



How to Use Your Activity Areas Equipment Lists

The activity areas equipment lists are designed to show you items for each area that allow children to learn, imagine and create but not be overwhelmed by too many materials.

Establishing activity areas requires some planning, work and possible expense, but there are many benefits to having organized activity areas in your program.

★ Discipline problems may be reduced when children have many choices and areas to play that interest them and allow them to stay more engaged in play.

★ Caregivers can determine what items need to be added to activity areas by paying attention to children's play, development and interest.

★ Activity areas are organized and labeled which mean children are learning even during clean-up time.

Other tips for setting up and managing your activity areas

Keep it simple: When choosing locations for each center think about how children will use each area. For example, you may not want to have your block area in a high traffic zone or your reading area next to a noisy art area.

Make it manageable: Arrange only the number of areas that can fit comfortably into the available space.

Observe and evaluate: Observe how each area is being used which will help you evaluate current setup, the need for new materials, or ideas for future changes.

Have fun! Setting up activity areas does not have to be stressful. Start by keeping everything simple – and enjoy the play experience with the children in your care.

Source: Using Learning Centers in Child Care by extension at extension.org

Funded by Department of Workforce Services, Utah Office of Child Care

When Purchasing New Materials

When purchasing new materials for your program on your own or with a grant the equipment lists can assist you in selecting the basic items needed in each activity area and help you keep track of what items you already have in your program.

Block Activity Area (Family Child Care up to 16 children)



When setting up and purchasing items for your block area, remember to include items for infants and toddlers, and that all items are safe for the ages you care for.

| Setting Up the Activity Area (required) | | |
|--|----|--|
| Yes | No | |
| | | Shelves with small labeled containers which put all items within children's reach. Unit blocks do not have to be in a container if they are organized and labeled on shelves |
| | | There is enough space for children to move freely, without bumping into objects or each other |

| Items in the Center (required) | | |
|--|---|---|
| Accessible daily during free choice (put in the number of items you have) | Additional items for rotation (put in the number of items you have) | ITEMS DESCRIPTION |
| | | Infants and Toddlers: set of 12 soft or light weight blocks |
| | | Preschool and School Age: a set of least 180 unit blocks |
| | | 10 small vehicles (cars, trucks, boats, planes, etc.) |
| | | 10 people figures (families, multi-cultural, community helpers) |
| | | 10 animal figures (farm, zoo, ocean, dinosaurs, etc.) |
| <i>Notes: Legos and Duplo are considered manipulatives and can be in the block area but do not count in the requirements. It is not best practice to store blocks in large tubs.</i> | | |

Beyond the Basics (not required)

- Children can save their creations and play with them later.
- Caregiver asks children questions and responds to questions.
- Caregiver observes to make sure children express interest and enjoyment when playing in the block area.
- Include other infant/toddler materials such as soft blocks, plastic blocks, cardboard blocks, buckets, dump trucks.
- Include other school age materials such as bristle blocks, Lincoln logs, bolt construction sets, magnet blocks.
- Include other preschool material such as traffic signs, interlocking wood rails, tunnels, large hollow blocks, foam blocks, cloth blocks, paper bag blocks, milk carton blocks.



Resources for Caregivers

Books: *Exploring Math & Science* by NAEYC, **Block Play** by Sharon MacDonald, **Block Book** by Elizabeth Hirsch.

Career Ladder Training: *A Great Place for Kids, Unlocking the Creative Mind, Back to the Basics: Building Blocks to Success.*

Art Activity Area (Family Child Care up to 16 children)



When setting up and purchasing items for your art area, remember to include items for infants and toddlers, and that all items are safe for the ages you care for.

| Setting Up the Activity Area (required) | | |
|--|----|--|
| Yes | No | |
| | | Shelves with labeled containers which put all items within children’s reach |
| | | There is enough room for at least 3 children to take items off shelves and create with them on a table |

| Items in the Center (required) | | |
|---|---|--|
| Accessible daily during free choice (put in the number of items you have) | Additional items for rotation (put in the number of items you have) | ITEMS DESCRIPTION |
| | | Daily supply (enough for all children) of drawing materials including paper and crayons, markers or pencils |
| | | Daily supply of paints (watercolor or tempera) accessible daily |
| | | Daily supply of three-dimensional materials (play dough, clay, wood for gluing, etc.) |
| | | Daily supply of collage materials (paper, fabric, cardboard, glue, etc.) |
| | | 10 Tools to include scissors, play dough accessories and other optional items such as hole punches, glue, tape, staplers, etc. |

Beyond the Basics (not required)

- Children can save their creations and complete them later.
- The art area is near a water source for mixing paint and cleaning up.
- Children know and follow the rules for using the art area.
- Caregiver asks children questions and responds to questions.
- Caregiver observes to make sure children express interest and enjoyment in creating art.
- Include infant/toddler materials which may include finger paint, play dough or jumbo crayons.
- Include school age materials which may include wood and tools, clay, felt pens, butcher paper, yarn and beads, books about artists and art techniques.
- Include other preschool materials such as easels, drying racks, smocks or shirts, collage materials, other items to paint with including squeeze bottles, sponges, rollers or feathers, pom-poms, stamps, tissue paper, puffy paint, small brushes, foam, craft sticks, rubbing crayons to use with nature items, puppet-making materials like paper bags, socks, buttons and fabric.



Resources for Caregivers

Book: *Expressing Creativity in Preschool* by NAEYC

Career Ladder Training: *A Great Place for Kids, School Readiness Standards, Course 4: Additional Core Standards*

Funded by Department of Workforce Services, Utah Office of Child Care

Dramatic Play Activity Area (Family Childcare up to 16 children)



When setting up and purchasing items for your dramatic play area, remember to include items for infants and toddlers, and that all items are safe for the ages you care for.

| Setting Up the Activity Area (required) | | |
|--|----|---|
| Yes | No | |
| | | Low shelves, plastic bins or baskets that allows children to access materials |
| | | There is enough room for at least 3 children to take items off shelves and play with them on the floor and/or table |
| | | Child sized housekeeping furniture |

| Items in the Center (required) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Accessible daily during free choice (put in the number of items you have) | Additional items for rotation (put in the number of items you have) | ITEMS DESCRIPTION |
| | | Infants: 10 dramatic play items such as soft animals, soft dolls, pots and pans, toy telephones |
| | | Toddlers : 12 dramatic play items such as dress up items, small buildings with accessories (bus with people), doll furnishings, dolls, cooking/eating props |
| | | Preschool: 6 dress up clothing items representing work, leisure and fantasy play |
| | | Preschool: 6 dramatic play items such as dolls, doll furnishings, dishes, play food |
| | | Preschool: 10 soft toys such as puppets, soft dolls, stuffed animals |

Beyond the Basics (not required)

- Children know and follow the rules for using dramatic play activity area.
- Caregiver asks children questions and responds to questions.
- Caregiver observes to make sure children express interest and enjoyment in the dramatic play area.
- When playing in the dramatic play activity area children can express thoughts and feelings and build skills in all domains
- Include other infant/toddler materials such as soft animal or people sets.
- Include other school age materials such as cash register, microphones, aprons, real computer keyboards, sunglasses, scarves, phones, cooking items.
- Include other preschool materials which may include different type of ethnic food, mailbox, house cleaning items, dollhouse, vet center, puppet theater, grocery carts and baskets, large shatterproof mirror, real empty food containers, play tools, construction sets, pop up items, etc.

Resources for Caregivers

Books: *Literacy Play* by Amy Cox and Sherrie West, *Expressing Creativity in Preschool* by NAEYC

Career Ladder Training – *A Great Place for Kids, Family Child Care Course 3*



Math Activity Area (Family Child Care up to 16 children)

When setting up and purchasing items for your math area, remember to include items for infants and toddlers, and that all items are safe for the ages you care for.

| Setting Up the Activity Area (required) | | |
|--|----|--|
| Yes | No | |
| | | Shelves with labeled containers which put all items within children’s reach |
| | | There is enough space for at least 3 children to take items off the shelves and create with them on the floor and/or table |

| Items in the Center (required) | | |
|---|---|--|
| Accessible daily during free choice (put in the number of items you have) | Additional items for rotation (put in the number of items you have) | ITEMS DESCRIPTION |
| | | Infants and toddlers: 5 items representing shapes (examples are sorters, simple puzzles or blocks with different shapes), numbers (containers with lids, drums, phones), or quantity/size (nesting cups, stacking rings) |
| | | Preschool: 5 items that allow children to use concrete objects to experiment with quantity, size and shape (pegboards, puzzles, balancing scales, geometric pattern blocks, etc.) |
| | | School-age: 5 items that allow children to use concrete objects to experiment with quantity, size and shape (rulers, geoboards, board games, calculators, etc.) |

Beyond the Basics (not required)

- Children know and follow the rules for using the math area.
- Caregiver asks children questions and responds to questions.
- Caregiver observes to make sure children express interest and enjoyment when using math items.
- Include infant/toddler materials which may include large beads and laces, colored wooden blocks, large colored pegs and pegboards, tunnels, collection of toys, measuring cups and spoons, pots and pans with lids and board books that have counting.
- Include school age materials which may include large dice, abacus, magnet tiles, sticky sticks, math boards, measuring tapes, containers to measure liquid or sand.
- Include other preschool materials such as sewing cards, magnetic letters and numbers, collectibles like keys or milk lids, group games like lotto, dominoes and board games, math journals, play clocks, money, cash registers and items to sort.

Resources for Caregivers

Book: *Exploring Math & Science* by NAEYC

Career Ladder Training – *A Great Place for Kids, School Readiness Standards, Course 2 Mathematics*



Science & Nature Activity Area (Family Child Care up to 16 children)



When setting up and purchasing items for your science & nature area, remember to include items for infants and toddlers, and that all items are safe for the ages you care for.

| Setting Up the Activity Area (required) | | |
|--|----|---|
| Yes | No | |
| | | Shelves with labeled containers which put all items within children's reach |
| | | There is enough room for at least 3 children to take items off shelves and play with them on the floor and/or table |

| Items in the Center (required) | | |
|---|---|--|
| Accessible daily during free choice (put in the number of items you have) | Additional items for rotation (put in the number of items you have) | ITEMS DESCRIPTION |
| | | 3 books that represent nature realistically (photos, realistic drawings/paintings, etc.) |
| | | 3 board books that represent nature realistically (photos, realistic drawings/paintings) |
| | | 3 nature collections (rocks, leaves, shells, etc.) |
| | | 3 different types of nature/science exploration sets (magnifying glasses, scales, magnets & metal items, life cycle materials, binoculars, etc.) |
| | | 3 nature sequencing cards/picture sets, puzzles or activity sets |

Beyond the Basics (not required)

- Children can save their creations and complete them later.
- Locate this activity area near natural light (for growing plants).
- There is paper and writing instruments that allow children to document their discoveries.
- Use a sand and water table to conduct experiments (sink or float, "what happens when you add water to sand?").
- Ask families to bring used items that children can take apart and put together (make sure items are safe).
- Include other infant/toddler materials which may include safe mirrors, safe items found in nature, finger paint, bubbles.
- Include other school age materials which may include pulleys and ramps, microscope and slides, simple science experiments, magnets.
- Include other preschool materials such as a light table, a pet, scales, science or scientists' posters, gears, magnet tiles, plants.



Resources for Caregivers

Book: *Exploring Math & Science in Preschool* by NAEYC

Career Ladder Training: *School Readiness Standards, Course 4: Additional Core Standards*

Funded by Department of Workforce Services, Utah Office of Child Care

Music and Movement Activity Area (Family Child Care up to 16 children)



When setting up and purchasing items for your music and movement area, remember to include items for infants and toddlers, and that all items are safe for the ages you care for.

| Setting Up the Activity Area (required) | | |
|--|----|---|
| Yes | No | |
| | | Shelves with labeled containers which put all items within children's reach |
| | | There is enough space for children to move freely, without bumping into objects or each other |

| Items in the Center (required) | | |
|---|---|--|
| Accessible daily during free choice (put in the number of items you have) | Additional items for rotation (put in the number of items you have) | ITEMS DESCRIPTION |
| | | A device that plays children's music (iPod, phone or CD player) |
| | | 6 music CDs representing at least 3 different music styles (classical, jazz, children's songs, ethnic music, etc.) |
| | | 10 musical / rhythm toys (at least 3 appropriate for each age group) |

Beyond the Basics (not required)

- Children know and follow the rules for using the music and movement area.
- The music area is away from quieter areas, such as the language and literacy area.
- Caregiver asks children questions and responds to questions.
- Caregiver observes to make sure children express interest and enjoyment in making and moving to music.
- Include other infant/toddler materials which may include sight and sound tubes, wrist and ankle bells, rattles, toddler tambourines, etc.
- Include other school age materials which may include tone bells, rhythm sticks, drums and a karaoke machine.
- Include other preschool materials such as a parachute, colorful scarves, ribbons, egg shakers, buckets and wood spoons (as a drum), sing along children's books, art material children can make musical instruments out of.

Resources for Caregivers

Book: *Expressing Creativity in Preschool* by NAEYC

Career Ladder Training: *School Readiness Standards, Course 4: Additional Core Standards*



Sensory Activity Area (Family Childcare up to 16 children)



When setting up and purchasing items for your sensory area, remember to include items for infants and toddlers, and that all items are safe for the ages you care for.

| Setting Up the Activity Area (required) | | |
|--|----|---|
| Yes | No | |
| | | A sensory table or large shallow plastic sensory bin |
| | | There is enough room for at least 3 children to use the sensory table without being crowded |

| Items in the Center (required) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Accessible daily during free choice (put in the number of items you have) | Additional items for rotation (put in the number of items you have) | ITEMS DESCRIPTION |
| | | 8 accessories for digging, holding, pouring, and floating (shovels, measuring cups and spoons, molds, small pitchers, water wheels, sifters, small vehicles such as boats and cars, etc.) |

Beyond the Basics (not required)

- Children know and follow the rules for using the sensory activity area
- Caregiver asks children questions and responds to questions
- Caregiver observes to make sure children express interest and enjoyment at the sensory table.
- Include other infant/toddler materials such as texture cloths, touch and feel board books, sensory bottles, different textured balls, blocks or bean bags, different texture rugs or mats, safe items from nature.
- Include other school age materials which may include clay, slime, color sand, tissue paper, gardening activities, cooking activities.
- Include other preschool materials which may include bubbles, ice, finger paint, shaving cream, dinosaurs, trucks and cars, plastic letters or numbers, items from nature, sponges, pom poms, etc.

Resources for Caregivers

Books: *Recipes for Play* by Rachel Summer and Ruth Mitchener, *Sensory Play* by Gayle Jervis and Kristen Cacka

Career Ladder Training: *Special Needs Course 3: Setting Up the Environment*, *Back to the Basics: Methods in Playdough*



Manipulative Activity Area (Family Child Care up to 16 children)



When setting up and purchasing items for your manipulative area, remember to include items for infants and toddlers, and that all items are safe for the ages you care for.

| Setting Up the Activity Area (required) | | |
|--|----|---|
| Yes | No | |
| | | Shelves with labeled containers which put all items within children's reach |
| | | There is enough room for at least 3 children to take items off shelves and create with them on the floor and/or table |

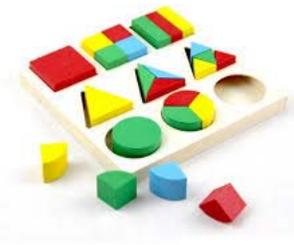
| Items in the Center (required) | | |
|---|---|--|
| Accessible daily during free choice (put in the number of items you have) | Additional items for rotation (put in the number of items you have) | ITEMS DESCRIPTION |
| | | Infants up to 6 months: 10 manipulatives such as rattles and grasping toys |
| | | Infants 6 months to 12 months: 10 manipulatives such as busy boxes, nesting toys, pop up or toys with buttons, containers to fill and dump, simple puzzles, pop beads, stacking rings, chunky pegboards, interlocking blocks, etc. |
| | | 1 year old and toddlers: 10 manipulatives such as simple puzzles, pop beads, stacking rings, cause and effect toys, chunky peg boards, interlocking blocks, etc. |
| | | 3 sets of interlocking building toys such as Legos, Lincoln logs, magnatiles, etc. |
| | | 3 sets of manipulatives such as pegs/peg boards, bead lacing set, interlocking gears, puzzles, etc. |

Beyond the Basics (not required)

- Children know and follow the rules for using the manipulative activity area.
- Caregiver asks children questions and responds to questions.
- Caregiver observes to make sure children express interest and enjoyment working with the manipulatives.
- Include other infant/toddler materials which may include feely boxes, star builders, abc blocks, small boxes with lids, play animals.
- Include other school age materials which may include nuts and bolts, building sets, real tools and wood, beads and string, sewing items.
- Include other preschool materials such a light table with crystal climbers or other colorful transparent items, fishing sets, dressing boards or dress up clothes with snaps, buttons, zippers and laces, items to sort by size, texture or color, pipe builders.

Resources for Caregivers

Career Ladder Training: *A Great Place for Kids! Positive Learning Environments*



Language and Literacy Activity Area (Family Child Care up to 16 children)



When setting up and purchasing items for your language and literacy area, remember to include items for infants and toddlers, and that all items are safe for the ages you care for.

| Setting Up the Activity Area (required) | | |
|--|----|--|
| Yes | No | |
| | | Low shelves, plastic bins or baskets that allows children to access books |
| | | There is enough room for at least 3 children to read comfortably without being crowded |

| Items in the Center (required) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Accessible daily during free choice (put in the number of items you have) | Additional items for rotation (put in the number of items you have) | ITEMS DESCRIPTION |
| | | 12 vinyl, cloth and or board books appropriate for infants, toddlers and young two-year olds that feature some of each of the following: people of various age, races and abilities, animals, familiar objects and routines |
| | | 12 picture books appropriate for preschool age children that feature some of each of the following: people of various ages, races and abilities, animals, familiar objects, and familiar routines |
| | | 12 books appropriate for school age children both fiction and non-fiction that feature various areas of interest such as science, animals, sports, fantasy, bilingual, how to books |

Beyond the Basics (not required)

- Children know and follow the rules for using the language and literacy activity area.
- Caregiver asks children questions and responds to questions.
- Caregiver observes to make sure children express interest and enjoyment while looking at and reading books in the language and literacy Area.
- Children can use bookmarks to mark pages where they left off and return to books later.
- When using the language and literacy activity area children can express thoughts and feelings and build skills in all domains.
- Include other infant/toddler materials which may include laminated photos or pictures, puppets, props that go along with story books.
- Include other school age, materials such as newspapers, kid's magazines, journals, dictionaries, listening center, poetry books, paper, pencils, markers, journals, book making supplies, etc.
- Include other preschool materials which may be puppets, written materials, props, felt, whiteboards or chalk boards, books in English and children's home language, storying telling kits, language board games.

Resources for Caregivers

Books: *Learning About Language & Literacy in Preschool* by NAEYC, *Exploring Language & Literacy* by NAEYC
 Career Ladder Training: *Strong and Smart: Physical & Intellectual Development, School Readiness Course 1*
 Funded by Department of Workforce Services, Utah Office of Child Care

