

Materials/Equipment List

For Preschool Child Care Centres

High quality early learning and child care programs provide safe, stimulating environments that are warm, comfortable and aesthetically pleasing. Children are active learners who use the physical environment in a direct, hands-on manner. The physical environment, as well as all the materials and equipment are part of a child's learning experience. The schedule, space, interaction with others and daily routines all provide learning opportunities. The learning environment should provide a rich assortment of materials and equipment for children to develop socially, cognitively and physically.

The materials and equipment should:

- be available in a quantity and variety to occupy all children in attendance
- be consistent with the developmental capabilities of children in attendance
- be available for much the day
- offer many types of play choices, for blocks of time, to provide different opportunities for children to experiment, explore and learn
- be accessible to children where they can reach and use the materials by themselves with adaptations to furniture to meet all children's needs
- be organized into particular interest centres (may overlap into other centres)
- be arranged so quiet and active centres do not interfere with one another
- represent and encourage acceptance of diversity (race, culture, age, abilities, gender) in all activity areas
- be rotated and changed frequently based on the children's interests
- be provided indoors and outdoors to broaden children's exploration and experiences

Activity Area: Dramatic

(Daily living centre)

Materials/Equipment

1. Home Area:

- child-sized stove, sink with cabinet for storing dishes, refrigerator, table and chairs, bed, dresser, dress up display and other furnishing such as washer/dryer
- cooking utensils, such as pots/pans, eating utensils, dishes, muffin pan, wok, toaster, play food, collection of empty containers such as food products and spices
- cleaning utensils such as mops, brooms, feather dusters, rags, pails, empty containers of cleaning products such as laundry detergent and dish soap
- infant dolls, dolls representing adults, small dolls for doll houses (diverse ethnic characteristics)
- doll furniture, such as cradle/crib, high chair, stroller, wheelchairs, walkers, baby carriers from various cultures
- doll clothes and accessories such as bottles, blankets
- full length unbreakable mirror
- telephones, clocks, radios, cameras
- stuffed animals
- fabrics or blankets typical of various cultures
- garage with small vehicles, doll house and accessories, barn with small toy animals and accessories

2. Dress up clothes: (male and female; depicting the season)

- jackets, shirts, dresses, skirts, pants
- accessories such as jewellery, purses, tote bags, briefcases, suitcases, sunglasses
- hats, including hard hats, hats used in different jobs, sun hats
- costumes
- clip-on ties, scarves
- boots, sandals, slippers, shoes

Activity Area: Fine Motor

(Table toy centre, quiet thinking centre, manipulative centre)

Materials/Equipment

Some of each category:

1. Building toys:

- small wooden blocks/cubes
- interlocking blocks (Lego/Duplo)
- magnetic blocks
- Tinkertoys
- Lincoln Logs
- Bristle Blocks
- Waffle Blocks

2. Puzzles:

- variety of textures – foam, plastic, wood, multitexture
- different complexities, knobbed, without knobs, variety of pieces (five to 30), interlocking and individual pieces, sequence, floor

3. Manipulative:

- small and large beads, strings, bead pattern cards, bead frames
- sewing materials including blunt needles, wool, burlap, buttons, lacing cards with laces/string
- pegs and peg boards
- pounding boards with mallets
- parquet shapes with and without pattern cards
- zip, snap and button dressing frames
- gears
- straws/sticks with connectors
- links, linking stars
- nuts and bolts, screws

Activity Area: Creative

(Art centre, wood construction area)

Materials/Equipment

Some of each category:

1. Drawing:

- large and small crayons
- pens, pencils, erasers, coloured pencils
- thick and thin washable markers
- chalk, chalk board, erasers
- paper (various sizes and colours, lined and blank) newspaper, construction, tissue, coffee filters, computer, cards, paper plates
- dry-erase boards/markers

2. Painting:

- finger paints
- liquid tempera paints
- block/disk tempera paints and trays
- variety of paint utensils, paint brushes, rollers, squeeze and spray bottles, sponges, Q-tips, paint scrapers

3. Collage:

- glue/paste, glue sticks, glue/paste pots, glue brushes/spreaders
- paper scraps, magazines, cards, wrapping paper, ribbon
- cardboard tubes, boxes, rolls for construction
- felt/fabric remnants
- yarn/string
- cotton balls, pompoms
- glitter, buttons, sequins, gems (all small materials require supervision and for use with children three years of age and older)
- natural objects (leaves, seeds, twigs, feathers)

4. Three-dimensional:

- play dough
- clay
- wood for gluing/construction
- pipe cleaners
- plasticine

5. Tools:

- safe scissors (left- and right-handed)
- staplers
- paper punches
- tape (various types), tape holder
- tools to use with play dough (craft sticks, blunt knives, scissors, pipe cleaners)
- stencils

Storage/furnishings:

- low, open shelves
- containers – clear plastic, wicker/rattan
- easels
- child-size table and chairs
- paint shirts or smocks
- facilities for drying, displaying and storing artwork

Comments: _____

Activity Area: Block

(Block area)

Materials/Equipment

1. Blocks: (enough blocks for at least three children with at least two different sets of blocks)

- unit blocks come in different shapes and sizes such as triangles, squares, rectangles, cylinders and arches (small blocks can be combined to create an equally sized larger block, ex: two small square blocks = one rectangular block)
- large hollow blocks (hollow blocks with open sides)
- tree blocks (oak, birch, basswood, pine, natural tree cookies, homemade or store bought)
- homemade blocks (large cardboard milk cartons, plastic containers, foam containers, sturdy boxes, wood cut into block shapes)

2. Accessories: (at least two types)

- vehicles – small trucks, cars, trains, farm vehicles
- traffic/road signs
- floor road map/carpet
- small toy people representing various ethnic groups, ages, abilities
- small toy animals (zoo, farm, domestic, native, dinosaurs)
- ramps, boards, cardboard cylinders

Storage/space:

- open shelves labelled with unit block outlines
- containers – clear, plastic, wicker/rattan baskets
- ample space and carpeted floor area

Activity Area: Reading

(Language reasoning, literacy, books and pictures, library area)

Materials/Equipment

Some of each category:

An assortment of books is needed. They can be store-bought, adult and child-made books, photo albums and children's magazines. Choose some from each of these categories:

1. Factual books:

- real animals
- facts about animals and plants
- real life experiences, ex: going to the doctor
- number, shape, colour

2. Nature and science books:

- five senses
- human body
- animal homes and lives

3. Race and cultures books:

- historical and contemporary stories about people from various races and cultures
- books in various languages

4. Diverse abilities books:

- books depicting individuals with additional needs (wheelchair, crutches, hearing devices, etc.)

5. Fantasy books:

- pretend stories about people
- pretend stories about animals

6. Additional language materials:

- flannel board and accessories
- puppets, puppet theatre
- poster sets (sets of winter scenes, etc.)
- listening centre and recorded stories with or without headphones

Storage/furnishing:

- book display
- comfortable seating, child or adult size couch, pillows, covered mattress, adult sized arm chair

Comments: _____

Activity Area: Large Muscle

(Active role play area, space/equipment for gross motor play)

Materials/Equipment

Gross motor equipment should include some of the following:

1. Stationary equipment:

- climbing equipment
- slides
- low, balancing equipment
- swings

2. Portable equipment:

- balls (variety of sizes and textures)
- sports equipment (child-size basket ball hoop, plastic bats, hockey sticks)
- wheel toys (wagons, push/ pull toys, wheelbarrows, scooters)
- riding toys (variety of sizes with and without pedals, for use by one or two children)
- tumbling mats
- jump ropes
- bean bags, targets/containers
- hula hoops
- ring toss game
- parachutes
- tunnels
- toboggans/sleds
- large blocks (indoors and outdoors)
- loose materials such as big cardboard boxes, blankets, gutters (plastic eve troughs), wood pieces

Activity Area: Sand/Water

Materials/Equipment

1. Sand/water:

- sand boxes, sand pits (outdoors), various types of sand/water tables such as dishpans, plastic bins, tubs, buckets, sinks
- water sprinkler, hose
- sand or sand substitute (modelling sand, play pellets)
- waterproof aprons or smocks

2. Sand/water toys:

- measuring cups/spoons, variety of containers/pails, plastic bottles
- shovels, scoops, molds
- pumps, siphons, sand/waterwheels
- sponges, small water droppers, spray bottles, turkey basters
- funnels, plastic tubes, pipes
- trowels, rakes, sand scrapers, sifters
- things that sink or float
- nature items such as shells, pieces of wood, rocks

3. Dramatic play toys:

- animals, dinosaurs, sea creatures, small people
- small and large trucks and cars, diggers, boats
- kitchen utensils – spoons with and without strainer holes, egg beaters, tongs, pots, pans, muffin tins, whisks

Storage/space:

- shelf under water/sand table
- easy to clean flooring

Activity Area: Science

(Science discovery centre)

Materials/Equipment

Some of each category:

1. Natural objects:

- flowers
- moss
- leaves
- shells
- rocks
- acorns
- pine cones
- bird nests, feathers
- fossils, bones
- wood, twigs, branches, drift wood

2. Living things:

- pets (acceptable to health authorities)
- plants, flowers, terrariums
- aquariums/fish bowls with fish, snails, tadpoles
- worm composting
- garden
- bird houses, feeders visible from a window

3. Nature science books/posters, games, puzzles:

- factual books/posters such as animals, plants, birds, fish, human body, seasons, weather, planets, environment
- maps, globe, atlas, x-rays
- games with a nature theme, nature picture matching cards, nature sequence cards
- puzzles with nature or natural sequences, such as the life cycle, ex: frog, butterfly, chicken, plant
- nature/science floor puzzle such as the human body (heart, lungs)

4. Nature/science materials:

- pinwheels, wind chimes, sources of wind such as fans
- magnets with iron and non-iron objects
- magnifying glasses, prepared slides/microscopes, bug viewers
- sink and float items
- pulleys/levers
- shaking cans, smelling cans (filled with spices), feeling boxes
- prisms, plastic translucent colour paddles/colour cards, kaleidoscopes, coloured glasses
- tornado tubs
- realistic plastic insects

Storage/furnishing:

- shelves/display areas
- tables/chairs

Comments: _____

Activity Area: Math/Number

Materials/Equipment

Some of each category:

1. Measuring:

- liquid/dry measuring sets (cups and spoons)
- scales and weights
- cloth tape measures, metre sticks, rulers, wind up metre tapes
- thermometers
- height charts
- centimetre cubes/snap cubes

2. Shapes:

- magnetic shapes
- pattern or matching cards for any shape toys
- attribute blocks (of different sizes, colours, shapes, thicknesses)
- parquetry blocks
- puzzles with different geometric shapes
- unit blocks with outlines on shelves for organizing

3. Counting:

- small objects to count such as coloured beads, animals, vehicles, with or without pattern cards or sorting/counting tray
- play money in the drama area
- attribute beads and activity cards
- pegs/peg boards
- pegboards with numbers and holes to match
- games or puzzles where quantities of objects are matched to written numbers, dice games

4. Written numbers:

- number books and posters
- magnetic numbers
- number puzzles
- number lacing cards
- number lottos
- play telephones
- dramatic play cash registers with play money
- clocks
- calendars
- playing cards

5. Quantities:

- dominos
- playing cards
- abacus
- charts and graphs
- nesting/stacking cups
- toys and games to figure out more or less/fractions
- snap cubes, centimetre cubes
- puzzles or three-dimensional graduated cylinders showing a sequence of different heights

Comments: _____

Activity Area: Music/Movement

Materials/Equipment

1. Musical instruments: homemade or commercial

- bells, piano, triangles, xylophones, rhythm sticks, tambourines, drums, maracas, cymbals, tone blocks from various cultures

2. Dance props:

- scarves, ribbons, streamers, hoops, dancing clothes and shoes (male and female)

3. Audio equipment:

- tape or CD player, tape recorder, radio
- tapes or CDs of different types of music such as folk, classical, popular children's songs, jazz, rock, reggae, rhythm and blues, music from various cultures and in various languages
- listening centre, with or without headphones
- song books, microphones

Storage/furnishings/space:

- low, open shelves
- small tables/chairs
- open area for dance/movement

Comments: _____

Activity Area: Technology Centre

(TV, video, computers)

Materials/Equipment

A technology centre is not an essential part of a preschool room and is not required because children learn best from having hands-on contact with materials and socializing with peers and adults.

If used, the audio/visual equipment including TV programs, movies, videos and computer software must be culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate, with no violent, frightening or sexually explicit content. Many children's videos or TV programs contain violence and are inappropriate. Useful materials might include:

- video of a story that is considered children's literature
- computer software that has educational content in introducing concepts such as numbers, colours, matching
- videos for children and staff to exercise to
- videos showing familiar things such as baking cookies/ bread
- videos that support a curricular/interests of children

Storage/furnishing:

- computer tables and chairs

Comments: _____

This revised resource was adapted from:

All About the ECERS-R, Debby Cryer, Thelma Harms, Cathy Riley, 2003

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale revised edition, Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, Debby Cryer, 2005

Caring Spaces, Learning Places, Children's Environments that Work, Jim Greenman, 2005

The Complete Learning Centre Book, Rebecca Isbell, 1995

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For further information contact:

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