

Blocks are essential materials in the classroom, and block play enhances all areas of a child's development. The Block Area/Center should include many different types of building materials for children to use in their own constructions and combinations. The Block Center should be designed to allow children to be active builders as they think through their thoughts and ideas about construction. Through block play, mathematical concepts such as shapes, patterns, size, length, weight, and spatial relationships are explored and put to practical use. While building structures, children can develop an understanding of physical science concepts such as simple machines (lever, wedge and inclined plane), cause and effect, gravity, balance, and stability. Use the IQ Guide for the Learning Environment to ensure that all required items are accessible to children daily.

- ♥ **The majority of unit blocks are stored on shelves for easy accessibility and sorted, labeled, and organized for easy clean-up:** Unit blocks should be organized neatly on shelves so children can use them independently. To facilitate clean-up, labels for unit blocks should support stacking blocks by shape and size. The large majority of unit blocks should be stacked on shelves and not in bins or tubs. This arrangement helps children practice the skills of sorting and stacking. Labels can include photos, drawings, and/or pictures from magazines and/or tracings.
- ♥ **Block area is located away from traffic patterns:** The block area should be located in an area of the room where traffic patterns will not disturb play. Many teachers let the large group area also serve as the block center.
- ♥ **Area large enough for five or more children:** This area should be large enough so that several children can build and create structures without interrupting other activities. The block area should be one of the largest in the classroom and accommodate five or more children.
- ♥ **Organized storage for blocks, props, and accessories:** Basic shelving is required for organized storage of unit blocks, props, and accessories.
- ♥ **Standard unit blocks**—A minimum of 200-250 unit blocks should be accessible. Unit blocks are wooden and include shapes such as rectangles, squares, triangles, and cylinders.



- ♥ **Large hollow blocks:** A minimum of 17-30 large wooden hollow blocks should be accessible each day.
- ♥ **Block accessories:** Three types of block accessories should be accessible. Examples include:
Vehicles Farm Animals Zoo Animals Ocean Animals Traffic Signs People
- ♥ **Real and found materials:** At least two types of real and found materials should be included. Examples include:

Egg Cartons PVC Pipes and Fittings Paper/Plastic Cups Cardboard Tubes

- ♥ **Literacy development materials:** Materials to promote literacy development include:

Maps Alphabet Blocks Books Related to Block Play Writing Materials

- ♥ **An additional type of block with a minimum of 10-20 blocks:** The additional block type should not be interlocking. Additional blocks might include:

Foam Cardboard Plastic Teacher-Made
(juice box containers, VHS tapes, etc)

