

Appendix K

Selecting Materials for Your Family Child Care Home

Open-Ended Toys

Open-ended toys allow children to use their imaginations and problem-solving skills as they find many different ways to use the materials and explore the world. Examples of open-ended toys include blocks, balls, cardboard boxes, and arts and craft materials (crayons, colored paper, markers, stickers, pipe cleaners, fabric scraps, etc.). Everyday household materials including pots and pans and wooden spoons (drums), plastic containers (stacking or nesting), clothes baskets, and blankets and pillows (forts) can promote children’s creativity. Materials from nature including tree stumps, stones, seashells, and leaves also create many opportunities for exploring science.

Following is a table identifying the different activities and suggested materials for each area:

Activity Area	General Comments	Infant/Toddler Specified	Preschool Specified
Blocks	Materials in the home that could serve as blocks include empty cans, recycled smaller boxes/containers (cereal boxes, yogurt containers), pvc pipe, and sponges.	Soft washable blocks of varying sizes, shapes, and colors.	A variety of blocks including accessories such as cars/trucks, people, animals.
Games and Puzzles	The best games are those that help develop children’s memory, prediction, and/or reasoning skills.	Puzzles with two to eight pieces, puzzles with knobs.	Puzzles with five or more pieces, memory games, picture dominos, card and/or board games specific to preschool-aged children.
Art Equipment	Promotes small muscle development through drawing, coloring, painting, cutting, or pasting.	Finger (pudding) painting, jumbo colors markers, or chalk. (Always consider infant safety as they are likely to place most items in their mouths.)	Playdough, crayons, markers, paint, paper, tracing shapes, scissors, and glue.
Sensory Materials	Nature and/or household items of different textures (soft, rough, smooth).	<i>As Age Appropriate:</i> Playdough with cookie cutters/plastic knives; dry material bins including sand, cornmeal, rice, or pasta; digging tools, funnels, and containers for dumping; wet material bins (water, snow, ice); squeeze bottles; sponges; funnels; and containers to fill/dump.	Playdough with cookie cutters/plastic knives; dry material bins including sand, cornmeal, rice, or pasta; digging tools, funnels, sifters, and containers for dumping; wet material bins (water, snow, ice); items that float or sink; squeeze bottles; funnels; sponges; and containers to fill/measure.

Activity Area	General Comments	Infant/Toddler Specified	Preschool Specified
Science Equipment	In general, materials for classifying, ordering by size, and sequencing are good choices. Having children assist with feeding of family pets or other small animals and watering of household plants is a great way to also get children interested in nature.	Nesting and stacking toys, sets of safe objects of various sizes and colors, and sets of large plastic wild animals, farm animals, and/or dinosaurs.	Materials might include nature collections (leaves, shells, rocks, pieces of wood); sets of wild animals, farm animals, and dinosaurs; magnifying glasses, magnets, and materials made from metal. Objects to sort and classify by shape, color, size, texture, or other criteria.
Spatial Relationships	Promotes visual perceptual motor skills.	Large single piece puzzles with knobs, blocks.	Puzzles, building blocks, or other building materials (Legos, Magna tiles, etc.)
Art Equipment	It is important to have enough art supplies for several children to participate in the activity at one time.	<i>As Age Appropriate:</i> Jumbo crayons/markers/ sidewalk chalk, paint dabbers, finger paint with edible food (pudding/Jell-O), and paint smocks (old adult size shirts that are put on with the buttons in the back).	Markers, crayons, sidewalk chalk, paint (tempera, watercolor, finger paint), paint smocks (old adult size shirts that are put on with the buttons in the back), glue, scissors, colored paper, tissue paper, and pipe cleaners.
Music, Dance and Movement	Children develop rhythm and creativity with musical instruments and dance props.	Simple rhythm instruments (shakers, small maracas, tambourines, wooden blocks with a spoon), scarves, ribbons tied around a ring, CDs.	Rhythm instruments (shakers, maracas, drums, cymbals, tambourines, triangles, rain makers, etc.), scarves, ribbons tied around a ring, bean bags, CDs.
Dramatic Play	Children learn to role play and act out characters and daily routines through dramatic play.	Multi-ethnic boy and girl dolls and accessories (blanket, bottles), strollers, play kitchen and accessories (food, pots and pans, empty food containers), trucks and cars and other toys representative of the child's culture and community.	Multi-ethnic boy and girl dolls and accessories (stroller, bed, clothes, etc.) play kitchen/doctor office (with relevant props), trucks, cars, and other toys representative of the child's culture and community, dress up clothing (including shoes, jewelry, hats) and puppets.

Activity Area	General Comments	Infant/Toddler Specified	Preschool Specified
Books and Story Telling	Books should include stories and people from diverse cultures and races, including children with disabilities. Adults should be portrayed in a variety of roles. Books also need to address the developmental areas of social emotional, math and science, and language.	Thick, chunky books allowing young children to turn the pages. Books with minimal words. Books with a theme which children can relate to. Rhyming books.	Books that have a reasonable amount of print. Books where children can predict what is going to happen next. Counting books, science books, and books with a message about appropriate behaviors. Books promoting literacy development (rhyming, letters) and language.
Large Muscle - Climbing		Cushioned areas where infants can pull themselves up safely, tunnels to crawl through, small slides, rocking toys.	Planks, tree stumps, tires to climb in and out of and balance beams.
Large Muscle - Wheeled Toys		Small push/pull toys, non-pedal scooters.	Tricycles, wagons, pedal toys.
Games, Equipment		Balls, bean bags.	Balls, bean bags, ring toss, parachute, hula hoops

Adapted from the Family Child Care Association of Maine. (<https://fccmaine.com/2020/02/10/getting-started-in-fcc-part-3-equipment/>).