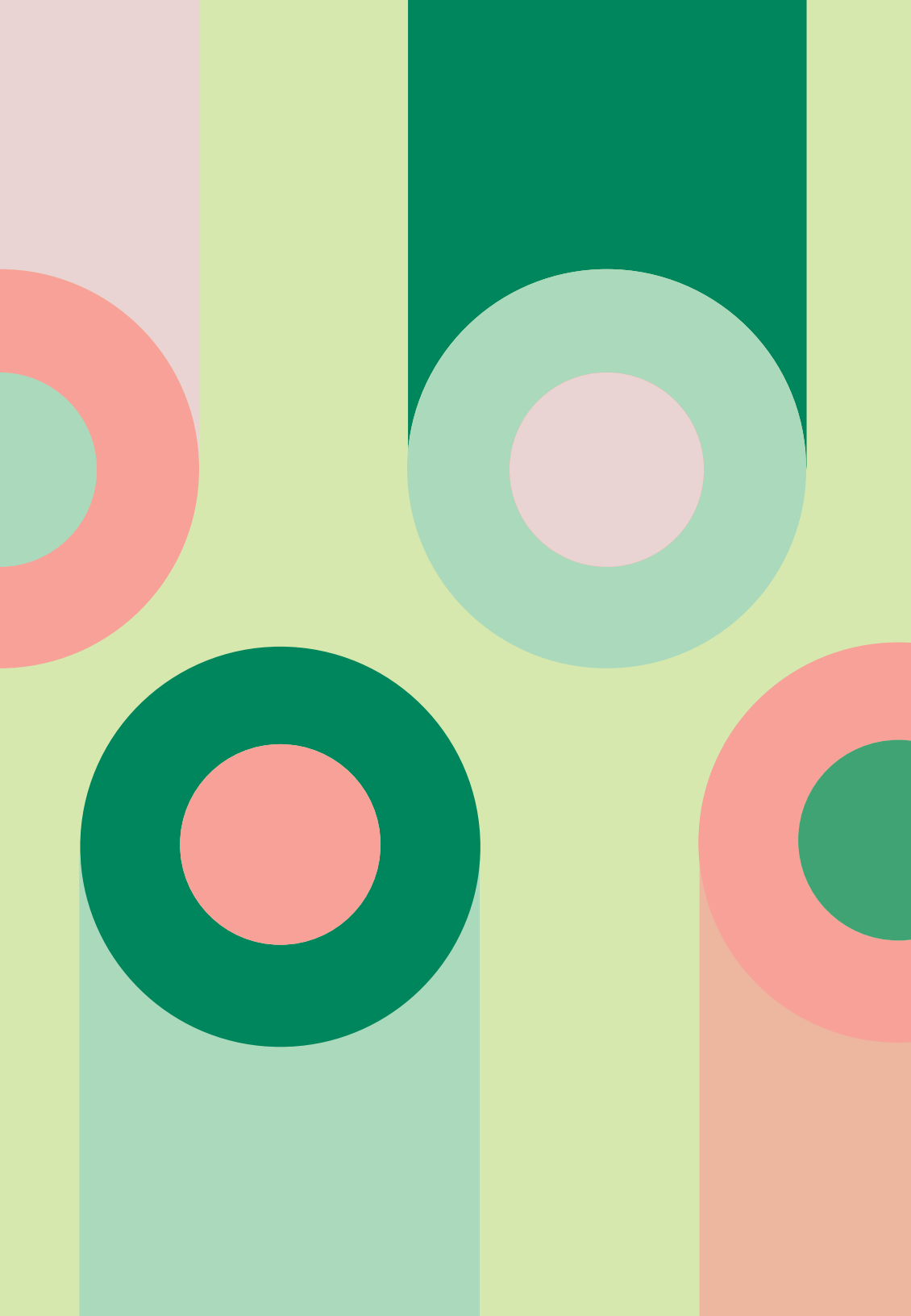




7 Early Learning Trends to Follow in 2026

Experience
+ Positive.





Did you know?

Students who attend full-day preschool programs show higher academic and social gains by third grade than their half-day student peers.

REPORTED BY EDSOURCE 2023

Improve your student outcomes with these trends

Preschools that follow trends and adopt innovation in early education set children up for academic success. Discover what early learning trends matter in 2026 – and consider how you might integrate them into your own classroom – so you can better meet the needs of your young learners.

In this guide, we cover seven top trends in early learning:

1. Microlearning
2. Gamification
3. Blended learning
4. Behavioral data use
5. Artificial intelligence adoption
6. Inclusive and adaptive learning
7. STEAM and STEM education

Plus, you'll get expert answers to schools' FAQs about where to find early learning space designs, innovative furnishings, and more.

Call or email us to talk to a early learning expert today.

1

Microlearning and bite-sized content

Microlearning and bite-sized content in early learning classrooms are on the rise. Concise, easily digestible content encapsulated in microlearning modules like slides, short videos, quizzes, and infographics deliver maximum impact in a short amount of time. Microlearning leverages repetition, enhancing the likelihood of information retention.

2

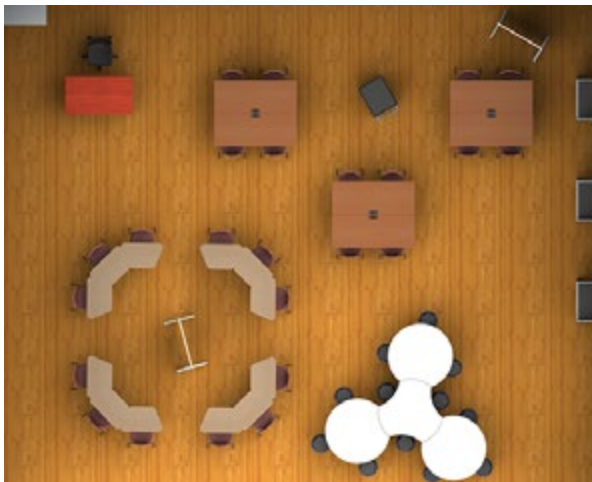
Lesson gamification

Gamification strategies are an integral part of early educational content. Gamified elements and activities, including points, rewards, contests, and leaderboards, motivate young students to learn in short, fun bursts of memorable experiences. Plus, gamification can foster healthy competition and collaboration among students.

3

Blended learning environments

Blended learning, which combines traditional classroom teaching with online elements, continues to gain popularity. Blended learning allows for personalized learning experiences tailored to each child's pace and style, and often increases student learning and engagement.



[Explore Elementary
Blended Learning Classroom](#)



[Explore Elementary
Blended Learning Makerspace](#)



[Explore Early Learning
Outdoor Art & Play Yard](#)

4

Behavioral data collection

Behavioral data allows teachers to identify patterns in student behavior, both positive and negative. By understanding individual needs, teachers can tailor their approach to provide targeted support for each student, addressing specific behavioral issues or reinforcing positive conduct.

5

Artificial intelligence use

Artificial intelligence allows teachers to receive near-instantaneous feedback on student performance and engagement. AI, and specifically generative AI like ChatGPT, skyrocketed into multiple use cases in 2025. Expect the trend to follow through in 2026 with:

- Language learning
- Tutoring and remediation
- Research and analysis
- Writing assistance
- Personalized learning



6

Inclusive and adaptive learning

The future of education prioritizes accessibility and inclusivity. In 2026, we expect to see classroom designs that embrace flexible spaces, [mobile furniture](#), quiet spaces, and [sensory furnishings](#) for students with unique sensory or behavioral profiles.



7

STEM and STEAM education

With the growing career demand for science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics skills, educators are adopting more STEM/STEAM programs [and furnishings](#). These activities are widely adopted in today's early learning classrooms via:

- **Play-based learning** – puzzles, [toys](#), and sensory exploration
- **Technology integration** – educational apps, [coding games](#), and interactive devices
- **Innovation and creativity** – arts n' crafts, drawing, [painting](#), and storytelling
- **Collaboration** – group projects and team problem-solving



Did you know?

Children who enroll in early childhood education are 24% MORE likely to graduate high school. They're also 4X more likely to complete a bachelor's degree.

REPORTED BY BRIGHTER FUTURES INDIANA



Schools' FAQs about early learning in 2026

Where can I find innovative room designs for early learning?

School Outfitters has as a [catalog of 3D room designs](#) for a variety of early learning spaces, including commercial daycare spaces for infants and toddlers. Browse proven room designs for early learning STEM spaces, outdoor classes, collaborative preschool classrooms and more.

How can I make my early learning spaces inclusive?

Start by understanding your students' current needs and challenges and prioritize [inclusive classroom furniture](#) to accommodate those needs and challenges. For example, is your classroom full of high-energy kids? Provide an energy outlet and reduce disruptions with furnishings like wobble stools and fidget toys. And don't forget to browse [special education classroom designs](#) for inspiration.



FAQs continued

Where can I find flexible furniture for my preschool classroom?

Shop School Outfitters' [preschool classroom essentials](#). You'll find flexible furniture options for any early learning space, from soft seating sets to mobile chairs and desks, colorful classroom rugs and more.

How can my school adapt to early learning trends?

It starts with recognizing what strategies and curricula demonstrate results and positive outcomes for early learning students. Your school can then prioritize resources to introduce concepts, pedagogy, room designs and [furniture](#) that make those goals achievable.

Ready to outfit an innovative early learning space?

Contact an early learning expert to get started today.

1-800-260-2776

sales@schooloutfitters.com

www.SchoolOutfitters.com



About School Outfitters

School Outfitters is on a mission to help students, teachers, and administrators Experience Positive wherever learning takes place. The company's belief in people—that everyone deserves a chance to be themselves, to be seen, heard, and to realize their potential—translates into a relentless quest to do better and be better. As a result, School Outfitters' innovation in creating flexible learning spaces has won the repeat business of 97% of America's top 1,000 school districts.

Founded in 1998 and voted as a Cincinnati Top Workplace for 12 consecutive years, School Outfitters is 100% employee owned and operated. The company offers a broad range of flexible furnishings, collaborative arrangements, and technology integrations, delivered through more than 150 product lines, including exclusive distribution of Learniture, Norwood, Sprogs, and Egghead. To join the more than 30,000 customers who have chosen School Outfitters to Experience Positive, visit www.schooloutfitters.com.

