

Materials/Equipment List

**for Family and
Group Child Care Homes**

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High quality early learning and child care programs provide safe, healthy environments that are warm, comfortable, inclusive and aesthetically pleasing. Each family child care provider sets up the learning environment according to their individual style. Some integrate the activity areas into their own living spaces and some create separate spaces. The available indoor and outdoor space governs how providers set up areas that meet the needs of different development stages and the number of children. The schedule, space, daily routines, and the interactions with the provider, provider's family and other children, all present learning opportunities for children.

The learning environment should provide a variety of materials to promote positive social interaction, creativity, exploration and problem solving. Children should have space to play at their own pace and lots of choice in activities and toys, to develop socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically.

This materials and equipment list is not an exhaustive list but will help you choose equipment and materials that give children lots of play-based learning experiences.

The materials and equipment should:

- be available in quantity and variety to occupy all children in attendance
- be consistent with the developmental capabilities of all children in attendance
- be available for much of the day
- support natural play that children initiate and engage in spontaneously
- be accessible to all children where they can reach and use the materials by themselves with adaptations to materials, equipment and furniture to meet all children's needs
- be organized into different areas of the home to support certain types of play, with areas clearly defined
- be arranged for mixed-age groups of children where the main play area is suitable for all children and include an area or private space to be used by older children (containing small piece toys and art supplies)
- represent and encourage acceptance of diversity (race, culture, age, abilities, gender) and reflect on individual diversity of the family, and the families of children in the family child care home
- be rotated and changed frequently based on children's interests and abilities
- be provided both indoors and outdoors to broaden children's exploration and experiences

Activity Area: Dramatic

(Dramatic and imaginative play)

Materials/Equipment

12 weeks to 11 months

1. Home area:

- soft dolls
- soft toy animals
- pots, pans, large wooden/plastic spoons, ladles (safe objects from the adult world)
- toy telephones
- small cloth/vinyl toy animals for grasping
- mirror (unbreakable)

12 months to preschool

2. Home area:

- child-sized stove, sink, refrigerator, table, chairs
- cooking, eating utensils (dishes, muffin tins, wok)
- play food, empty product containers
- child size broom, mop, dust pan, feather duster, rags, pails, empty dish-soap containers
- dolls (male and female, culturally diverse)
- doll accessories (blankets, clothes of various cultures, bottles)
- doll furniture (crib, high chair, stroller, wheelchair, walker)
- toy or old (nonworking) telephones
- full length, unbreakable mirror
- fabrics or blankets typical of various cultures
- small, play buildings with accessories (barn with animals, garage with vehicles, and people)

3. Dress up clothes: (male and female; variety of seasons and cultures)

- jackets, shirts, dresses, skirts, pants
- hats for different jobs, weather and leisure
- shoes, boots, slippers
- purses, tote bags, suitcases
- costumes

4. Prop boxes:

Regularly offer other themes for preschool and school age children using props

boxes, including:

- health clinic: doctor's kit, bandages, tape, gauze, cotton balls, scale, books on first aid, white shirts, clipboards
- restaurant: cash register, note pads, menus, trays, aprons, chef hats, empty ketchup/mustard bottles, play money
- camping: tent, fake fire pit, pots, pans, sleeping bags, backpacks, binoculars, fishing supplies, maps, waders
- carpenter: carpenter's aprons, hard hats, rulers, measuring tapes, tools, empty paint cans, brushes, rollers

Other themes: car repair, party, grocery store, pet store, veterinary clinic, office

School age

Appropriately challenging materials in the types listed above, in addition to:

- small interlocking blocks and other accessories for fantasy constructions (ex: castle, super hero, pirate ship)
- adult figure dolls; action figures
- props for other dramatic play themes (see *prop boxes*)

Storage, furnishings, space:

- low shelves (ideally, toys should be on shelves low enough for children to reach by themselves)
- separate containers for play dishes, play food, dolls
- cardboard boxes to build temporary furniture
- dress-up clothes, hats, purses – hang-on wall hooks or clothes tree

Comments:

Activity Area: Fine Motor

(Manipulative)

Materials/Equipment

12 weeks to 11 months

1. Fine Motor:

- grasping toys (variety of textures)
- nesting cups
- containers to fill and dump (juice lids with smooth edges, baskets, large and small boxes with lids)
- rattles (different textures, colours, shapes, with varying noises)
- safe, hanging things to bat at or grasp
- stacking rings
- teething toys
- large pop beads (snap together)
- cause-and-effect toys with sounds or other responses when buttons are pushed
- household items such as pots, plastic containers with lids, graduated measuring cups

12 months to 24 months

Offer a wide variety of fine motor materials that require different skills.

2. Fine Motor:

- teething toys
- stacking rings (cloth and plastic)
- shape sorters
- pegboards and big pegs
- pop beads
- nesting toys or containers in graduated sizes (household plastic bowls and cups)
- muffin tins with balls for each cup

- medium or large interlocking blocks
- containers to drop objects into (smooth tin juice lids into tin containers with or without slot)
- large beads with thick strings or laces
- large links, chains
- interlocking stars
- puzzles (wood, rubber, heavy cardboard) with three to eight large pieces; with and without knobs
- pounding boards with mallets
- shoe boxes, gift bags, plastic margarine tubs (variety of sizes) with lids

Preschool

Provide some from each category:

3. Small building toys:

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

4. Puzzles:

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

5. Manipulative pieces:

- small and large beads, strings, bead pattern cards, bead frames
- sewing materials (blunt needles, wool, burlap, buttons, lacing cards with laces/string)
- pegs and peg boards
- shapes with and without pattern cards

- zip, snap and button dressing frames
- gears/plates
- straws/sticks with connectors
- links, linking stars
- nuts, bolts, screws
- trains and tracks
- potato-head figure, accessories
- shape sorters

School age

Appropriately challenging materials in the types listed above, in addition to:

- magnetic balls and sticks
- K'Nex
- geoboards (boards with elastics to make geometric/perimeter/area)
- tools to take apart objects (old clocks, radios, machinery and appliances)
- model kits
- pick-up sticks, marbles, jacks
- board and word games
- playing cards
- puzzles (more complex with many and/or small pieces)

6. Art materials: (See Creative section)

Storage, furnishings, space:

- containers, baskets (clear plastic, wicker, rattan)
- appropriately sized tables and chairs or floor area
- suggested storage: materials nearby in buffet or on low shelves

Comments:

Activity Area: Creative

(Art, construction)

Materials/Equipment

Art materials are not required for infants younger than 12 months. At one-year to two-years old, children should be offered appropriate art materials three times a week. Preschool and school age children should have drawing materials accessible daily. Only the simplest materials should be used with toddlers and they should be closely supervised.

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

Provide some from each category:

1. Drawing:

- crayons (thick crayons for toddlers)
- pencils, erasers, coloured pencils
- nontoxic markers
- plain paper, cardboard (various sizes, colours)
- chalk, chalkboard, erasers, sidewalk chalk

School age

Appropriately challenging materials in the types listed above, in addition to:

- pastels, charcoal, calligraphy pens

2. Painting:

- paints (tempera, watercolour, finger paint, food colouring)
- water, ice cubes, snow for painting outdoors
- variety of paint utensils, paintbrushes, rollers, squeeze and spray bottles, sponges, Q-tips, paint scrapers

3. Collage:

- glue, paste, glue sticks, pots, brushes, spreaders

- adhesive contact sheet (ex: mac tac)
- paper scraps, magazines, cards, wrapping paper, ribbon, cellophane, newspapers
- cardboard tubes, boxes, and rolls for construction
- fabric remnants, felt, burlap, leather
- yarn, string
- cotton balls, pompoms
- glitter, buttons, sequins, gems, beads, found objects and safe junk (only for preschool children, three years and up to school age)
- natural objects (pods, weeds, grasses, bark, leaves, seeds, twigs, feathers, rocks, pebbles, shells)

4. Three-dimensional:

- play dough, modelling clay
- cardboard tubes, boxes
- pipe cleaners, straws
- wood gluing or carpentry, soft lumber, dowels, knobs, jar tops, tree stumps, logs

5. Tools:

- scissors (left-handed and right-handed)
- staplers
- paper punches
- adhesive tapes/dispenser, craft glue gun (school age children)
- clipboards
- tools to use with play dough (craft sticks, blunt knives, scissors)

Storage, furnishings, space:

- open shelves, cupboard, low pantry shelf
- containers: clear plastic, wicker, rattan baskets (labelled, when possible)
- appropriately sized table and chairs on easy-to-clean flooring

Comments:

Activity Area: Block

(Block Area)

Materials/Equipment

Block play is not required for children under 12 months.

12 months to 24 months

1. Blocks:

- large, soft blocks (cloth or vinyl covered foam)
- lightweight blocks, five centimetres (two inches) or greater, of various sizes, shapes, colours, sensory (make noises), wood or plastic
- large cardboard blocks
- lightweight unit blocks

2. Accessories: (placed near the blocks, sorted by type)

- 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, native)
- train set
- containers to fill and dump

Preschool and School Age

3. Blocks:

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

Activity Area: Reading

(Language, reasoning, literacy, books, pictures)

Materials/Equipment

Choose a variety of homemade or commercial books (use your local library). Books for infants and toddlers should be thick cardboard, cloth or vinyl. Also use photo albums, magazines for a variety of reading levels for each age group.

Choose some from each category:

1. Factual:

- real animals, birds, plants
- real people (varying ages, race, abilities)
- life skills, real-life experiences (familiar objects/routines for infants and toddlers)
- encyclopaedia, dictionary, newspaper, magazines (school age children)

2. Nature, science, social studies:

- environmental topics (ex: erosion, insect study, planting, pollution, recycling)
- human body
- animal habitats
- homes, life
- family structure (ex: divorced, single-parent, gay, lesbian, adoptive, multi-generational, foster)
- magazines (ex: Owl, National Geographic Kids, Canadian Geographic)

3. Race and culture books:

- historical and contemporary stories about people from various races, customs
- books in various languages (ex: French, Braille, Ojibway, Chinese)

4. Diverse abilities books:

- stories with people who need additional support (wheelchair, crutches, hearing devices)

5. Fantasy:

- pretend stories about people
- pretend stories about animals

6. Additional language materials:

- flannel board and accessories
- puppets, puppet area (ex: use a curtain with a square opening, hung on a spring rod in a doorway as a theatre)
- posters, pictures, photos of children, family, pets (displayed throughout the space where children spend the majority of their time)
- listening centre and recorded stories with or without headphones

School age

Appropriately challenging materials in the types listed above, in addition to:

- chapter books
- comic books
- book-binding supplies (paper punch, thick yarn, cardboard, coils, three-hole punches, book cover material)
- notebooks, journals
- stationary, envelopes, sign-making supplies
- staplers, paper, pencils, pens, clipboards, writing surfaces
- language games, walkie-talkies

Storage, furnishings, space:

- basket of books for infants/toddlers, quilt on floor, carpeted area, cushions, couch
- books for older children out of young children's reach near soft furnishings, comfortable seating, chairs, couch, pillows, away from active play

Comments:

Activity Area: Large Muscle

(Active, physical, gross motor)

Materials/ Equipment

Avoid equipment that confines or restricts infants' movements (ex: swings, infant seats, strollers or exersaucers). Make sure your indoor and outdoor climbing equipment has appropriate shock absorbing surfacing and fall zones. Appropriate safety gear is required (ex: helmets, elbow and knee pads) for ride-on toys and sports equipment.

1. Stationary equipment:

- age-appropriate climbing equipment, manufactured and natural
- age-appropriate slides, swings
- ramps for crawling infants

2. Portable equipment:

12 weeks to 11 months

- indoor/outdoor pad or blanket
- crib gym for younger infants
- soft balls in various sizes, textures (beach balls, clutch balls, balls with holes)
- small push toys
- sturdy things to pull up on (low furniture, table)

12 months to 24 months

- balls and bean bags
- riding toys without pedals
- large push-pull wheel toys (wagons, wheelbarrow, shopping carts, doll carriages)
- mattress, cushions or rugs for tumbling
- rocking toys
- large cardboard boxes, milk crates, thick planks

Preschool

Appropriately challenging materials in the types listed in 12 – 24 months, in addition to:

- riding toys with pedals
- sports equipment (child-sized basketball hoop, plastic bats)
- wheeled equipment (scooters)
- hula hoops, jump ropes
- toboggans, sleds
- large blocks
- loose materials such as big cardboard boxes, blankets, gutters (plastic eavestroughs), wood pieces/planks, tires, large cable spools
- gardening tools

School age

Appropriately challenging materials in the types listed in preschool, in addition to:

- games equipment (croquet, bowling, horseshoes, yo-yos, paddle ball, rubber cones, ring toss, targets)
- basketball hoop, badminton and tennis rackets, floor hockey sticks, nets (need required protective gear)
- bikes
- rollerblades, ice skates
- kites, gliders
- Frisbee
- stilts, pogo sticks

Comments:

Activity Area: Sand/Water

Materials/Equipment

Sand or water play is not required for children under 18 months. Set up sand and water play regularly (at least once a week) with direct supervision for toddlers and preschool children.

1. Sand/water:

- sand boxes, sand pits (outdoors), various types of sand/water tables (ex: dishpans, plastic bins, tubs, buckets, sinks)
- water sprinkler and hose
- sand or sand substitute (modeling sand, play pellets)
- waterproof smocks

2. Sand/water toys:

Provide a variety for different activities (ex. washing dolls, sea animals, shells/rocks, buried treasure, sink float)

- measuring cups, spoons, beakers, containers, pails, plastic bottles
- shovels, scoops, moulds
- pumps, siphons, sand/water wheels
- sponges, water droppers, spray bottles, turkey basters
- funnels, plastic tubes, pipes, spigots
- trowels, rakes, sand scrapers, screens, sifters
- objects that sink or float
- nature items such as shells, pieces of wood, rocks

3. Dramatic play toys:

- animals, dinosaurs, sea creatures, small people, dolls
- small trucks and cars, machinery, boats
- large spoons, strainer spoons, egg beaters, tongs, pots, pans, muffin tins, whisks

Activity Area: Music and Movement

Materials/Equipment

Tapes, CDs, TV and radio music should be used for listening, dancing or singing and turned off when children lose interest. They should not be left on as background music. Radio, TV and CD music must be monitored to ensure appropriate content. Follow family child care or group child care home's code of conduct and technology policy.

1. Musical toys: (infants and toddlers)

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

2. Musical instruments:

Use homemade or commercial instruments from various cultures:

- harmonica, recorders, kazoo's
- guitar, auto harp, banjo, piano, xylophones
- bells, triangles, tambourines, drums
- maracas, cymbals, rhythm sticks
- gourds, cans, washboard, castanets, tone blocks

3. Dance props:

- scarves, capes, pompoms, ribbons, streamers, hoops
- male and female dancing clothes, ballet slippers, appropriate shoes
- costumes, props from various cultures

4. Audio equipment:

- tape or CD player, tape recorder, TV, radio (appropriate content)
- music tapes and CDs, folk, classical, children's songs, jazz, rock, reggae, rhythm-and-blues
- music from various cultures and countries and in various languages
- dance videos from various cultures
- listening centre, headphones

Activity Area: Science

(Nature, sensory)

Materials/Equipment

This area helps connect children to their natural environments. Provide some from each category.

1. Natural objects

Smaller materials can be brought out for young children to use with close supervision. Large materials, (ex: shells) can be left out and accessible.

- flowers, moss, leaves, seeds, plants, acorns, pinecones, bulbs
- shells, rocks
- bird nest, insect nests, feathers
- fossils, bones
- wood, twigs, branches, drift wood
- sand, earth, water

2. Living things:

- pets (acceptable to health authority), cages
- plants, flowers, terrarium
- aquarium, fish, snails, frogs, tadpoles, insects
- worm composter
- garden plants, ferns, moss
- bat house, bird feeders, bird bath visible from window

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

- books, posters of animals, plants, birds, fish, human body, seasons, weather, planets, environment, universe, sky, star charts, habitats, rock formations, continents
- maps, globe, atlas
- x-ray photos
- nature games, matching pictures, cards, nature sequence cards
- science and nature puzzles (plant, animal, human life cycles)
- floor puzzle such as the human body (heart, lungs)

4. Nature and science materials:

- weather vane, wind funnels, pinwheel, wind chimes, fan, chronometer, temperature gauge, rain gauge, observation chart
- magnets
- magnifying glasses, hand lenses
- thermometers
- digital and weighted scales
- prisms, kaleidoscope, mirrors, coloured lenses
- texture/sensorial materials (fur, sandpaper, collection of objects of one colour, cornstarch and water)
- bubble solution and bubble wands
- hanging crystals, sun catchers, cellophane on window (to create light pools)
- mobiles of realistic birds, butterflies

School age

Appropriately challenging materials in the types listed above, in addition to:

- compasses
- pendulums
- tuning forks
- test tubes, eye droppers
- slides, microscope, binoculars
- pulleys, levers, ropes
- batteries, wire, light bulbs
- tools for exploring the insides of rocks, seeds, nuts, etc.
- tools for taking apart old clocks, radios, machinery and appliances
- tools for measuring such as rulers, tape measures, levels

Storage, furnishings, space:

- shelves, display area
- containers: clear plastic, wicker, rattan baskets
- tables, chairs
- low windows so children can see outdoors

Activity Area: Math and Numbers

Materials/Equipment

12 weeks to 24 months

Offer simple materials that allow children to use concrete objects to explore quantity, size and shape.

- rattles (various shapes)
- simple shape puzzles
- shape and number board books
- shape sorters
- stacking rings
- nesting cups
- toys with numbers (toy phone)

Preschool

- small blocks, objects to count such as coloured beads, animals, vehicles, with or without pattern cards, sorting and counting tray
- play money
- dry and liquid measuring cups, spoons
- balance scale and weights, bathroom scale
- rulers
- height chart
- centimetre cubes, snap cubes
- magnetic shapes and numbers
- pattern or matching cards
- attribute blocks (various sizes, colours, shapes, thickness)
- parquetry shapes
- shape puzzles
- number, shape books
- dominos

Activity Area: TV, Video and/or Computer

Materials/Equipment

Infants and toddlers learn best from interactions and hands-on experience. Research shows children under two years should not be allowed to watch TV.

TV, computer and video are not required for children to have fulfilling experiences in child care. If you give preschool or school age children access to a computer, you must ensure you take general safety precautions for online activities. You must also provide positive, constructive and meaningful activities that are carefully supervised. Using technology in learning activities enables older children to broaden and extend their interests and introduce new concepts. If you provide gaming and communication devices (portable and stationary) you must monitor appropriateness, limit the time in use and follow the family child care or group child care home's code of conduct and technology policy.

TV programs, movies, videos and computer software must be culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate. It cannot have any violent, frightening or sexually explicit content. You must monitor content closely because many children's videos and TV programs contain violence and are inappropriate.

Useful materials can include:

- audio/visual equipment, DVDs with movies and games
- computers (located in a common room so you can help the children and monitor them)
- printers, scanners
- cameras, video recorders

Storage, furnishings, space:

- adjustable tables and chairs

Comments:

This resource was adapted from:

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For further information, contact:

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Available in alternate formats upon request.