

Variety of Activities

Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.03(3) - Opportunities for each child to make choices in a variety of activities shall be offered. A Child with Special Needs shall be integrated into the activities provided by the Center unless contraindicated medically or by written parental agreement.

(a) Variety of Activities. Activities shall be planned for each group to allow for:

1. Indoor and outdoor play;
2. A balance of quiet and active periods;
3. A balance of supervised free choice and caregiver-directed activities;
4. Individual, small group and large group activities;
5. Large muscle activities, such as but not limited to, running, riding, climbing, balancing, jumping, throwing, or digging;
6. Small muscle activities, such as but not limited to, building with blocks or construction toys, use of puzzles, shapes, nesting or stacking toys, pegs, lacing, sorting beads, or clay;
7. Language experiences, such as but not limited to, listening, talking, rhymes, fingerplays, stories, use of film strips, recordings or flannel boards;
8. Arts and crafts, such as but not limited to, painting, coloring, cutting, or pasting;
9. Dramatic play, such as but not limited to, play in a home center, with dolls, puppets, or dress up;
10. Rhythm and music, such as but not limited to, listening, singing, dancing, or making music; and
11. Nature and science experiences, such as but not limited to, measuring, pouring activities related to the “world around us” such as nature walks, plants, leaves or weather or experiences in using the five senses through sensory play.

Family Child Care Learning Homes: 290-2-3-.09(1) - The Family Child Care Learning Home shall provide a variety of daily activities appropriate for the Children’s chronological ages and developmental levels. Children with special needs shall be integrated into the activities provided by the Family Child Care Learning Home unless contraindicated medically or by parental agreement. Activities shall be planned for each group to allow for:

- (a) Indoor and outdoor play;
- (b) A balance of quiet and active periods;
- (c) A balance of supervised free choice and caregiver-directed activities;
- (d) Individual, small group, and large group activities;

- (e) Large muscle activities, such as, but not limited to, running, riding, climbing, balancing, jumping, throwing, or digging;
- (f) Small muscle activities, such as, but not limited to, building with blocks or construction toys, use of puzzles, nesting or stacking toys, pegs, lacing, sorting beads, or clay;
- (g) Language experiences, such as, but not limited to, listening, talking, rhymes, finger plays, stories, use of film strips, recordings or flannel boards;
- (h) Arts and crafts, such as, but not limited to, painting, coloring, cutting, or pasting;
- (i) Dramatic play, such as, but not limited to, play in a home, with dolls, puppets, or dress up;
- (j) Rhythm and music, such as, but not limited to, listening, singing, dancing, or making music; and
- (k) Nature and science experiences, such as, but not limited to, measuring, pouring, activities related to the "world around us" such as nature walks, plants, leaves or weather, or experiences in using the five senses through sensory play.

Rule Type: Non-Core Rule

Intent of the Rule

To provide opportunities for children to choose from a variety of activities and materials appropriate for specific age groups and to implement the activities with attention to children's individual needs and developmental levels. To ensure that children with special needs are included in activities appropriate for their developmental levels, unless their participation is precluded by a medical condition or parental agreement. To ensure that the child care program balances various types of activities by alternating activities throughout the day.

Clarification

Play is essential to a child's development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children. Teachers should offer a wide variety of activities to capture children's interests and to meet their individual abilities. Children with special needs benefit from being grouped with children of similar ages and vice versa. When children participate in a variety of activities, they develop the best strategies for progressing through the different social stages.

A variety of activities offered throughout the day creates a positive early childhood environment. Teachers should offer teacher-initiated and child-initiated learning experiences that encourage child development. Planned activities should include a balance of indoor and outdoor play, quiet and active periods, and opportunities for children to participate as individuals and as part of a small and large group. For example, quiet activities include story time, art, listening to music, manipulative play, and snack/meal/nap time. For infants, quiet activities could include holding, cuddling, rocking, etc. Examples of faster-paced activities include outdoor play (climbing, running, swinging, etc.). For infants, active play could include crawling, pulling up, and grasping/batting/pushing toys, etc.

Child care programs should provide children time to choose and engage in their own activities, under supervision, and time for teachers to select and guide children's activities. The activities made available to children should foster large muscle development for coordination and balance, support the development of small muscles for manual control, nurture the development of language, communication, and listening skills, encourage creative, spontaneous expression and communication, and provide sensory/perceptual experiences with opportunities for children to observe, explore, and discover the natural environment.

It is acceptable for child care programs to combine activities. For example, nature and science activities might be combined with arts/crafts and music by allowing children to make a collage using natural materials gathered from outdoors (i.e., leaves, dried flowers, etc.) combined with finger paints, crayons, construction paper, and other art materials while listening to music or environmental tapes (with sounds of the ocean, rainfall, animals, etc.).

Indicators

- ✓ Child care programs shall provide a variety of daily activities.
 - Recommendation: Children’s interests should be the main focus of activities. Staff should change activities if children lose interest and extend play time if children are interested.
 - Best Practice: Routinely rotate toys and materials in each classroom to alleviate boredom.
 - Organizational TIP: Consider arranging toys and materials according to interest areas to create learning centers within the classroom (e.g., book center, art center, music center, dramatic play center, etc.).
 - Tip: For examples of toys, materials, and equipment to use in each interest area, see the chart below. (NOTE: This list is not all inclusive, and suitability would depend on the age group.)

Large Muscle	Small Muscle	Language	Arts & Crafts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jump ropes • Hula hoops • Parachutes • Riding toys • Easel with large paint brush and paint or water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacing beads • Jigsaw puzzles • Playdough • Finger plays • Safety scissors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books • Posters • Charts • Flash cards • Flannel boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint • Stickers • Crayons • Construction paper • Glue
Dramatic Play	Rhythm & Music	Nature & Science	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dolls • Dress-up clothes • Pots & pans • Puppets • Telephones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDs • Instruments • Dancing ribbons • Rattles • Tape/CD players 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rocks • Magnifying glasses • Sand/water tables • Plants • Magnets 	

- ✓ Children with special needs shall be included in the activities provided by the child care program.
 - Reminder: Children’s activities should permit and allow for participation by all children. Accommodations must be made for children’s individualized needs. This may involve adapting the space and materials in the classroom to ensure accessibility for all children in care.
 - Note: Children with special needs should only be excluded from activities when a medical reason prohibits their participation or when the child care program has a written parental agreement on file that specifies the activities in which the child is or is not able to participate.
 - Tip: Regional Inclusion Specialists can provide free information and assistance on including children with special needs in the child care program. Contact information for regional Inclusion Specialists can be found on Bright from the Start’s website at: <http://www.dec.al.gov/CCS/ProviderInclusion.aspx>

Resources:

Child Care - eXtension

http://articles.extension.org/child_care

Earlychildhood NEWS

<http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com>

Caring for Our Children

<http://cfoc.nrckids.org/>

Georgia Early Learning Development Standards (GELDS)

<http://www.gelds.decal.ga.gov/>

Environmental Rating Scales Institute

<http://ersi.info/index.html>