

What Effective Classroom Libraries Look Like...

(Assembly requires no tools but creativity)

Libraries should be inviting and comfortable

That means ample seating with beanbag chairs, pillows or other alternatives, as well as at least one special chair in a central spot for teacher read-aloud.



How much space is enough?

Classroom libraries should be able to accommodate at least 4-5 children at a time. In fact, some experts suggest a space that measures 10 feet by 8 feet or more, if possible.



A quiet, cozy setting is important

Successful classroom libraries are situated away from traffic flow and set apart with bookshelves or other barriers.

Book baskets can be useful

They can be used to hold multiple copies of books for children to read to each other. Or, if open faced bookshelves aren't available, baskets offer a low-cost alternative to organizing books by genre.



Covers of quality books attract readers

Book wedges or open-faced bookshelves attract attention and invite browsing. Book wedges may also be used to highlight revolving book collections that reinforce curriculum themes.

Displays attract students...

...and pique their curiosity. Book posters and other visuals are a great way to promote reading, highlight authors, reinforce classroom themes or announce special events. This space can also be used to display student book reviews and other submissions.



A small table can produce big results

It will provide teachers with the ability to conduct group or guided reading sessions, as well as individual lessons. A table also promotes small group discussions or cooperative learning exercises.

Organization is key

The more user-friendly a classroom library, the easier it is for students to interact with books and enjoy a meaningful experience. These books are arranged alphabetically, but they could just as easily be arranged by genre and reading level. The goal is to attract students, stimulate their curiosity and make it easy for them to find what they're looking for.



Bookcases are fine for older students, but...

...younger students will have a difficult time reaching the top two shelves. Clearly, shelves should meet the physical requirements of the students using them. Also, shelves don't necessarily have to be placed against a wall. They can be used as a barrier to shield students from visual distractions. With this arrangement, teachers should always make certain they are able to see the entire library area from anywhere in the classroom.

