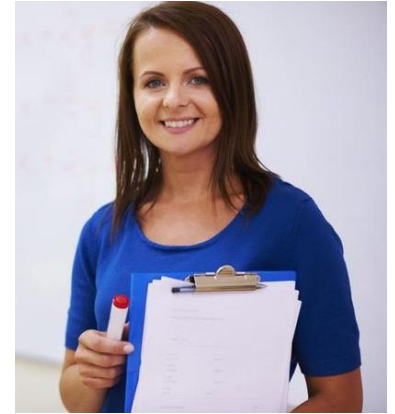


# Tips Sheet for purchasing items for your child care

## Purchasing indoor materials

- When selecting materials, choking is a particular risk for children age 3 or younger. Follow the manufactures guidelines for the specific age groups.
- When having a grant to purchase items you may want to look at purchasing large items like shelves or large dramatic play items.
- Select toys for teaching more than one skill or concept.
- Select items that are stimulating to the senses (colorful, textural, even noisy).
- Items should promote active, not passive involvement and encourage imagination rather than adult control.
- Do not purchase large items that do not fit in your play area. There should be enough space for children to move freely, without bumping into objects. If this is not possible in your activity areas, look at the large items you have in the space and consider removing some of them.
- Select puzzles, other manipulatives, and games that challenge but do not frustrate children.
- Select items of different textures and materials. Are most of the materials children use or touch made of plastic? Try adding wicker baskets, pillows with different texture materials, area rugs such as clipped, looped, Berber, or braided materials, furniture that is wood, leather or cloth and natural items such as rocks, safe plants, driftwood and seashells.
- Select multipurpose, unstructured materials that can be used for a variety of play experiences for children of many age levels.
- When purchasing shelving do not purchase shelves that are over 45 inches so children can reach items. Always make sure all shelving is safe (splinter free, will not tip over, etc.).



## Purchasing outdoor materials

Large playground equipment does not have to be a priority. Adding materials such as tree trunks, stepping stones, sandboxes, playhouses, an assortment of balls, hoops and dramatic play materials can get children moving and spark their imagination.

## Purchasing materials for children with specials needs

When purchasing materials for indoors and out it will benefit all the children in your care if you purchase materials that are “accessible” to children. Accessible means the equipment is both easy to get to and, once on the equipment, is easy and safe for a child to play on independently and safely.

### Resources:

*Family Child Care Homes Creative Spaces for Children to Learn*, by Linda J. Armstrong.

*Caring for Children in Family Child Care*, by D. Koralek, L Colker, D. Trister Dodge.



Utah Office of Child Care  
A Division of the Utah Department of  
Workforce Services