# TRACKING PATTERNS TO DETERMINE DESIGN NEEDS

Activity overview:

Participants look for behavior patterns and where they happen in the classroom, then use the information to make changes to the space.

Directions:

1. Use a diagram of your classroom or the chart below to record data.

2. For one week, note where problems occur and when. Problems could include behaviors such as fighting over materials, accidents such as tripping over materials, or children being uninterested in the centers' activities and materials.

3. Also during that week note where children are positively engaged in classroom activities. Some examples of this include: children sharing toys in the block area, smiling and laughing, creating an art project together (appropriately), sharing the completion of a puzzle, helping each other put toys away, etc.

4. Review your data for patterns. For example, you may see that there were four instances of pushing at the cubbies during arrival, six instances of arguments in the block area over grabbing toys, five instances of helping at clean-up, three of creating art projects together, etc.

5. Use your data and your answers to the questions provided below to consider what changes to make to the physical space.

6. Rearrange the environment and take data for another week to see if the patterns change.
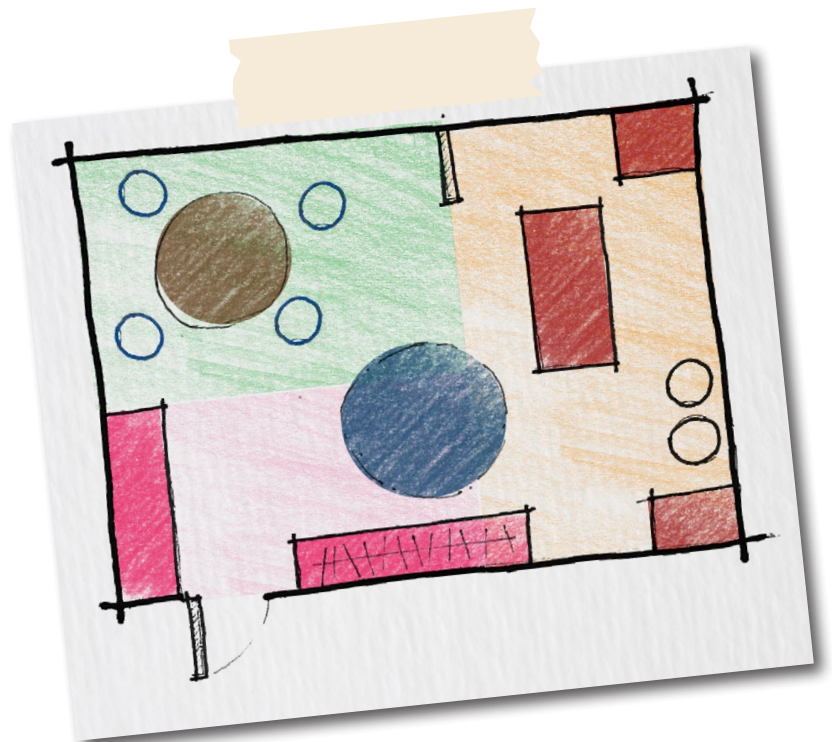
Center	Challenging/Positive behavior	When/How often
Circle time area		
Writing		
Dramatic play		
Blocks		
Reading/Library		
Art		
Computers		
Sensory table		
Discovery (Science/Math)		
Table top (Toys and Games)		
Other: _____		

Category/Question	Comments/Ideas/Changes
Space/Boundaries: • *Are the centers clearly defined with furniture, rugs, and/or shelves?* • *Is there enough space for all children to easily move about the room?* • *In each defined area is there adequate space for the number of children using it?*	
Proximity/Distance: • *Are the quiet and noisy areas in proximity or separated?* • *Are centers located near things that children need to access to complete projects (art center near sink, puzzle or game shelves within reach of tables, etc.)?* • *Are teachers able to view children in all centers?*	
Home/Culture: • *What home-like features are included in the classroom?* • *How is (are) the culture(s) of the local community reflected in the classroom?*	
Flexibility/Permanence: • *How does the space accommodate gross motor activity?* • *What aspects of the physical space cannot be changed (due to cost or structural issues) and are challenging to overcome (e.g., limited access to natural light, cumbersome cubbies, noise from elementary school activities, asphalt playground, etc.)?*	
Engaged in Learning/Challenging Behavior: • *Are there areas of the classroom where challenging behaviors are more likely to occur?* • *Are there areas where typically children are positively engaged in classroom activities?*	