

BLOCK CENTER TIPS

BLOCK AREA ARRANGEMENT

- Select an area of the room for your block area that is not in a high traffic area.
- Define a large space in your room for the block area. It should be large enough to accommodate 5-6 children at one time.
- Provide adequate shelving. Make sure you have enough shelf space so that you can label and divide your blocks by size and shape.
- Label shelves with block shapes so children can easily see the label.
- Provide block props that change throughout the year
- Add real and found materials to the block area
- Add props and accessories related to your current topic or interest.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

- The block area should be closely supervised by one teacher during play.
- The teacher should have a positive attitude about the learning that can take place in the block area.
- A teacher can model simple structures for children to prompt building.
- A teacher should ask the builder to, "tell me about it".
- A teacher should point out new materials and props.
- A teacher should give suggestions related to the current topic or interest.
- A teacher should assist in taking down structures and replacing blocks on shelves.
- In the block area, modeling is key.

RULES FOR BUILDING WITH BLOCKS

It is important that teachers establish rules early in the year for the block area. These rules should be taken seriously by the children to help prevent injury. Rules should be stated in a positive fashion and tell children what they CAN do.

- Blocks are for building only.
- Feet remain on the floor.
- Only take apart what YOU have built.
- Remove blocks carefully and replace them on the shelf.
- Build in the center of the block area; leave space for traffic and next to the empty shelf for cleaning up.
- Build only as high as (your head, your chest, etc.)

CLEAN-UP TIME

- Allow enough time to prevent rushing
- Station one adult in the block area during clean-up time
- Encourage all children the help clean-up the block area.
- Define roles - "delivery person", "stacker"
- Provide assistance and model.
- Play games to make it fun
- Find out who is really good at sorting and stacking and assign them the job of "checking and reorganizing"

PRESERVING BLOCK PLAY

- Make a sketch
- Take a picture
- Allow structure to remain for a short, specified length of time
- Build on a moveable surface
- Place a large enough box over the structure to protect.