. Get names ready for bag spaces, job/monitor lists, assessment slots (children can then take work you wish to keep for assessment directly to the space, this will save you hours during the year.)
- Be prepared to set your room up before the actual school year begins. I like to go in a week before (check to see if anyone will be there, usually the office staff is there) and put up displays like months of the year, the alphabet, numbers up to twenty and then I move my furniture around.

Ensure you have enough seats for all the children. I mix my tables up, having some areas with tables together for 4-6 children and some for just two.

Remember furniture like tables can be moved. I always ask the children after about two or three weeks how they feel the room is working for them.

I also like to have a couch and some cushions in the room and we make a list of couch potatoes for each day of the week. That way every child gets to sit on the couch during the week.

When trying to find a place for my desk, I look for a space out of the way, in a corner, somewhere away from main display boards. I don't want my desk to be the dominant feature of the classroom. I only use it to store what I'm going to need for the day/week. I never teach from the desk.

Some other areas I have are:

A book area where children can see what books are available for them to take home. These can be re sorted by the children once you feel a bit more settled - maybe week two or three. Label with the headings the children come up with. Included in a book area should be picture story books, junior novels, novels, newspapers and magazines -I send a note home early in the year asking for any old football records, cricketing magazines etc and include them in my classroom library. Find out about borrowing from the school library. I like to borrow at least 20-30 books each week. It's always a good idea to include children in choosing books for the classroom too. The amount you can borrow may be dependent upon the size of the school library and any borrowing limitations. Also in my book area is a listening post with headphones.

A publishing area where watercolour pencils, oil pastels, lettering stencils, cloth tape, highlighters, gel ink pens, sign pens, hole punches and staplers are placed. Children know these items are used when they are publishing. The extra items can be kept in an art cupboard that children are able to have access. Everyday textas, crayons, pencils, erasers, grey leads and sharpeners are kept in a small carrying basket with a few different components. The children in my classroom share their materials. In some classrooms teachers give a pencil case with colouring and writing pencils. Whatever works for you and others in your area do is fine.

Maths area is where all the maths equipment is kept. If you have any parents who want to help out early in the year, ask them to take a photo of the equipment in tubs and make a small label with the picture, laminate them and stick them onto the tubs.

Games area to keep board games, cards etc. It's a good idea to ask the children what board games they would like to play. Make a list and ask if there is any way these can be purchased by the school. I have bought board games myself during sales and slowly built up a collection over the years.

Building area to keep lego, duplo, train sets and large blocks children like to use to build imaginative cities etc.

If you have space, try to have a large box for construction - donated boxes, yoghurt containers, lids etc for children to construct wonderful items. Make sure you have plenty of masking tape and sticky tape.

A basket with dress ups is also good, but it will depend on the space available to you.

Label everything to provide environmental print for the children to see and use. Each time they look for something they will have to read to find it, by having the photos to accompany the labels you are providing a visual cue for those children who need it.

Note: The agreement (in Victoria) allows for a minimum of 2.5 hours of planning time per week. As a first year graduate, you are also entitled to an extra hour. Ask your principal or assistant principal about this.

A possible plan to a first week in Year 2/3

MON.	<p>Start your first week with some developmental play. Put some board games out, a drawing table with paper and pencils, the lego/duplo and building blocks, maybe a painting table/easel, playdough or plasticine and anything else you'd like to have out. Welcome the parents and children to your room. It's a good idea to be in your room with everything ready to go at least 8.45am, show them where they can place their bags. You will find lots of parents may want to chat with you this time every day.</p>	
Before school		
9am	<p>When the bell goes mark the roll. If children have already started playing with some of the equipment let them know they can go back to that same area once the roll has been marked. Some of the parents may stay in the classroom, if you're comfortable with this let them stay. Introduce yourself to the children and ask them to tell everyone one thing about themselves when you call their name from the roll. They can then go off to developmental play. Move around the room and talk to the children as they are playing. It's a great time to take a photo of each child.</p> <p>Have a share time of about 20 minutes at the end of the session.</p>	<p>Let the children know how you show them when it's time to stop. look and listen. It may be a rhythmic clap that they copy, one quick clap and your arm in the air, but whatever you choose, make sure the children are aware that at that time your expectation is that everyone stops, looks and listens to what you have to say.</p> <p>The photos are great to use for various forms of art, for class books and children's own published books.</p>
10.40	<p>Let the children get their playlunch and give them time to eat. Take the opportunity to begin a serial reading book. "Fantastic Mr Fox", "James and the Giant Peach" or "The Twits" by Roald Dahl are good ones to start with.</p>	<p>You may set aside this time every day for the first few weeks to read to the children.</p>
11am	<p>RECESS</p>	
11.30am	<p>SQUIRT/DEAR/Silent reading. Explain to children that you would like them to read quietly for 20 minutes. Let them know that you expect them to sit and read for twenty minutes with enough books so that they are not walking around choosing more. Explain that you will ask some children to read to you from the books they have chosen.</p> <p>The time spent on this should increase as the year goes on. Allow five minutes at the end of this session for children to choose a book to take home and read. You may like to provide them with a Home Reading Log, this can incorporate any reading they do at home, including newspapers and any of their own books from home.</p>	<p>This is the time you can listen to children read to you and take notes on the miscues they're making, the type of book they're choosing and identify an area they need to work on. Remember to ask questions about what the book was about, some children can appear to be fluent but their understanding is minimal.</p>
12noon	<p>Writing - Model writing, it could be about yourself, your holidays, what you're looking forward to this year. As you write, demonstrate re reading to keep meaning. When you've finished tell the children you will read it again to make sure you've used the best words you can. Don't be afraid to cross words out, insert words and underline any words to indicate a misspelt word. Also show the children that any words they</p>	<p>Do your modelled writing on large sheets of paper, so you can refer to them whenever you like.</p>

	<p>believe to be misspelt need to be reattempted. You could say things like, "Does it look right?" "What can I hear?" "What other words do I know that sound similar?" "Is there a part of this word that I know?"</p> <p>Tell the children they are going to do some writing about something they'd like to write about. Have them turn and talk to the person next to them about what it is they will write about. Ask for some to volunteer what they will write about. Children can then go to a table and begin writing.</p> <p>When you confer with children who have finished, take notes on what you have discussed with them and what you noticed about their work. The first piece of writing is a good one to photocopy and use as assessment for future teaching and will give you a starting point for each child in your classroom.</p> <p>Ask children to sit on the floor and invite those who would like to share their writing aloud to do so.</p>	<p>It's a good idea to have alphabet strips available for children to use. Rather than sticking them on a table, laminate them and place them onto tables as children are putting the date on their work. In doing this those children who don't want to say out loud they need to use them have them right there.</p> <p>As you read through the child's writing, you will need to look for text type, meaning, grammar, structure, spelling and punctuation.</p>
1.15pm	<p>Eat lunch inside - opportune time to have share time/show and tell. You may like to allocate children certain days or open it up to all.</p>	
1.30pm	<p>Lunch time play outside.</p>	
2.30pm	<p>Children write their name on card or paper and decorate it to put on their locker/tub. Have the card ready and the contact pre cut to size. The only instructions I give to the children in the grade is that others have to be able to see their name from a distance. I encourage them to include decorations that are significant to them. Children negotiate with others as to the placement of their tub/locker.</p> <p>Pack up the classroom, allocate children jobs to do e.g. book area, tables, publishing trolley, office, library, games area, sports equipment etc. These jobs can be changed weekly, monthly, each term - it's up to your grade.</p> <p>Before the children go home ask them to give you one positive aspect of the day. It finishes the day on a positive note.</p>	
3.30pm	<p>Children go home.</p>	

<u>TUES.</u>	
9am	Developmental Play for 15-30 minutes. Mark the roll while children are playing.
9.30	<p>Tell the children you would like them to develop the expectations for everyone in the classroom. Show children what a 'Y' chart looks like. Give a copy of one and explain they are going to fill in, "What a good classroom looks like, sounds like & feels like." Individually children work on this within a time frame of about 10-15 minutes. Put the children in groups of four and give each group a large sheet of paper and textas. You can assign roles if you like, scribe, task master, reporter, time keeper. Tell the children they have 20 minutes to put all the responses onto their group chart. Individual responses are collated and added to the group's chart.</p> <p>After 20 minutes ask the children to stop. Ask them to make sure all the members of the group have their name on the large sheet of paper. Collect these to make a class 'Y' chart later in the week.</p>
10.40	Children eat playlunch during serial reading.
11am	RECESS
11.30	<p>SQUIRT/DEAR/Silent reading</p> <p>Remind children of your expectations during this time,</p>
12 noon	<p>Getting to know you game - "Find Someone Who..."</p> <p>Have a sheet prepared with different categories e.g. lives in the same suburb as you, is the same age as you, has a dog/cat/bird as a pet, saw a movie on the holidays, walked to school today, has a birthday in the same month as yours etc. The aim is to find three people to fit in each category. Children can only have a person's name on their sheet once or twice, this means they will interact with different children and find out information about others.</p> <p>Ask children to share some of their information.</p>
1.15pm	Eat lunch inside
1.30pm	Lunch time play outside.
2.30pm	<p>As the children to think of five things they are great at doing. Ask them to turn and talk to the person next to them about what they will write, have a few children share their ideas. Give each child a strip of paper and ask them to write their thoughts down. Bring them back to the floor in a circle and ask each child to share. It will show that we're all good a different things and will help with any children who may say, "I'm no good at anything."</p>
3.20pm	Pack up the classroom and get ready to go home.

⇒ Observe how children work in small groups. Praise positive behaviours like sharing, encouraging, turn taking.

⇒ This can then be used for further maths investigations. Children choose one of the categories, survey and graph the results.

⇒ Put each child's photo in a centre of a star and place the five words they've chosen in each of the arms. Print these out and laminate them to go up on display in the room.