

Materials/Equipment List

for Infant and Toddler Child Care Centres

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High quality early learning and child care programs provide safe, healthy, environments that are warm, comfortable and aesthetically pleasing. Infants and toddlers need rich opportunities to investigate, explore and enjoy places that engage all the child's senses and allow freedom of movement. The relationship between children and responsive, respectful caregivers provides the security and encouragement needed to explore the environment. The learning environment should provide unhurried experiences, during care routines and play. It should also offer a number of choices of appropriate toys, objects and activities for infants and toddlers to develop socially/ emotionally, cognitively and physically.

The materials and equipment should:

- be available in a quantity and variety, with duplicates of favourite items, to occupy all the children in attendance
- be consistent with the developmental capabilities of the children
- be available for much of the day
- be set aside and cleaned daily for any group of children who put objects in their mouths
- support children's emotional well-being, stimulate their senses and challenge their motor skills
- include open areas where children can safely move and explore
- be organized to help children develop a sense of order and ensure individual and small group experiences for different kinds of play
- have protected spaces for young infants and comfortable soft spaces for children to relax in a homelike atmosphere
- be accessible to children, so they can find and return materials on their own with adaptations to materials and/or furniture to meet all their needs
- represent and encourage acceptance of diversity (ex: race, culture, age, abilities, gender) in all activity areas
- be provided indoors and outdoors to broaden children's experiences and connect them to nature
- be rotated and changed according to children's interest and skills while keeping some familiarity

Activity Area: Gross Motor

(Active, physical play, large muscle)

Materials/Equipment

Avoid equipment that confines and restricts infants' movement such as swings, infant seats or exersaucers.

12 weeks to 11 months

1. Stationary and portable equipment:

- small push toys
- soft balls (variety of sizes and textures, such as beach balls, clutch balls, balls with holes, rubber, cloth)
- activity centres for young infants
- indoor/outdoor pad, mat or blanket
- low platforms/ramps (vinyl-covered foam)
- floor cushions
- sturdy things to pull up on (low, carpeted bench, rails)
- inflatable beach rings, inner tubes or play rings

12 months to 24 months

2. Indoor stationary and portable equipment:

- low riding toys without pedals
- low wheeled, steerable, riding toys with pedals (older toddlers)
- large push-pull wheel toys (wagons, wheelbarrows, shopping carts, doll carriages)
- large cars and trucks (plastic or wooden)
- soft balls (variety of sizes and textures)
- bean bags
- low climber with steps and slide
- rocking toys
- balance board

Activity Area: Sensori-motor Blocks

Materials/Equipment

1. Blocks: *(at least two or three sets of 10 or more blocks per set)*

- large soft blocks (cloth or vinyl-covered foam)
- light-weight wood or plastic blocks, five centimetres (two inches) or more of various sizes, shapes, colours
- large cardboard blocks
- light-weight unit blocks in different shapes and sizes (triangles, squares, rectangles, arches)

2. Accessories: *(at least five accessories of different types)*

- small age-appropriate toy vehicles (trucks, cars, boats, airplanes)
- small age-appropriate toy people (various ethnic groups, ages, abilities)
- small age-appropriate toy animals (non- frightening zoo, farm, domestic)
- train set
- containers to fill and dump

Storage, space:

- low shelves
- containers (clear, plastic, wicker or rattan baskets)
- sturdy floor space/area protected from interruptions

Comments: _____

Activity Area: Sensori-motor Water

Materials/Equipment

Not required for infants younger than 18 months. Direct supervision is required.

1. Water:

- water table or large tub (flat on floor for younger children)
- individual tubs or basins (thick bath mats for comfort and to absorb water)
- hose and/or sprinkler
- water-proof smocks

2. Water toys: *(provide a variety with different activities: washing dolls, sea animals /shells/rocks)*

- pails, containers
- water wheels
- pumps
- tubes, hoses
- floating toys
- spray bottles, plastic bottles
- bubbles
- siphons and funnels
- sponges
- turkey basters
- measuring cups and spoons
- trucks and cars
- dolls and washcloths
- sea creatures
- nature items (shells, pieces of wood, rocks)

Activity Area: Sensori-motor Sand

Materials/Equipment

Not required for infants younger than 18 months. Direct supervision is required.

1. Sand:

- sand boxes or outdoor sand pits, table, large plastic tub, sink
- individual tubs or basins
- sand or sand substitute (sterilized potting soil, finely shredded mulch)

2. Sand toys: *(provide a variety with different activities)*

- kitchen utensils (measuring cups, spoons, pots, pans, muffin tins, funnels, sifters, plastic dishes, ice cube trays)
- pails, shovels, scoops, containers, molds
- toy rakes and hoes
- wide-toothed combs, trowels, screens
- brooms, dust pans (child sized)
- dramatic play toys (animals, small toy people, large trucks, diggers)
- nature items (shells, pieces of wood, rocks)

Storage, space:

- shelf under or near sand table
- easy-to-clean flooring

Comments: _____

Activity Area: Sensori-motor Creative/Art

Materials/Equipment

Art materials are not required for infants younger than 12 months. Materials should be made available, with close supervision, for toddlers (12 to 24 months) several times per week. Very simple materials should be accessible to older toddlers (two year-olds).

Do not use food for art (ex: pudding). It can give a misleading message about the proper use of food and creates sanitary issues.

1. Drawing:

- large crayons
- water colour markers
- large pieces of chalk
- paper of different sizes and colours

2. Painting:

- finger paints
- block or disk tempera paints and trays
- water colour paint
- liquid tempera paints
- paint brushes of various widths, with short, thick handles

3. Collage:

- glue and paste, glue sticks, glue and paste pots, glue brushes and spreaders
- paper scraps, cut-out magazine pictures, cards, wrapping paper
- stickers (self-adhesive)
- adhesive/contact sheets (ex: mac tac)
- cotton balls, pom poms
- yarn
- ribbon
- nature items (leaves, twigs, feathers)

Activity Area: Sensori-motor Science

(Nature/sensory)

Materials/Equipment

Provide some from each of these categories.

1. Natural objects:

Smaller materials can be stored and used with young children with close supervision. Larger materials, such as shells, can be left out and accessible.

- bird nests
- shells
- pine cones
- stones
- leaves
- smooth wood pieces, large wooden napkin rings
- textured/sensorial pieces (fur, sandpaper, natural bristle brushes, collection of objects of one colour)

2. Living things:

- pets that are acceptable to health authorities
- aquariums or fish bowls with fish
- plants, flowers, terrariums
- bird houses, feeders, trees, grass can be placed outside and visible from a window

3. Books, posters, photos, mobiles:

Display photos and pictures where children can easily see and reach them.

- factual picture books of animals, plants, birds, fish
- posters of real animals, plants
- photos of real animals, plants
- mobiles of realistic birds, butterflies

4. Toys:

- puzzles with realistic pictures of animals, fish, frogs, fruit, vegetables
- scent boxes, feeling boxes, sound boxes
- realistic plastic fruit and vegetables
- realistic toy animals (non-frightening zoo, farm, domestic)
- realistic animal-shaped rattles
- large magnets
- magnifying glasses
- bubble solutions and bubble wands
- light pools, things that create colours, light, shade (hanging crystals, sun catchers, light table)

Storage, furnishing, space:

- shelf, low table, smooth tree-stump table
- low windows so children can see outdoors

Comments: _____

Activity Area: Imitative

(Dramatic play)

Materials/Equipment

12 weeks to 11 months

1. Home area:

- soft dolls
- soft toy animals
- safe objects from the adult world (pots, pans, large wooden or plastic spoons, ladles)
- toy telephones
- small, cloth or vinyl, grasping toy animals
- unbreakable mirror with or without handle or grip

12 months to 24 months

2. Home area:

- child-sized stove, sink, refrigerator, table, chairs
- cooking and eating utensils (pots, pans, dishes, large wooden or plastic spoons, ladles)
- play food, empty product containers
- washable, soft dolls, male or female, multi-ethnic
- doll accessories (blankets, clothes of various cultures, bottles)
- doll furnishings (cribs, high chairs, strollers)
- soft toy animals
- toy or realistic telephones (cell, portable, rotary dial, push button)
- small play buildings with accessories (doll house with furniture and people, farm with animals, garage with vehicles and people)
- full length, unbreakable mirror

3. Simple dress up clothes: *(Clothing outgrown by older children is often the right size for toddlers.)*

- jackets, shirts, dresses, skirts
- hats for different jobs, activities, weather

Activity Area: Fine Motor

(Language/concepts/ manipulative)

Materials/Equipment

12 weeks to 11 months

1. Fine motor:

- grasping toys (variety of textures)
- squeeze toys
- nesting cups
- containers to fill and dump (juice lids with smooth edges, baskets, big and little boxes with lids)
- rattles (different textures, colours, shapes, with varying noises)
- safe hanging things to bat at or grasp
- simple stacking rings
- teething toys
- large pop beads
- cause-and-effect toys with sounds or other responses when buttons are pushed

12 months to 24 months

Offer many choices and a variety of manipulation that require different skills.

2. Fine Motor:

- teething toys
- stacking rings (cloth, plastic)
- stacking cones
- shape sorters
- pegboard and jumbo pegs
- pop beads (snap together)
- nesting toys or containers in graduated sizes (household plastic bowls, cups)

- muffin tins with balls for each cup
- medium or large interlocking blocks
- small five centimetres (two inches) building blocks
- containers to drop objects into (smooth tin juice lids into tin containers with or without slot)
- bead mazes
- large wooden beads, thick strings, laces
- large links, chains
- interlocking stars
- puzzles (wood, rubber, heavy cardboard), three to eight large pieces with and without knobs
- pounding boards with mallets
- shoe boxes, plastic food tubs (variety of sizes) with lids
- gift bags
- texture matching games
- lock and latch boxes

Storage, furnishing, space:

- low shelf
- containers (clear plastic, wicker, rattan, baskets)
- carpet area for floor play
- table, chairs

Comments: _____

Activity Area: Language Concepts – Reading

(Books and pictures)

Materials/Equipment

Provide some materials from each category. A wide selection of thick cardboard, cloth or vinyl books is needed. They can be store-bought, adult or child made books and photo albums.

1. Books:

- animal (non-frightening real, fantasy, cartoon)
- people (real individuals or families, fantasy, cartoon; of varying races, ages, abilities)
- familiar objects
- familiar routines

2. Additional language materials:

- laminated pictures, photos of children, family, pets (display them around the room at child's eye level, within reach and change them often)
- puppets (hand and finger sized)
- flannel board and figures
- songs and story tapes or CDs
- wall hangings (textured, touchable, securely fastened)

Storage, furnishing, space:

- low book shelf (front covers of books displayed)
- combination of comfortable seating (adult armchair, large and small pillows, covered mattress, child-sized couch, chairs, rug)

Comments: _____

Activity Area: Language Concepts – Music and movement

Materials/Equipment

Tapes and CD music should be used for musical experiences, at limited times. They should not be left on as background music.

1. Musical instruments: *(home-made or commercial, from various cultures)*

- bells, toy pianos, xylophones, rhythm sticks, tambourines, drums, maracas, cymbals, tone blocks, shakers made of plastic bottles, rain sticks

2. Musical toys:

- rattles, chimes, soft toys with bells inside, music boxes, musical mobiles, musical push/pull toys

3. Dance props:

- scarves, ribbons, fabric (use with close supervision)

4. Audio equipment:

- CD player, tape recorder
- tapes, CDs of different music (folk, classical, popular children's songs, jazz, rock, reggae, rhythm and blues)
- music from various cultures and in various languages

Storage, furnishings, space:

- low open shelves
- open area for dance and movement

Comments: _____

This guide was adapted from:

All About the ITERS-R, Debby Cryer, Thelma Harms, Cathy Riley, 2004

Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale revised edition, Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, Richard M. Clifford, 2006

Caring for Infants & Toddlers second edition, Derry G Koralek with Amy Laura Dombro and Diane Trister Dodge, 2005

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

Dear Parent: Caring for Infants with Respect expanded edition, Magda Gerber, 2002

Designs for Living and Learning-Transforming Early Childhood Environments, Deb Curtis, Mary Carter, 1999

Infants, Toddlers, and Caregivers 5th edition, Janet Gonzalez-Mena and Dianne Widmeyer Eyer, 2001

Best Practices Licensing Manual for Early Learning and Child Care Centres, Manitoba Child Care Program and Manitoba Family Services and Housing

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