



This guide walks you through presenting the **Staffing: Zoning to Maximize Learning** in-service suite. These are suggestions, so please use the materials as you see fit. This in-service suite includes PowerPoint slides and supporting materials.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Presenter PowerPoint slides (18)
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activities:
 - » *Discussion Questions*
 - » *Classroom Map with Zoning Areas*
 - » *Staff Zoning Chart*
- Tips for Teachers
- Tools for Supervisors
- Helpful Resources
- Flip chart paper or similar large paper, markers, and clear sheet protectors with dry-erase markers

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- This presentation describes zoning as an effective practice for teachers to manage staff and create well-organized classrooms.
- The presentation includes videos and examples of organizational charts and zoning maps.
- Participants have the opportunity to practice creating their own charts and maps.



EMPHASIZE



We will focus specifically on zoning: a practice commonly used to organize classroom staff.

SLIDE 1: ZONING TO MAXIMIZE LEARNING

Introductions:

- Begin the training by giving participants background information on yourself.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves (e.g., where they are working, their current role, etc.).
- Use an icebreaker that focuses participants on their roles in the classroom:
 - » In small groups have participants discuss what jobs they have in the classroom.
 - » In small groups ask participants to think about their favorite and least favorite area of the classroom. Do they like supporting children in the block area? Or would they rather read to children in the book area? Ask participants to share their ideas with the group.

Introduce the topic.

Zoning focuses on how to organize classroom staff in order to maximize learning for children.

Zoning is a systematic way for a lead teacher to:

- Maximize child engagement
- Organize staff members in the classroom in a more efficient manner and establish an organized and effective classroom environment.





SLIDE 2: FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Review NCQTL framework for effective practice:

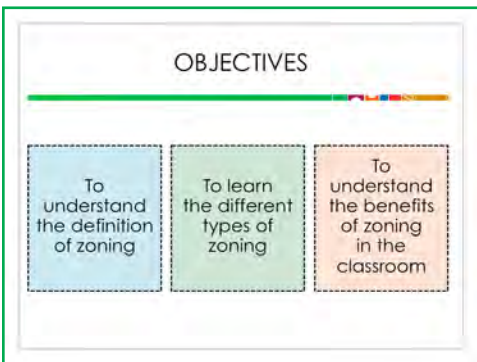
- The House structure supports school readiness for all children.
- The foundation represents effective and engaging interactions and environments.
- The pillars represent research-based curricula and teaching practices and ongoing child assessment.
- The roof represents highly individualized teaching and learning.

All components interact with each other and are essential for effective everyday practice for all children.

This in-service suite brings us to the foundation of the House framework, *Engaging Interactions and Environments*.

One feature of the foundation of the House is a well-organized classroom.

Zoning is a practice for effectively managing staff and staff tasks.



SLIDE 3: OBJECTIVES

Outline objectives for the presentation:

- To understand the definition of zoning
- To learn about the different types of zoning and how they can be used in the classroom
- To highlight the benefits of zoning in the classroom and share some common problems and solutions related to zoning



WHAT IS ZONING?

- Zoning is an effective practice used to support children's active participation and engagement in the classroom.
- Zoning is a tool used to organize classroom staff.



SLIDE 4: WHAT IS ZONING?

- Zoning is an effective practice used to support children's active participation and engagement in the classroom.
- Zoning organizes classroom staff by assigning specific roles and duties for the day or during a specific time of day, such as free play or outdoor time.

WHY USE ZONING?

- Zoning can increase engagement behaviors.
- Zoning can increase staff efficiency.
- Zoning helps build confidence in preschool staff.
- Zoning is flexible and can help make communication between staff members easier.



SLIDE 5: WHY USE ZONING?

Benefits:

- All team members know where they should be and what they should be doing. Children are not left to wait while the adults try to organize their roles, as these have been decided and explained to staff ahead of time.
- Staff can work more efficiently as a team when everyone knows where they need to be and who is responsible for handling an issue that may arise throughout the day.
- Each staff member has a vital role in the running and management of the classroom.

NOTE

Zoning is never meant to feel restricting or like something that should be "set in stone." Unexpected events happen in preschool classrooms that create a need for spontaneous changes or temporary shifts in teacher responsibilities.

Having a specific zoning schedule in place makes it easier for classroom staff to communicate immediate needs and to then get back on track after unexpected events are over.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Set up the activity by having the group break into classroom teams or small groups. Have participants discuss the following questions and be prepared to share back with the larger group some of the key discussion points. It might be helpful to have one person record the answers on a large sheet of paper for everyone to view.

1. Describe how you see children interacting with each other and materials in your classroom. What times of day are the children most engaged? What times of day are challenging?
2. Describe what “setting-up for circle” means in your classroom. This can lead to discussing what each “job” in the classroom actually entails so that all staff members are clear about the duties that go along with each assigned activity of the day.
3. How does your classroom staff currently assign roles and plan activities? What works well? What challenges do you face?
4. How will zoning benefit your classroom?

Highlight:

- Zoning helps clarify staff roles and responsibilities.
- Zoning helps staff remain on task.
- Zoning ensures that the necessary materials are available/set up/cleaned up and that the classroom environment is ready for children.



TYPES OF ZONING

Zone: Each staff member is responsible for a separate area or "zone" of the classroom

One-to-One: Staff members are responsible for staying near or "zoning" with a child who has more significant challenges.

SLIDE 6: TYPES OF ZONING

1. **Zone:** Teachers are assigned to specific areas and tasks in the classroom. Teachers remain in their assigned "zone" for the duration of an activity (e.g., free choice, outdoor time, snack), supporting, playing with and providing instruction for children in their "zone."

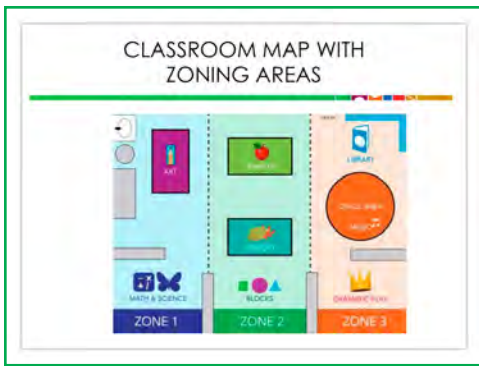
For example, if Teacher A is "zoned" in the block area during free choice, he or she would go directly to the block area at the beginning of free choice and remain there, as children move in and out of that area.

2. **One-to-one:** One teacher is responsible for shadowing and supporting one child throughout the day. This situation might be used when a new child joins the class and needs some extra attention to learn the routine, or with children who may engage in aggressive behavior.

Some classrooms will use a combination of these zoning types, depending on the immediate needs of the classroom climate.

This presentation focuses on zoning by area.





SLIDE 7: CLASSROOM MAP WITH ZONING AREAS

Introduce the *Classroom Map with Zoning Areas* by asking participants to describe each zone.

DISCUSSION

- How many zones?
- What is each teacher responsible for?

Key information to highlight or add to participants' discussion:

- The teacher assigned to Zone 1 is responsible for the art table and the math and science area. This teacher remains in this area, and goes back and forth between the two learning centers, supporting children's play and providing instruction.
- Zone 2 has a teacher assigned to the blocks and sand and water table. This person moves back and forth between the sensory table and the block area to interact with the children.
- Zone 3 covers the dramatic play or house area, as well as the library corner. A teacher in this zone supports children in the dramatic play area, while periodically checking in with the children in the library area.

NOTE

Teachers are the ones who stay in their zones, while the children are free to explore the entire classroom.

Make these additional points:

- Planning for classroom zoning encourages the teachers to think about how the physical classroom is arranged. It provides an opportunity for staff to evaluate the balance of activities. For example, dramatic play can be a busy, high-need area so it's good to have a more child-independent area such as the library in the same zone.
- Often, classrooms will first use a zoning plan during learning center time, but the full benefits of zoning really come from using this strategy throughout the day during all classroom activities and transitions.
- Times of day when children need specific help to complete a task, such as toileting, brushing teeth or putting materials in their backpacks, are useful times to use zoning as well. During these times, one teacher can help a group of children, while the other teacher continues supporting the rest of the classroom.



STAFF SCHEDULE			
Activities/ transitions	Staff person A	Staff person B	Staff person C
Arrival	Greet children and parents	Help children put away backpacks	Get tables ready for breakfast
Breakfast	At red table	At blue table	At green table
Transition to outside	Signal transition/blow bubbles	Clean up breakfast tables	Help children to transition
Outside	At big toy	In the field	Clean and sanitize tables
Transition to classroom	Help children transition to circle time	Signal transition	Help children wash hands
Circle time	Support children at circle	Lead circle	Break
Centers	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3

SLIDE 8: STAFF SCHEDULE

Share the example of an assignment chart or matrix used for zoning in the classroom.

Describe the chart.

- The left hand column lists activities and transitions for the day. The top rows list the staff members available for teaching.
- It is important to be as detailed as possible in listing activities and transitions so that everyone knows exactly what they should be doing during each activity of the day.
 - » For example, during “outside” time, Staff C is cleaning the tables inside the classroom while the other teachers are helping outside.
 - » Notice during “Centers,” that each staff member has a zone—refer back to the classroom map on previous slide.

EMPHASIZE *

Charts can be adapted to fit individual classroom needs.



LEARNING ACTIVITY: CLASSROOM MAP WITH ZONING AREAS

In this activity participants practice organizing a classroom into zones. Set up the activity by having the group break into classroom teams or small groups.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Classroom Map with Zoning Areas* handout to each participant and review directions. Each team sketches a map of their classroom environment and breaks it into zones according to how many staff are most often in the classroom. Remind teams to use the back of the sheet to map out the outside play area!

NOTE

This is a good time to work with the teams to discuss room arrangement and any challenges they may face. For example, what if one zone has all of the higher-supervision needs areas (e.g., blocks, art, and dramatic play)? Work with the classroom teams to problem-solve this. It might lead to discussions about re-arranging furniture/centers to better meet supervision needs.



HOW TO USE ZONING IN THE CLASSROOM

- Specify the teacher roles, zones, and responsibilities at the beginning of the week.
- Make sure everyone understands their roles and zones.
- Post a chart in a visible location in the classroom.

SLIDE 9: HOW TO USE ZONING IN THE CLASSROOM

Describe key procedures for using zoning:

- Develop an organizational chart, and list each activity and routine that happens throughout the day as well as all classroom team members.
 - » Include the transitions between activities and outside play time.
 - » Think of the jobs that need to be done at each activity and assign them to different team members.
 - » These jobs can be rotated weekly, so all team members understand all roles.
- Review the zoning assignments at the start of each week, and make sure that everyone understands their roles and knows their zones.
 - » Be sure to check in with new staff members or staff members who have less experience, and make sure they feel comfortable with their zones and their responsibilities.
- Post the zoning chart in a visible location for all to see and reference throughout the day.
 - » Give each teacher a copy of the zoning chart to keep in their pocket for quick reference.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

STAFF ZONING CHART

In this activity participants practice using zoning to assign tasks to staff members during daily activities and routines. Set up the activity by having the group break into classroom teams or small groups.

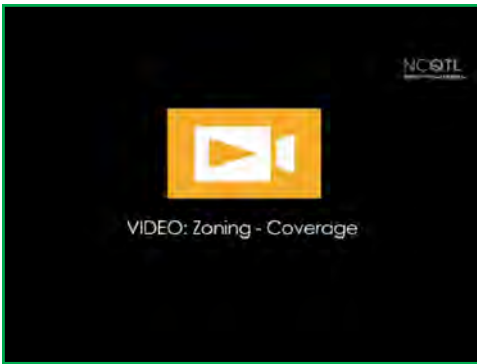
HANDOUT

Distribute the *Staff Zoning Chart* handout to each participant and review directions. Teaching teams complete a staff zoning chart by assigning responsibilities of staff members during daily activities and routines.

NOTE

- The trainer may need to work closely with the groups to help them break the day down into the necessary details in order to ensure that the staff know what they should be doing during every time of the day.
- Remember that the activities go down the left column, the staff members on the top row and the specific tasks are written into the corresponding cells on the chart.





Length of video: Approximately 2 minutes and 9 seconds

SLIDE 10: VIDEO: ZONING – COVERAGE

Introduce the video.

In this classroom, the teachers spend 15 minutes at the beginning of each day clarifying the roles and expectations for the teachers, volunteers and children.

VIDEO

As participants watch the video, encourage them to note specific ways the teacher uses zoning to organize the day's activities.

DISCUSSION

After the video, solicit feedback:

- Was there anything else that the participants noticed happening in the video?
- What did they like, and how will this impact their use of zoning?

Key points to highlight in the discussion, if not mentioned by participants:

- The teacher talks with the assistants about the role of each person, including the parent volunteer, during all activities of the day.
- The materials for the activities are prepared ahead of time.
- The teacher also discusses individual child support when reviewing the name writing, and discusses how one child, Diego, can independently write a "D" but will need help with the remainder of his name. She also asks for a teacher to translate for Yuli, another child.
- The teacher solicits feedback about how activities are working.
- Teachers make plans for changes that may be necessary.
- This group of teachers keeps personal zoning charts for reference throughout the day.



TIPS FOR ZONING

- **Position** your body so you can see your whole zone.
- **Scan** your zone and the classroom or outside area often.
- Practice **talking** to the other teacher or teachers in the classroom as children move between areas.

SLIDE 11: TIPS FOR ZONING

Think about body positioning.

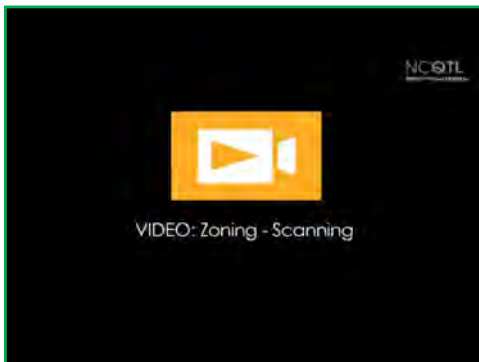
- Position your body at child level, but with your back to a wall or the edge of your outside space, if possible. This will enable you to see the whole room, in addition to what is happening in your zone.

Scan your zone.

- While interacting with one group of children, lift your eyes to ensure that the other children in your zone are also engaged in an activity. Scanning allows for monitoring of problem areas and to act quickly and proactively before problems arise.

Talk with other teachers throughout the day.

- As a child leaves your zone, communicate with the other staff members to let them know that someone is joining their area. This also helps children move around the classroom more appropriately and maintain their engagement during the day.



Length of video: Approximately 12 seconds

SLIDE 12: VIDEO: ZONING – SCANNING

Introduce the video.

Inform participants that they will watch a video that provides examples of a teacher using *Tips for Zoning*.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Ask participants what key elements they noticed.

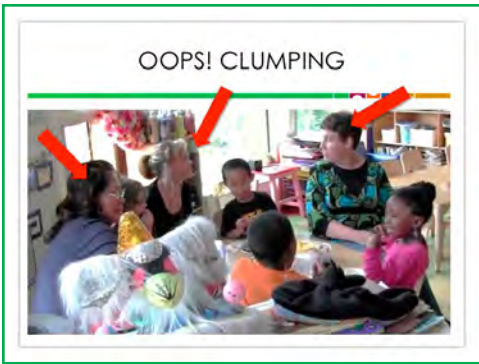
Highlight or add the following points.

- The teacher is sitting in a place where he can see various parts of the classroom.
- While working with a small group, he looks up and scans the classroom to see what is happening.
- He confirms that another teacher is in her zone.

NOTE 

- The teacher remains in his zone.
- He is able to spot any potential problems that may need his attention.
- Using these strategies maximizes the teacher's ability to effectively use teaching time.





SLIDE 13: OOPS! CLUMPING

Problem #1: Clumping

Zoning is a way to ensure that “clumping” does not occur in the classroom.

Clumping is when teachers are in the same area of the classroom rather than spread out among the children in the room.

Why “clumping” is problematic:

- Teachers may not be able to adequately monitor all of the children.
- Learning time may not be maximized, since all teachers are focusing on just a few children rather than many children across all areas of the classroom.



SLIDE 14: CLASSROOM MAP WITH ZONING AREAS

Solution #1: Zoning Map

Look again at the classroom zoning map.

- Teachers have been assigned a specific area or “zone” to monitor.
- They will each remain in their general area, keep their body positioned so they can see all that is happening in their zone, and communicate with other staff members as needed.

At times a teacher may need to leave a zone in order to handle a specific situation or issue.

- Communication between staff ensures that “clumping” doesn’t happen and ensures that all children are being attended to at all times.



"I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!"

- "We never know who should be doing what."
- "Who should be cleaning up?"
- "Who should be setting up?"
- "Who is available to take kids to the bathroom?"



SLIDE 15: "I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!"

Problem #2: Who is Doing What?

When staff are unaware of what to do in the classroom they may be heard saying things such as:

- "We never know who should be doing what."
- "Who should be cleaning up?"
- "Who should be setting up?"
- "Who is available to take children to the bathroom?"

STAFF SCHEDULE

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Circle time	Support children at circle	Lead circle	Break
Centers	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3

SLIDE 16: STAFF SCHEDULE

Solution #2: Use Staff Schedule

Zoning is a way to ensure that staff know what to do during each part of the day. Using a staff schedule is one solution to this problem.

When teachers take the time to fill out a zoning chart and an assignment matrix, everyone has clear expectations about their zones and responsibilities.

- Using zoning can help staff feel calmer, more organized and more efficient.
- Reviewing the chart at the beginning of the day and posting it in a place where everyone can reference it throughout the day creates a shared understanding of staff responsibilities and assignments.





SLIDE 17: REVIEW

Review important points.

- When teachers know where they should be throughout the day, they are more prepared to teach children and help them engage in their surroundings — thus eliminating child wait time, which can lead to undesirable behaviors.
- Zoning is an easy way to organize and utilize staff members. A classroom chart posted in a visible spot on the wall helps teachers know what their duties are throughout the day.
- Zoning takes the guesswork out of classroom responsibilities. The question of “Who is doing what?” does not exist anymore.
- Zoning helps support the lead teacher while building confidence in all staff members. When assistant teachers feel that they are in charge of a specific area and that they are a vital part of helping a classroom run well, they may feel more confident.
- The ongoing communication between adults in the classroom fosters a feeling of collaboration, teamwork, and “being in this together.”

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to share their thoughts on implementing zoning in their classrooms.

- What are they most excited to implement?
- What do they have concerns about?

HANDOUT

Distribute and review handouts based on participant roles:

- *Tips for Teachers* – A brief handout for classroom staff highlighting key points for success in zoning.
- *Tools for Supervisors* – A guided observation tool for zoning.
- *Helpful Resources* – Further information about zoning for classroom staff and/or supervisors.





SLIDE 18: CLOSING

Provide participants with NCQTL contact information and encourage them to visit our website for additional resources to support effective teaching practices in the classroom.

Potential follow-up suggestions if you are working with participants who may need additional support in implementing zoning in their classrooms:

- Follow up with emails, phone calls, or classroom visits.
- Suggest teachers pair with a more experienced teacher.
- Provide additional examples of how teachers are using zoning in their classrooms.
- Review resource list and make recommendations.