

MATERIALS GUIDE: FCCERS-3



MATERIALS GUIDE



This resource should be used in conjunction with the FCCERS-3 scale book and the GA and ERSI Additional Notes. This document will give a generalized overview of the kinds of materials needed in the Activities subscale of the FCCERS-3 scale but will not give specific amounts of items that are needed. Additionally, the materials listed in this guide are not an exhaustive list of all materials that can be used. Please reference each item in your scale book to determine how many materials are needed based on the ages and abilities of children that are enrolled.

Helpful Tips to Keep in Mind:

- As materials are rotated for variety or for sanitizing, note the types of materials you are removing and add another material of the same type back into rotation. For example, if you take an interlocking material out, replace it with another interlocking material. This helps to ensure all kinds of materials are still represented.
- For mixed ages enrolled in your Family Child Care program, ensure materials for all ages and abilities are accessible for use. Keep in mind the ages of children in the program, how those ages change throughout the year, and the age ranges listed in the scale book.
- Material selection will need to change as children progress in age and abilities throughout the year. For example, when choosing materials for a group of toddlers, it may be necessary to include a few materials from infant categories at the beginning of the year but add in more preschool materials by the end of the year.

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BOOKS



Providers have an important role to play in preparing children for life-long literacy, both by making books accessible to children and by sharing the joy of reading with them. When providers encourage children to use books and model excitement in reading, children will learn to love books. Children can acquire pre-literacy skills by learning to identify letters and sounds, following a story, hearing new vocabulary, and recognizing print.

Infants and toddlers will learn new sounds and words, while **preschoolers** will learn inflection, storytelling, and new concepts like math or science. **School-agers** will continue to develop their love and skills for reading when age-appropriate books are accessible.

Books should:

- Be organized in a way that allows all children in the class to easily access them.
- Consist of both fiction and factual books for all age groups.
- Be suited to the age and developmental levels of the children.
- Contain positive social messages. Not contain graphic or violent images.
- Be in good repair. All books that are worn or torn should be discarded.
















*Books can be store bought or teacher made, using laminated pictures of the children for example.

*E-books can be considered here if they are accessible, and children are able to use them independently but should not have sound or animation. An electronic device counts as only one book, even if it may have more books stored on it.



BOOKS



<p>Infants (Birth - 11 months)</p>	<p>Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)</p>	<p>Preschool (3 years - 5 years)</p>	<p>School-Age (6 years - 12 years)</p>
<p>Cloth books </p> <p>Plastic books </p> <p>Board books </p> <p>Accessible Book Storage </p>	<p>Board Books </p> <p>Toddler picture books </p>	<p>Paperback and Board books </p> 	<p>Informational Paperbacks And Novels </p> <p>E-books w/ no sound or animation </p>
<p>Appropriate topics per age group:</p> <p>Wide selection of books with varied topics such as: people, race, age, ability, animals, familiar objects, familiar routines, nature/science, and math.</p>		<p>Wide selection of books with varied topics such as: nature, science, math, diverse people, feelings, jobs, cultures, sports, hobbies, and those representing current themes or topics.</p>	
<p>Homemade Books:</p> <p>Loose-leaf Book Rings  Stapled, covered with tape  Ribbon or Yarn  Child-created  Zip-lock bags </p>			

FINE MOTOR MATERIALS

Fine motor materials allow children to tone and develop their smaller muscle groups, which will help them as they learn to write and perform self-help skills, such as zipping and buttoning. When varied categories of fine motor materials are accessible to children, they provide opportunities for developing a wider variety of skills as they grow.

Fine motor materials include the following categories: **interlocking building materials, manipulatives, and puzzles.**



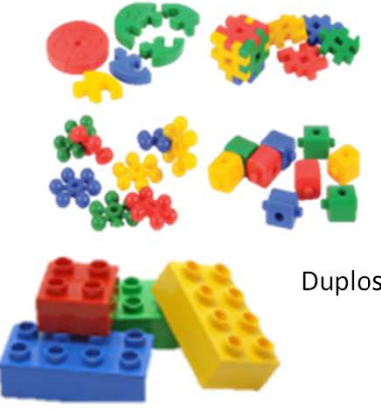





Did you know?

- Some materials may work for more than one age group. For example, Potato Head toys may be appropriate for both toddlers and preschoolers, and Legos and magnetic tiles are appropriate for both preschoolers and school-age children.
- When using small toys, check for size and potential choking hazards before use with young children.



Interlocking Building Materials

Interlocking materials are objects that are designed to fit together.


















Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
<p>Large pop beads</p>  <p>Large Links</p> 	<p>Assorted interlocking</p>  <p>Duplos</p>	<p>Legos</p>  <p>Lincoln Logs</p>  <p>Bristle Blocks</p> 	<p>K'nex</p>  <p>Stretchy Tubes and Connectors</p> 
<p>Pop beads, large links, other shapes that connect such as flowers, fish, or animals</p>	<p>Pegs with peg boards, pop beads, small waffle blocks, bristle blocks, and other connecting shapes</p>	<p>Interlocking blocks of varied sizes, interlocking logs, Duplos, Legos, Tinker Toys, and magnetic tiles</p>	<p>Lincoln logs, small interlocking block building sets</p>
<p>Homemade Interlocking Materials:</p> <p>Interlocking cardboard</p>  <p>Interlocking tissue rolls</p>  <p>Interlocking pool noodles</p>  <p>Interlocking felt pieces with fasteners</p> 			

**When using small toys check for size and potential choking hazards before use with young children.*

Manipulatives



Manipulative materials encourage a child to learn through touching, moving objects, ordering, weighing, arranging to fit, etc. Being able to physically manipulate objects helps children have a deeper understanding of concepts that rote learning cannot provide.


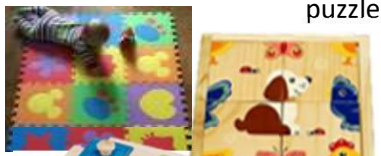












Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
<p>Grasping toys</p>  <p>Ring toys</p>  <p>Stacked nesting cups</p>  <p>Ball rattle</p> 	<p>Mr. Potato Head</p>  <p>Busy box</p>  <p>Large lacing beads</p> 	<p>Peg boards with pegs</p>  <p>Gears</p>  <p>Lacing cards</p> 	<p>Pick-up sticks</p>  <p>Geoboards</p>  <p>Jacks</p> 
<p>Busy boxes, nesting toys, textured toys, cradle gyms, rattles, cause and effect toys that respond when buttons are pushed</p>	<p>Stacking rings, medium nesting cups, shape sorting games, big pegs with peg board, bead mazes, simple lacing toys, etc.</p>	<p>Stringing beads, sewing cards, table blocks, pattern blocks, zip-snap-button dolls, nuts and bolts, wooden train tracks</p>	<p>Pick-up sticks, marbles, small computer games, magnetic tiles, geometric shapes</p>
<p>Homemade Manipulatives:</p> <p>Cardstock lacing cards</p>  <p>Lacing stems</p>  <p>Stackable egg crates</p>  <p>Homemade shape sorter</p> 			

**When using small toys check for size and potential choking hazards before use with young children.*

Puzzles



Puzzles are made of shaped pieces that fit into matching spaces either in a frame or without a frame. Some puzzles are less complex for infants with larger knobbed pieces and others are more complicated with more pieces and a more intricate design. Puzzles help develop fine motor skills as children must turn the pieces to line them up and then press them together.

Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
<p>Chunky puzzles</p>  <p>Floor mat puzzles</p>  <p>Large knob puzzles</p> 	 <p>Small knob puzzle</p>  <p>Chunky puzzles</p>	 <p>Framed puzzles</p>  <p>Floor puzzles</p>	<p>Non-framed Jigsaw puzzle</p>  
<p>Easy to grasp and large piece puzzles</p>	<p>Large, chunky piece puzzles, smaller knob puzzles</p>	<p>More complex puzzles, framed puzzles, knob puzzles, table-top puzzles that teach concepts such as counting</p>	<p>Complex puzzles, with many pieces and/or small pieces</p>
<p>Homemade Puzzles:</p>  <p>Painted wood block puzzle</p>	 <p>Cereal box puzzles</p>	 <p>Felt pieces puzzle</p>	 <p>Paper plate puzzles</p>  <p>Craft stick puzzles</p>

**When using small toys, check for size and potential choking hazards before use with young children.*

ART MATERIALS



Art materials are materials that children use to experiment with visual representation. When children are provided art experiences, they practice problem solving and develop fine motor skills that will aid them in later writing and self-help skills. Additionally, children can experiment in creative, hands-on ways with math and science concepts, such as space, line, shapes, and the combination of colors.

Art allows children to be creative and to express their ideas and thoughts. The more freedom children have in using these materials, the more benefits they will gain from the experience. Open-ended art projects that allow for individual expression teach children far more than teacher-directed crafts. Think process over product!

Art materials include the following categories: **drawing materials, paint, three-dimensional materials, collage materials, and tools.**

Remember:

- Close, age-appropriate supervision is required when children use art materials.
- Edible materials are not counted as art materials because they give a misleading message about the proper use of food.
- Art materials, such as crayons, may have the warning “not recommended for use by children under 3 years of age.” Unless materials are labeled toxic, they may be used with younger children, but only with stringent supervision.
- In order to be considered accessible for older toddlers and preschoolers, paints should be set up for use, or be stored in a way that a child can reach and use them without a teacher’s help.
- To give credit as an art material, whatever is needed to make it useable must be provided with it. For example, rollers and cookie cutters require playdough, and stencils require paper and pencils, crayons, or markers.

Drawing Materials














Drawing materials allow children to freely draw what they would like. Paper or another drawing surface must accompany the drawing materials. Drawing helps children develop fine motor skills that will help them learn to print and write as they grow.

Infants / Young Toddlers (Birth-17 months)	Older Toddlers / Twos (18 months-35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
<p>Chunky egg crayons</p>  <p>Finger crayons</p>  <p>Art materials are not required for children under 18 months.</p>	<p>Jumbo colored pencils</p>  <p>Watercolor markers without caps</p> 	<p>Crayons</p>  <p>Marker boards with markers</p>  <p>Chalk</p> 	<p>Colored pencils</p>  <p>Regular pencils</p> 
<p>Additional Materials: Crayons, pencils, pens, markers, and oil pastels</p>			
<p>Homemade Drawing Materials</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="210 1291 357 1331"> <p>DIY crayons</p>  </div> <div data-bbox="766 1291 871 1364"> <p>Melted crayons</p>  </div> <div data-bbox="1396 1258 1585 1437"> <p>DIY sidewalk chalk using Plaster of Paris and tempera paint</p>  </div> </div>			

**Close, age-appropriate supervision is required when children use art materials.*

Paints

Painting with young children encourages children to express themselves while strengthening fine motor skills. Finger painting allows children to explore the feeling of the paint on their fingers and to use their fine motor skills to move and squish the paint around. When painting with a brush, children must use their fine motor skills to dip their brushes in the paint and wipe off the excess before moving the brush across the paper.







Infants / Young Toddlers (Birth-17 months)	Older Toddlers / Twos (18 months-35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
Art materials are not required for children under 18 months.	Watercolor paints  Tempera paints  Finger paints 	Liquid tempera paints  Tempera cake paints 	3-D Glitter paints  Acrylic paints  Metallic paints 
Additional Materials: Liquid watercolors, glitter paint, powdered tempera paint, bubble paint			
Homemade Paints: Ice cube Paint		Homemade Paint Recipes 	Homemade Bubble Paint 

**Close, age-appropriate supervision is required when children use art materials.*

Three-Dimensional Materials



Three-dimensional means that the art children create has height, width, and depth. Using 3-D materials helps children explore spatial orientation and problem solving as they figure out how to connect these materials together.

Infants / Young Toddlers (Birth-17 months)	Older Toddlers / Twos (18 months-35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
Art materials are not required for children under 18 months.	Playdough   Jumbo Craft sticks	Pipe cleaners  Modeling clay 	 Wooden craft pieces  Magic Noodles

Additional 3-D Materials: Cardboard rolls, Styrofoam balls, wiki-sticks, air dry clay, Floam, Scupley, floral foam, pom poms, cotton balls. Some 3-D materials can be found around the house, such as recycling items like cereal boxes, empty plastic jars, and paper towel rolls. Different kinds of playdough can be homemade or made with children as an activity.

Homemade 3-dimensional Materials: Empty plastic Jars 	Boxes 	Tissue Rolls 	Empty cereal boxes 
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*Close, age-appropriate supervision is required when children use art materials. **Gluing 3-D materials such as pom-poms to a flat surface does not count as 3-D. Children should be encouraged to build up and out with 3-D materials.

Collage Materials



Collage materials allow flexibility as children create. Collage provides a different kind of fine motor practice than drawing or coloring, as children need to pick up each small collage material and glue or stick it on to the surface.

Infants / Young Toddlers (Birth-17 months)	Older Toddlers / Twos (18 months-35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
Art materials are not required for children under 18 months.	 Short sections of ribbon  Large Foam Stickers  Yarn	 Buttons  Feathers  Cotton balls  Gems	 Pom-poms  Wooden shapes
Additional Collage Materials:	Large pom-poms, natural objects, cloth, stickers, and felt scraps	Pom-poms, sequins, glitter, natural objects, cloth or felt scraps, foam or wooden shapes	
Homemade 3-D Materials:			
Scrap paper 	Picture cut-outs 	Magazines 	Assorted tissue / paper 

**When using art materials, check for size and potential choking hazards before use with young children. Close, age-appropriate supervision is required when children use art materials.*

Art Tools



Art tools are any additional items that children use to create art. Tools increase the amount of creativity that children can have when making art. Tools also encourage a wide variety of fine motor skills, such as cutting, rolling, and pressing.

Infants / Young Toddlers (Birth-17 months)	Older Toddlers / Twos (18 months-35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
Art materials are not required for children under 18 months.	 <p>Glue Sticks</p> <p>Tape</p> <p>Playdough Rollers</p> <p>Paint Brushes</p>	 <p>Safety Scissors</p> <p>Paint Rollers</p> <p>Stencils</p> <p>Bottles of Glue</p>	 <p>Hole Punches</p> <p>Smaller paintbrushes/ different sized paintbrushes</p> <p>Children's Scissors</p>
Additional Art Tools:	Paintbrushes with various widths and handle sizes, easy-to-use blunt scissors, self-stick stamps, stickers, tape	Hole/shape punches, tape, tools to use with playdough or clay, paintbrushes, sponge painters, dot paints, stamps and ink pads	
Homemade Art Tools:	 <p>Cardboard paint scrapers</p> <p>Homemade Paintbrushes</p>	 <p>Sponges</p>	 <p>Homemade Glue</p>

**Close, age-appropriate supervision is required when children use art materials.*

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

From a very early age, children show us that they enjoy music produced either from voices or instruments. Providing musical instruments, musical materials, and musical experiences can encourage children in their language, social-emotional, and motor development.

Infants and toddlers are exposed to new sounds and words through songs. **Preschoolers and school age children** can learn concepts like cause and effect and tempo when working with different kinds of instruments.

Music can be used to encourage different kinds of activities, such as soft music at nap time or faster music to encourage dancing and gross motor movement.




Remember:

- When using musical toys that are battery operated, the batteries must be replaced when needed and the toy must be functional for it to be counted as a music material.
- The spread of germs should be minimized when children use music instruments with mouth pieces, such as a flute or harmonica. This can be done by sanitizing the material after each child or providing individual instruments for each child’s personal use.
- If recorded music is played by the provider or by a child, this counts as one material that is accessible to the children.



Musical Materials

Music materials are items that children and teachers use or create to make or listen to music. These materials include: **Musical toys**, which are toys that play music; **Instruments** that allow children to create noise, music, or musical sounds; and **recorded music** that the teacher or children play using a CD player or other device.

Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
<p>Piano/Xylophone</p>  <p>Assorted Musical Toys</p> 	<p>Musical Toys</p>  <p>Rainsticks</p>  <p>Tambourines</p> 	<p>Drums</p>  <p>Xylophone</p> 	<p>CD player with CDs</p>  <p>Musical Keyboard</p> 
<p>Additional Materials: musical mobiles, soft toys with bells inside, drums</p>		<p>Pianos, bells, xylophones, guitars, flutes, triangles, cymbals, rhythm sticks, drums, keyboards, multicultural instrument sets, iPods</p>	
<p>Homemade Music Materials:</p> <p>Rainsticks</p> 	<p>Drums</p> 	<p>Guitar</p> 	<p>Maracas</p> 

BLOCKS

Blocks encourage children to experiment with shape, size, balance, and gravity, and are essential materials to have accessible to children. Block play also helps children to develop spatial awareness, to collaborate with other children, and to improve fine motor skills.

- **Infants** might explore the texture and feel of the blocks, the sound blocks make when they are hit together or shaken, designs on the blocks, and how to stack a few blocks.
- **Toddlers** might begin to experiment to see what happens when blocks are stacked different ways, how varied sized blocks build differently, and begin to make simple structures with them.
- As children become **preschoolers and early school-age**, they begin to make much more complex structures, often with an end goal of a specific structure in mind, such as bridges and intersecting roads, a zoo, a farm, or a house.

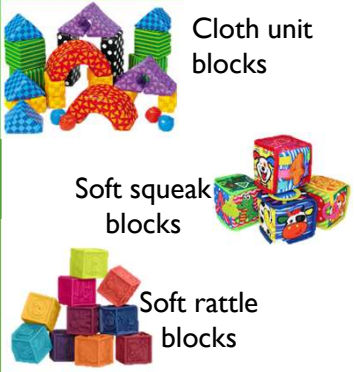
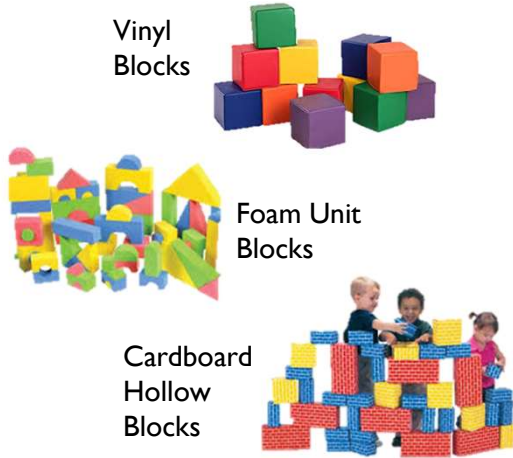






Remember:

- There are many different materials that people consider blocks, but the ERS tools define blocks. Blocks are geometric shapes with smooth sides that are 2" or more, do not connect, and fall over easily when stacked.
- Blocks are only required for mobile infants- 8-year-olds.










Blocks

The types of blocks recommended for different age groups of children differ because of age and ability. Young infants are provided with large soft blocks that are easy to grasp and are sometimes textured. Toddlers are given soft unit and hollow blocks that they can use to begin to safely experiment with building. Preschoolers and school-age children can be given heavier wooden unit and hollow blocks because their gross motor skills are more developed, and they can manage them as they build larger and more elaborate structures.

Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 8 years)	
 <p>Cloth unit blocks</p> <p>Soft squeak blocks</p> <p>Soft rattle blocks</p> <p>*Blocks are not required for non-mobile infants.</p>	 <p>Vinyl Blocks</p> <p>Foam Unit Blocks</p> <p>Cardboard Hollow Blocks</p>	 <p>Wooden Unit Blocks</p> <p>*Blocks are not required for children older than 8 years.</p>	 <p>Wooden Hollow Blocks</p>	
<p>Additional Materials:</p>	<p>Soft vinyl, cloth covered blocks, large cardboard blocks, sensory blocks such as those that make noise, clear window blocks</p>	<p>Unit blocks (wooden, plastic, or hard foam including shapes, such as rectangles, squares, triangles, or cylinders); large hollow blocks (wooden, plastic, or cardboard)</p>		
<p>Homemade Hollow Blocks:</p> <p>Recycled boxes covered with duct tape, contact paper, vinyl wrapping paper</p>	 <p>Recycled large drink boxes</p>	 <p>Mini cereal boxes</p>	 <p>Empty packing or wrapping boxes of all sizes</p>	 <p>Duct Tape Building Blocks</p>

Block Accessories

Block accessories encourage children to enhance their play. Accessories should be stored near the blocks so that children know that they are intended to be used in block play, and they should add to block play rather than detract from it. Block accessories should be proportional to the size of the blocks being used.

Infants / Toddlers (Birth-23 months)	Two Year Olds (24 months-3 years)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 8 years)
<p>*Block accessories are not required for children under 24 months.</p>	<p>Vehicles</p>  <p>Wooden block people</p> 	<p>Animals (ex. zoo, farm)</p>  <p>Road Signs</p> 	
<p>Additional Accessories:</p>	<p>Small buildings, trees, plants, fences, people</p>		
<p>Homemade Block Accessories:</p>  <p>Homemade road and road signs</p>	 <p>Painted block wooden buildings</p>	<p>Cardboard parking garage used with blocks</p> 	

DRAMATIC PLAY

Dramatic Play is the act of simply pretending. Pretend play is essential for the growth and development of children, it allows children to develop their imagination and act out roles. When using dramatic play materials, children should be free to use materials in their own way to cultivate their creativity.

Dramatic play materials should be plentiful and include a wide variety of materials and props. Having ample dramatic play materials to choose from enhances children's play and increases their opportunity for learning. When dramatic play materials and props are available both indoors and outdoors, children have more opportunities to engage in meaningful dramatic play.

Dramatic play materials include all toys that are provided for children to use in their pretend play. This might include small toy people or small animals to use with blocks or buildings. **Dramatic play props** are a type of dramatic play material, that are child-sized or real versions of what children see in their world. This might include cooking and eating equipment, toy foods, doctor's kits, cash registers, soft toy animals, etc.



Dramatic Play

For infants, dramatic play can increase their vocabulary as they learn words for everyday objects, such as hat, bowl, and cup. Introducing infants to dramatic play gives them their first experiences differentiating between real life and pretend things. Although infants usually play alone, dramatic play increases social-emotional skills and introduces the foundation for parallel play. They can mimic what they have seen their parents do, such as talk on the phone or give a baby a bottle. Even young infants can mimic a teacher patting or rocking a baby doll. Materials for infants should be simple and easily accessible.

Infants

(Birth-11 months)

Materials:



Soft people figures

Vehicles



Toy animals



Props:



Soft dolls

Pots and Pans



Soft toy foods



Soft animals



Toy telephones



Additional Materials: toy buildings

Additional Props: purses without straps

Dramatic Play



Dramatic play is important in the development of toddlers and twos. Dramatic play helps to expand their vocabulary, teaching them names for types of foods, dishes, and actions, such as stir or pour. It encourages them to use their expressive language skills and communicate with one another as they act out different roles. Teachers are essential for modeling roles, showing children how to use the materials, and encouraging children to try things on their own. Toddlers begin to move beyond mimicking to create their own ideas and stories as they develop.

Toddlers/Twos (12 months- 35 months)

Materials:



Soft people figures



Soft Sea animals



Trains



Toy cars with accessories

Props:



Child-sized play furniture



Dolls



Play foods



Simple Dress-up Clothes



Toy Telephones



Cooking/eating equipment (pots, pans, dishes, cups)

Additional Materials: small play buildings with accessories, zoo animals, farm animals, dinosaurs

Additional Props: Doll furnishings, soft animals

Homemade Toddler Dramatic Play Materials/Props:



Food made from blocks

DIY Stove/
refrigerator from
plastic storage
drawers



Mailbox



Dramatic Play



Dramatic play is essential for the development of preschoolers as it encourages them to develop imagination and empathy as they role play. It also allows them to work on their language, reasoning, and social skills as they communicate with one another, share ideas, listen, and pretend with one another. When ample and varied materials are provided for children to use in dramatic play, the possibilities of play and the benefits of dramatic play are enhanced and extended.

Preschool/kindergarten

(3 years- 5 years)

Materials:



Animal play set



Small toy people



Doll house with furnishings



Plastic bugs

Props:



Child-sized furniture



Cooking/eating utensils

Toy foods



Dolls



Accessories

Dress-up clothes for boys and girls



Props for role play



Additional Materials: small toy cars and trains, zoo and sea animals

Additional Props: Stuffed animals, mirrors, accessories (purses, tote bags, briefcases, glasses with no lens), doll furniture, additional theme props, cash register, toy telephones, restaurant menus, career props

Homemade Preschool Dramatic Play Materials/Props:

Cardboard pizza oven



Post office



Flower shop



Dramatic Play



School-age children require a wider range of props that they can use to act out their more complex understanding of the world. School-agers often extend their dramatic play into theatrical performances or puppet shows. School-age children can use preschool dramatic play materials as well.

School-Age

(6 years -12 years)

Materials:



Vehicles with accessories



Dolls with clothes representing adult figures



Small toy people for use with blocks, buildings, or vehicles

Props:



Puppet Theater



Large Variety of Foods



Interlocking blocks with accessories for fantasy construction

Additional Materials: action figures

Additional Props: Theater props, costumes, formal dress up clothes, uniforms from fast food restaurants, fashion dolls representing adult figures, action figures, restaurant menus, waiter/waitress props, veterinarian kit and props

Homemade School-Age Materials/Props:



Cardboard Puppet Theatre



Cardboard Castle



Cardboard Fiesta drink shop



DIY Space Station

NATURE/SCIENCE

From a young age, children are fascinated by the natural world. When teachers encourage children as they explore the natural world around them, it lays the foundation for science learning as they grow. When children are provided many kinds of science materials and experiences, they readily explore nature and science concepts. As children begin to explore these materials, teachers can add vocabulary, add new concepts and information to extend their learning, and encourage children to ask questions and talk about what they see.

Nature/Science materials include the following categories:
natural objects, living things to care for and observe,
nature/science books, pictures, games or toys,
nature/science tools, and sand/water with toys.






Nature/Science



Living Things

When children are given the chance to observe and care for living things, they learn about life processes, such as the need for air, food, and water. It also gives them a sense of responsibility.

Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
Non-poisonous, living plant 		Easily viewed bird feeder 	Fish
Additional Materials: House plants or terrarium; plants sprouting from seeds; flower, vegetable, or herb gardens (outdoors or indoors); fresh cut flowers in water, class pet (rabbit, gerbil, hermit crab); aquarium with fish, snails, or other animals; ant farm; worm farm; butterfly hatching kit			

Collections of Natural Objects:

Natural objects are things created by nature that can be found outdoors. Children can use these items to not only learn more about nature, but also to classify, categorize, and sort. Plants and animals that are encased in a hard plastic or resin are also considered here.

 <p>Seashells</p>  <p>Bird's nest</p>	 <p>Leaves</p>	 <p>Insects in transparent resin</p>	 <p>Rocks</p>
Additional Materials: Nuts (acorn, buckeye, walnuts), feathers (not dried), fossils, natural wood, pinecones, opened empty eggs from birds, dried flowers, seeds or pits from fruit, gourds			

Nature/Science



Nature/Science Books, Pictures, Games, or Toys

Nature/Science books, pictures, games, or toys give children realistic facts about animals, nature, and health concepts. These materials help children to develop their senses and overall awareness of the natural world around them. Adding books to a science center also gives children the opportunity to research and investigate topics they are interested in or curious about.

Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
<p>Factual books</p>  <p>Realistic Simple Animal Games, Pictures, and Posters</p> 	<p>Factual books</p>  <p>Five Sense Game</p>  <p>Science Memory Game</p> 	<p>Factual books</p>  <p>Life Cycle puzzles</p> 	<p>Factual books</p>  <p>More Difficult Science Puzzles</p> 

Additional Materials: Nature/science puzzles with pictures, flashcards, nature picture matching cards, nature picture sequencing cards, realistic factual nature science games

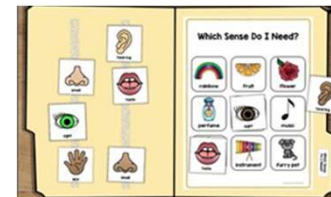
Homemade Books/Games:



Leaf Books











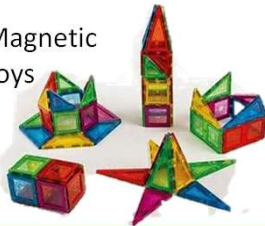




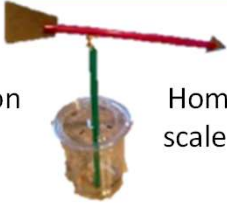
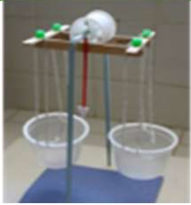
Cardboard leaf matching gam



Nature/Science File Folder Activities

Tools

Nature/science tools allow children to experiment with scientific concepts and to explore the scientific process. Materials need to be provided with tools for children to get the most out of them. For example, magnet wands will need objects to attract; magnifying glasses will need objects to study; and microscopes will need slides to examine.

Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
Magnetic stack  Color paddles  Easy hold magnifier 	Large magnets with objects to attract  Binoculars  Balance scale 	Funnels  Magnifier glasses and tweezers  Magnetic toys 	Eyedroppers  Microscope with slides 
		Additional Materials: scales, tape measure, rulers, test tubes, safety goggles, binoculars, prisms, kaleidoscopes, thermometers, working light table, flashlights	
Homemade Science Tools:			
Smelling bottles 	Rain gauge 	Weather station 	Homemade scale 

Infants / Toddlers (Birth-23 months)	Twos (24 months-35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
<p>*Sand/water is not required for children under 24 months of age.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sand/Water tables</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Sand/Water toys</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Floating toys</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Shovel and pail</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Sifters</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Scoops</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Watering can</p> </div> </div>		<p>*Sand/water is not required for school-agers.</p>
<p>Additional Materials Measuring cups, sponges, plastic toy animals, sink and float toys, coloring for water, bubbles for water, damp sand, baby dolls for washing</p>			
<p>Homemade Sand/Water Materials:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>DIY Floating Boats (sponges/straws)</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Sand containers</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>DIY sand combs</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>DIY bottle funnel</p> </div> </div>			

MATH/NUMBER







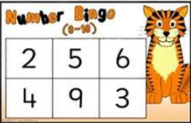






Children’s experiences with math activities and materials set the foundation for their understanding of concepts, such as size, quantity, numbers, and shapes. Materials that are provided for children need to be developmentally appropriate for their level and interest.

Introduce math for **Infants, Toddlers, and Twos** naturally. These experiences should be informal and occur as children play with everyday materials or toys. Singing can also be another great way to begin to introduce math concepts, such as counting, to children. **Preschool** experiences with numbers and math should relate math words and concepts to real world experiences to build the foundation for math in later years. **School-agers** should have more complex materials and/or games for complex math concepts, such as measuring, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and/or division.

Remember:

- Some math materials could be used for materials in other items. For example, a number puzzle would count for math as well as fine motor.
- Materials that require several components will only be counted if all components are present. Similarly, if a math material requires additional materials for its use, those must be present. For example, measuring cups and spoons are only useful when they have materials with them to measure, such as sand or water.



Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
<p>Simple shape puzzle</p>  <p>Phones with numbers</p> 	<p>Nesting cups</p>  <p>Stacking rings</p>  <p>Shape sorters</p> 	<p>Number puzzles</p>  <p>Number Games</p>  <p>Small objects used for Counting Activities</p> 	<p>Parquetry Blocks</p>  <p>Geoboards</p>  <p>Unit cubes and rods</p> 
<p>Additional math/number materials: Rattles of various shapes, cradle gyms with hanging shapes, number and shape board books, cash register with numbers</p>		<p>Balance scales, rulers, magnetic numbers, parquetry blocks or geometric shaped blocks, books on counting/shapes, math/number computer software</p>	<p>Rulers, tape measurers, number lines, math cards and board games, calculators, math computer software</p>
<p>Homemade Math/Number Materials:</p> <p>Homemade Abacus</p>  <p>Felt-shapes book</p> 		<p>Matching shapes Ice tray</p> 	<p>Cardboard Shape sorter box</p> 

PROMOTING ACCEPTANCE OF DIVERSITY



The ERS scales use the word **diversity** to refer to the differences between groups of people regarding race, religion, culture, gender, age, or ability. When early childhood programs give children the opportunity to learn about diversity through the materials and activities provided in the classroom, children understand more about the people and world around them.

According to the ERS instruments, **acceptance of diversity** means that instead of viewing differences as a negative, differences are considered strengths, adding more flavor to life and allowing all to contribute in unique ways.

Promoting acceptance of diversity materials include the following categories: **culture, race, abilities, age, and non-traditional gender roles**. Materials that count in this item may also count in other items. For example, a book showing a child wearing eyeglasses will also count in books, and pretend foods from different cultures will also count in dramatic play.

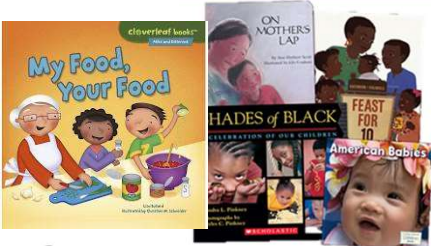








Remember: Examples must demonstrate a contrast in diversity. For example, a taco would not count as an example of cultural diversity alone, but when paired with food from another culture, such as sushi, the pair would count as one example.

DIVERSITY MATERIALS



Culture

Culturally diverse materials introduce children to customs that people may experience in different parts of the world, demonstrated by showing contrasting examples of traditional clothes worn, food eaten, realistic photos of customs taking place, and/or experiencing cultural music materials.










Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
<p>Books</p>  <p>Musical instruments</p> 	<p>Block people</p> 	<p>Multicultural vests</p>  <p>Foods</p> 	<p>Multicultural Music</p> 
<p>Additional Cultural Materials:</p>	<p>Dramatic play dishes or props, posters, picture card games, play foods from many cultures, posters, puppets, restaurant menus, multicultural instrument sets</p>		
<p>Homemade Materials:</p> <p>Felt Sushi</p>  <p>Felt Ravioli</p>  <p>Bongo drums with cans</p>  <p>DIY Sombrero</p> 			

DIVERSITY MATERIALS



Race

Racially diverse materials introduce children to the contrasting ways people can look by including examples of materials showing people of varied skin tones, facial features, races, and ethnic groups. This helps children to become familiar with people in our world and to value people from all races and ethnic groups.










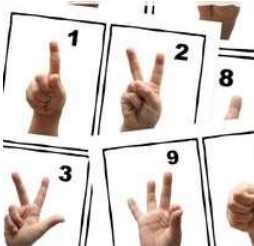
Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
 <p>Dolls</p>	 <p>Books</p>	 <p>Multicultural Crayons</p>	<p>Puppets</p>  <p>Puzzles</p> 
<p>Additional Materials:</p>	<p>Posters, bingo games showing people, felt stories, block people, language sequence cards, community helper flashcards, art materials (people cut outs, multicultural paint, multicultural colored pencils)</p>		
<p>Homemade Diversity Materials</p>  <p>Felt Dress-Up Dolls</p>	<p>Tissue Roll Block People</p> 	 <p>DIY Poster Puzzles</p>	

DIVERSITY MATERIALS



Abilities

Materials that show people with differing abilities help children to understand others around them who may think, speak, act, or move differently than they do. This is typically demonstrated by showing contrasting examples of people using varied communication methods, people who use equipment to assist them (hearing aids, walkers, glasses, wheelchairs, etc.), and people with differing abilities interacting in activities children can relate to.



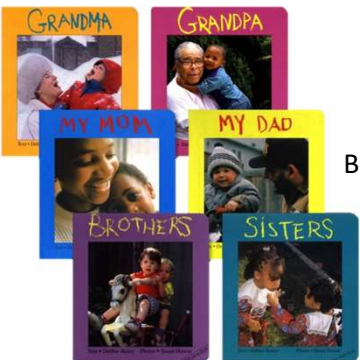
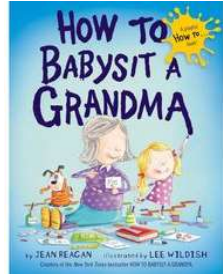





<p>Infants (Birth - 11 months)</p>	<p>Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)</p>	<p>Preschool (3 years - 5 years)</p>	<p>School-Age (6 years - 12 years)</p>
 <p>Posters</p>	<p>Block people</p>  	<p>Puzzles</p>  <p>Math and language games</p> 	<p>Dramatic play props</p> 
<p>Additional Materials:</p>		<p>Books, puppets, dolls, floor puzzles, display photos</p>	
<p>Homemade Diversity Materials:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="247 1252 485 1479">  <p>Felt people with eyeglasses</p> </div> <div data-bbox="663 1268 856 1338"> <p>Letter and sign match cards</p>  </div> <div data-bbox="1150 1243 1430 1317"> <p>Homemade peg dolls with eyeglasses</p>  </div> <div data-bbox="1556 1252 1703 1321"> <p>ASL Flashcards</p>  </div> </div>			

DIVERSITY MATERIALS



Age

Diversity in age means that the materials show contrasting examples of a wide span of ages, including senior citizens, younger adults, teenagers, children, and infants. For ages, seniors should be represented since they are often under-represented in children’s programs.








Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Finger puppets</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Block people</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Books</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Books</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Puzzles</p> </div> </div>			
Additional Materials:		Posters, picture card games, felt stories, dolls, puppets, display photos	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Homemade Diversity Materials:</p>  <p>Homemade Craft Stick Puzzle</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Homemade Puppet</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Homemade block figures</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Homemade memory game</p> </div> </div>			

DIVERSITY MATERIALS



Nontraditional Gender Roles

Gender Roles are a set of norms that society considers acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for people of certain genders. Materials that show non-traditional gender roles help children to see that men and women can do both traditional and non-traditional tasks.

Infants (Birth - 11 months)	Toddlers/Twos (12 months - 35 months)	Preschool (3 years - 5 years)	School-Age (6 years - 12 years)
 <p>Puppets</p>	<p>Career block people</p>  <p>Posters showing gender in non-traditional roles Ex: female doctors, male nurses, male teachers, etc.</p> 	<p>Books</p> 	 <p>Puzzles showing non-traditional gender roles (Ex: female scientist)</p>
Additional Materials:		Dramatic play clothes, picture card games, books, block figures, display photos	
Homemade Diversity Materials:			
<p>Printable Match-up game</p> 	<p>DIY Peg dolls with female doctors and police officers</p> 	<p>Craft stick puzzle</p> 