

Small group learning is great for building communication and social skills.

Designated rooms, small open areas or spaces captured under stairwells can become breakout areas where student and staff can find space to huddle together. These spaces invite students to continue class discussions, work on projects, study with a group or by themselves. Flexible and fluid space gives teachers or staff a place to provide direct instruction to a small group or conference one-on-one with a student.

As you're planning for small breakout rooms, think about what you are trying to accomplish, how it will be used, where it will be located, and how it will integrate with your school. Here are some questions to help guide your discussions and, ultimately, the best ways to set up small breakout rooms.

What purpose do these collaborative spaces serve?

Are the spaces appropriate for collaborative activities?

Can these spaces be created as part of the learning environment?

Are these spaces the same in all learning environments, or are they culturally and contextually defined?

How will the space be used?

Small group instruction or specialized services?

How will the space be supervised by staff?

Will the spaces double as meeting spaces for adults? Teacher conference or parent meetings?

How is information technology integrated into these spaces?

Do you have power/wiring needs?

Do you need power?

A place for recharging tools/equipment?

What is the need for flexibility in these settings?

Are they sustainable or will they need to be moved year to year?

Do you have storage requirements for supplies, books, technology, other?

Do they need to be locked?

Is anything heavy/delicate/hard to move?