

Pre-Kindergarten Classroom Environment

Research tells us that children from birth to age eight learn through hands-on, active exploration of quality materials in a safe environment where they feel secure. Children need time to manipulate materials with an adult nearby to help in facilitating that deeper level of learning. Children learn through play and this active learning promotes development in all domains.

The physical environment is so vitally important in setting the stage for early learning experiences. It is a large part of <u>instruction</u> in the early care and learning field. Interest areas that are strategically placed throughout the classroom and housed with self-correcting, high quality materials; areas of quiet and active places for learning; walls and spaces that reflect children's ownership of the room showcasing individualized artwork, projects, documentation charts with pictures and stories all of these aligned to Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Early Childhood. Lastly, a schedule that is balanced between child-directed/teacher-directed activities, outdoor/indoor free play and routines (don't forget that routines provide wonderful opportunities for learning as well).

This document can help with classroom environment staging and maintenance. Please feel free to reference it often and add to it where appropriate.

Sand and Water Interest Area	Library and Reading Interest Area	nd Reading Interest Area Science Interest Area	
Careful supervision is needed as children can drown in two inches of water. Change water daily. Children should wash hands before and after water/sand play. FYI: The material housed in a sand table must be able to be scooped and poured to count positively in ERS scoring. Add a bit of liquid soap and food coloring for added fun and discovery.	Rotate the books and materials in your reading corner monthly – preferably more often. Strive to incorporate books that positively reflect diversity in culture, ages, gender, races and abilities. Include books with pictures of real objects as well as fantasy. Informally read to the children during free play/center time/ work time. Incorporate softness to make an inviting, cozy reading area for children.	 within their own classroom community. Position a recycling box in this area and use it as an on-going teaching tool. 	
MATERIALS: Sand/Water table Sifters Funnels Funnels Plastic tubing Measuring cups Pitchers Spray bottles Eye droppers Pipettes Cups w/ holes Mods Funps Farden tools Pumps Sand pails Shovels Hand rakes Eye droppers Pipettes	MATERIALS: Books on tape Reading lamp Listening Center Big books Nonfiction books Magazines Fiction books Soft furniture Puppets Pillows Class-made books Rocking chair Area rug to add softness Book rack to neatly organize books Language and Literacy materials	MATERIALS: Magnifying glasses Thermometer Hand lenses Kaleidoscope Plants Feathers & straws Class pet Pulleys Collections Gears Fossils Inclined planes Rocks Tornado tubes Balance scale Life cycle charts Root view experiment Ant farm Flashlight Prisms Pinwheels Locks, bolts, keys, nuts Color paddles	

How to choose materials? Keep in mind:

1. SAFETY -

Non- toxic Smooth edges No choking hazards Age-appropriate

2. **DURABILITY** –

Warranty Age-appropriate

3. ADAPTABILITY -

Multiple uses

4. INSTRUCTION -

Developmentally appropriate Age appropriate

5. ECO-FRIENDLY -

Many programs are looking for ways to incorporate environmentally friendly materials into the classroom ~ using them as on-going teaching tools.

USEFUL TOOLS

ECERS—3

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale designed to assess group programs for preschoolkindergarten aged children, from 2 through 5 years of age

ITERS-3

Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale designed to assess group programs for children from birth to 2 ½ years of age

FCCRS

Family Child Care Rating Scale designed to assess family child care programs conducted in a provider's home

SACERS

years of age

School Age Care Environment Rating Scale designed to assess before and after school group care programs for school-age children, 5 to 12

Music Interest Area	Math and Ma	nipulative Area	Dramatic Play	Interest Area	
NOTES: Offer a diverse selection of for the children to listen to. Offer unique instruments th found within other cultures have them accessible durin play/center time/work time. Be intentional about the am time you play music for the children. It should be a meaningful experience rath background noise.	music at are and g free bunt of critical are and offer hare and	Exercise the use of graphs, tally charts and other visual tools to enhance math understanding. Use practical life activites, such as mealtimes and transitions, as oportunities to incorporate math.		 NOTES: Incorporate dramatic play materials outdoors for spontaneous, child-initiated role-playing from a differing perspective. Include gender specific clothing in dressups as children are just learning to develop gender role identitiy at this age. Include everyday, real life props.	
MATERIALS: Maracas Drums Tapes Cymbols Scarves Triangles Ribbons Rhythm sti Rainsticks Bells Home made instruments	Pattern blocks Color cubes Money Sorting materials Lacing cards Geoboards Balance scales Bristle Blocks Measurement tools Cash register	Stringing beads Abacus Number puzzles Counters Shape puzzles Legos Lincoln logs Pegboards/Pegs Clock	MATERIALS: Magnifying glasses Hand lenses Plants Class pet Collections Fossils Rocks Balance scale Root view experiement Ant farm Prisms Locks, bolts, keys, nuts	Thermometer Kaleidoscope Feathers & straws Pulleys Gears Inclined planes Tornado tubes Life cycle charts Science puzzles Flashlight Pinwheels Color paddles	

Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning....They have to play with what they know to be true in order to find out more, and then they can use what they learn in new forms of play.

--Fred Rogers of Mister Rogers' Neighborhood



It is becoming increasingly clear through research on the brain as well as in other areas of study that, childhood needs play. Play acts as a forward feed mechanism into courageous, creative, rigorous thinking in adulthood.

--Tina Bruce, Professor, London Metropolitan University

Block and Construction Area	Art Interest Area	Writing/Literacy Area
Position the block area in a location that is protected from traffic where building structures can not easily be toppled. Offer at least 3 different types of blocks for the children to build with. Blocks are materials that can be stacked. Take caution not to confuse fine motor materials with blocks. Allow children to continue work in progress from one day to the next when building large structures. MATERIALS:	Children's art should be individualized. Be very conscientious not to offer a model for replication. Offer children the oportunity to work with three dimensional materials (clay, wood etc). Keep current the display of childrens' artwork. Labeling with the date of completion willI help. MATERIALS:	Seek opportunities to link children's spoken language to print and post in the classroom at their eye level ~ (experience charting with childrens' input, project documentation with quotes from children etc.) Include examples of environmental print in the classroom whenever possible. It is a natural starting point in teaching children to read and offers them a concrete connection to everyday print. MATERIALS:
Unit blocks Road rug Foam blocks Cars Cardboard blocks Trucks Hollow blocks Construction vehicles Airplaines Inclined planes Traffic signs Planks Traffic signs Large empty boxes People representing diversity in ages, races, cultures, abilities and gender.	Play dough Watercolors Scissors Paint Paste Easel Glue Paintbrushes Toothbrushes Markers Toothbrushes Crayones Makeup brushes Roller paints Wallpaper scraps Collage materials Chalk Chalk boards Drying rack Smocks Yarn Various sizes/shapes of paper Real pictures of artwork and artists	Colored pencils Pens Paper Chalkboards Chalk ABC puzzles Flannel board & pieces Pencils Markers Envelopes Index cards Typewriter Letter stamps Phonics games

The PA Learning Standards for Early Childhood are research based standards that identify key learning areas of development for children. The Standards guide practitioners to intentionally integrate developmental knowledge with the attitudes, skills, and concepts children need to make progress in all learning areas.

It is important and best practice to document the Learning Standards in lesson planning, children's artwork and display such as experience charts, graphing etc.

For more information:

Infant /Toddler



Pre-Kindergarten

