

Community Investment
Collaborative for Kids

Resource

LISC



Community Investment
Collaborative for Kids

Guide



1

Developing Early
Childhood Facilities



2

Designing Early
Childhood Facilities



Equipping and
Furnishing Early
Childhood Facilities



4

Creating Playgrounds for
Early Childhood Facilities

Community Investment
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Community Investment
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Guide **3**

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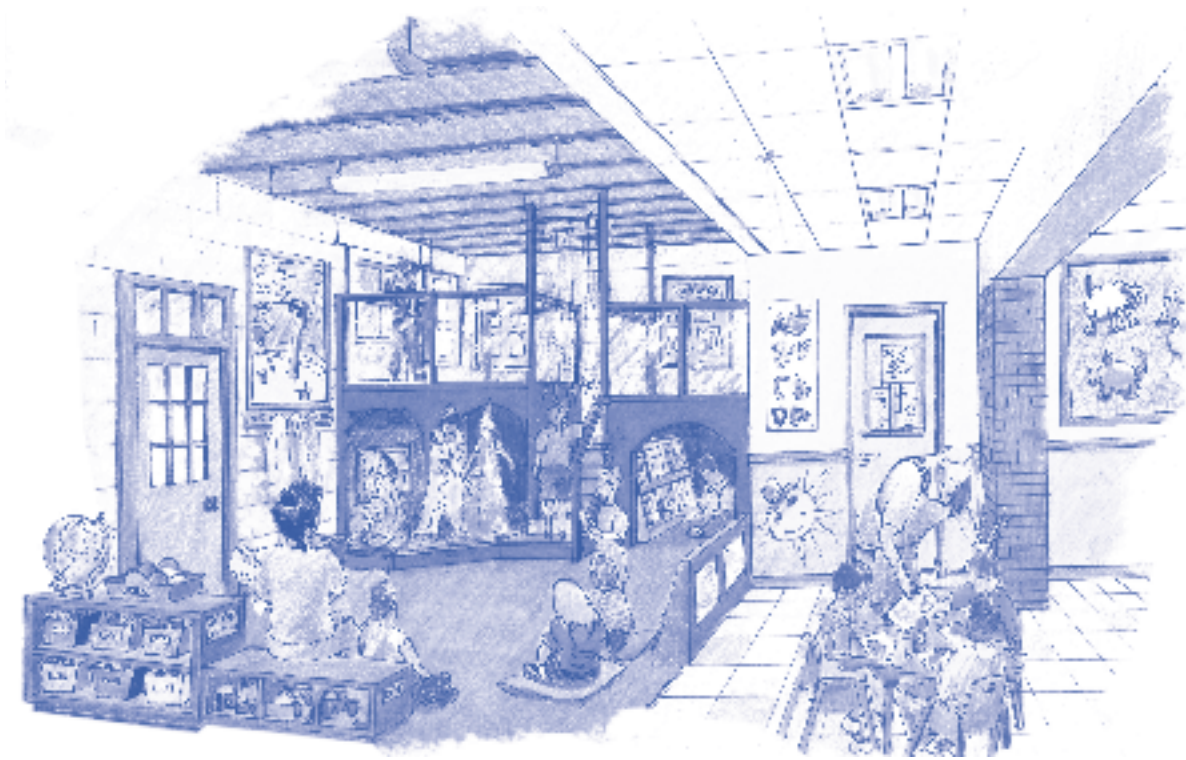
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The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this resource guide.

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A “A meaningful environment has spaces with assigned purposes. In childcare, space plays many different roles - it is a place to play, eat and sleep. It is also a place for children to belong and learn.”

*Quoted from “Early Childhood Environments that Work”
by Rebecca T. Isbell and Betty Exelby, Gryphon House, Inc., 2001.*

Introduction

The careful selection and arrangement of furnishings is an essential step in transforming an empty space into an early childhood environment.

The Equipment and Furnishings Resource Guide will help with selecting furnishings and equipment that make the space usable and comfortable, child-safe and child-friendly, and attractive and functional for the adults who share the environment.

The guide focuses on programs serving children from infancy through preschool, so it will emphasize equipment and layout of space to support the development of young children.

The guide is organized to help you plan your space, beginning with an unfurnished room. The information has been shaped by years of experience, the accreditation guidelines of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), wisdom shared by longtime early childhood educators, and the publications described in the section on Resources.

Many state and local regulations govern the use of child care space. At a minimum these regulations include child care licensing and building and fire codes. Before you begin to arrange and equip your space, familiarize yourself with these regulations and how they may affect your equipment choices

and classroom design. It is equally important to remember that these regulations serve as minimum standards. While every center must comply with all relevant codes and regulations, most early childhood programs will aspire to achieve a higher level of quality.

This guide focuses on equipping and furnishing children's classrooms – the most critical component of a child care center. However, when building or upgrading a center, it is important to plan and budget for all of the equipment and furnishings needed for the variety of support spaces that most centers have. These spaces may include:

- *Reception area*
- *Indoor gross motor space*
- *Offices*
- *Staff room*
- *Meeting rooms*
- *Parent resource room*
- *Kitchen*

There are a number of general guidelines to keep in mind when planning all of your center's equipment and furnishings purchases:

- *Focus on quality and durability, not on immediate cost savings.*
- *Purchase items that will help you create a warm and inviting environment in your center and classrooms.*
- *Select items that will inspire, and not inhibit, children's creativity and learning.*
- *Look for furnishings and equipment in colors and textures that blend harmoniously with other features of the space.*
- *Work with vendors known for high quality and long-lasting products, and who provide warranties and replacement parts.*
- *Ask vendors about upcoming sales or discounts.*

The physical environment of your center is the most visible aspect of program quality. Careful planning of your space will help you create an environment where teachers can provide the best possible care and education for young children.

Planning a Classroom

Begin your planning by examining the size and shape of the room.

Note the locations of:

- *Windows and doors*
- *Closets and built-in counters*
- *Electrical outlets*
- *Plumbing fixtures and heating units*
- *Any other fixed features*

These existing features in the room will influence the placement of furniture and layout of activity areas.

MAKING A SCALE DRAWING

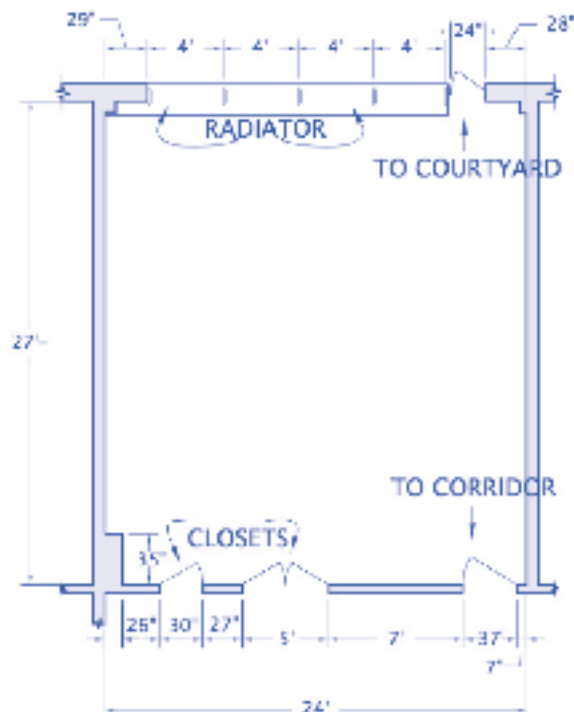
It is helpful to develop a simple scale drawing of each room you are planning. Assemble the following supplies:

- *A 25-foot retractable steel tape measure.*
- *A pencil, eraser and ruler for drawing straight lines.*
- *1/4-inch graph paper. Using that scale means that each 1/4-inch square represents one square foot of your space.*

Measure the length and width of the room and make a preliminary sketch of the space, noting those dimensions. Next, plot the dimensions and the location of the fixed features mentioned earlier. Note whether the doors open into or out of the space and indicate the direction on your sketch.

When you have all the measurements on your rough sketch, take a clean piece of graph paper and draw your room to scale (1/4 inch = 1 foot). Measure the windows and doors and draw them in the appropriate locations. Leave doorways open and draw a curved line showing the direction in which the door opens. Indicate the location of windows. On the drawing on this page, four windows are shown at the top of the drawing, separated by narrow woodwork. It is helpful to show the locations of electric outlets, plumbing, and other features that will help you make effective use of the scale drawing.

After completing an accurate scale drawing, make several photocopies. Using the photocopies, you can experiment with laying out activity areas without having to recreate the basic floor plan each time.



Sample Scale Drawing

DEVELOPING ROOM LAYOUTS

Once you have multiple copies of the floor plan, you can begin planning the space on paper.

1. Consider circulation and pathways through the space first. Look at the location of doors into and out of the space. At a minimum, you should have two doors – the main classroom door and your emergency exit. In some cases, you will also have a door to the children’s lavatory, a storage closet, and a door leading to an adjacent classroom or to the playground. Draw the pathways from the main door to all other doors, since they should be preserved as you begin to lay out interest areas.

Your goal is to create circulation patterns that allow children and adults to move comfortably through the room. The pathways will be further defined when you lay out equipment, but sketching them on the drawing will remind you to arrange furniture in a way that maintains circulation routes.

Avoid creating a straight path down the center of the room, with interest areas laid out on both sides. That path is likely to become a runway for young children. Instead, consider laying out the activity areas as destinations for children, with different kinds of paths – short and straight, gentle curves, T shapes. If your room is large, think about whether some circulation among interest areas can be established around the perimeter of the room.

2. Visualize how the fixed features of the space will affect the location of various activities. For example, look for the location of water or plumbing to determine where to place wet or messy activities.
3. Note the location of electrical outlets to determine where to place activities that require electricity – a lamp for the reading area, a surge protector for the computer equipment, or a connection for the aquarium.

THE FIVE ATTRIBUTES OF AN ACTIVITY AREA

1. A specific physical location suited to the activity
2. Visible boundaries
3. Play and sitting surfaces
4. Provision for storage and display specific to the area’s function
5. A mood that distinguishes it from contiguous spaces

– Anita Olds, *Child Care Design Guide*

4. Identify what the renowned child care facility designer Anita Olds, author of the *Child Care Design Guide*, called the “protected corner” – most often the corner furthest from the entry door. That may be the most desirable location for a book corner, or another activity where you want children to engage in activities requiring quiet concentration.
5. Once you have identified the fixed features, you can begin planning where to locate compatible activities, making best use of those features.
 - *The messy or wet zone should be near a sink. The main classroom door and the playground door also qualify as messy zones, since there are likely to be wet shoes and dirt tracked into those areas. The messy zones should have a tile or linoleum floor.*
 - *The quiet zone works well near the “protected corner.” This zone should have a warmer, softer floor surface such as carpeting or area rugs.*

- *The active zone should be laid out so that it can accommodate free-flowing activities like block play, dramatic play, music and movement, and gross motor activities. Depending on the size of your room, the active zone may overflow into the circulation paths. Carpeting or rugs are good choices for the active zone because they help manage noise and provide a warmer floor surface. If the active zone includes a slide or climbing structure, the National Program for Playground Safety recommends that you provide a resilient safety surface under indoor equipment. More information on safety surfaces is provided in the description of the Active Play activity area.*

6. Next, create furniture templates to move around the scale drawing as you try out locations for activity areas. Using another sheet of 1/4-inch graph paper, cut out rectangles, squares and circles that indicate the shape and approximate dimensions of the furnishings you plan to use. Dimensions are noted in the equipment catalogs. Use the same scale of 1/4-inch to equal one foot to make templates that represent the size and shape of the furniture. (You can also use a low-sticking spray glue that is sold in office or art supply stores to place the pieces on the template and move them around to try out different arrangements.)

An alternative to making templates is to sketch different layouts in pencil on the photocopies of the floor plan, maintaining the approximate scale of the different types of furniture.

Several early childhood equipment companies offer help in planning classroom space, so be sure to ask about that service or additional resources when you contact them for catalogs.

DETERMINING CLASSROOM OCCUPANCY

Determine the number of children and teachers who will occupy the space, based on the size of the room, the ages of the children in the group, and the staff-to-child ratios. Throughout this guide, we use the NAEYC group size and ratios in our examples:

CHILDREN'S AGES	MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE	ADULT TO CHILD RATIO
Infants Birth - 15 months	8	1:4
Toddlers 12 - 28 months	12	1:4
21 - 36 months	12	1:6
Preschool 3 year olds	18	1:9
4 and 5 year olds	20	1:10

Note: For licensing purposes, most states require a minimum of 35 square feet per child of net floor area in the classroom activity space. Many states require a minimum of 45 square feet per child for infants and toddlers. The net floor area is measured by deducting the floor area covered by cubbies, shelf units, and other permanently fixed furnishings from the gross floor area. NAEYC and other advocates for quality recommend a minimum of 50 square feet per child in preschool classrooms, and considerably more in infant and toddler classrooms where large equipment, such as cribs, take up a great deal of the usable floor space. These guidelines do not include space outside the classrooms for bathrooms, hallways, offices, reception, teacher's lounge, etc.

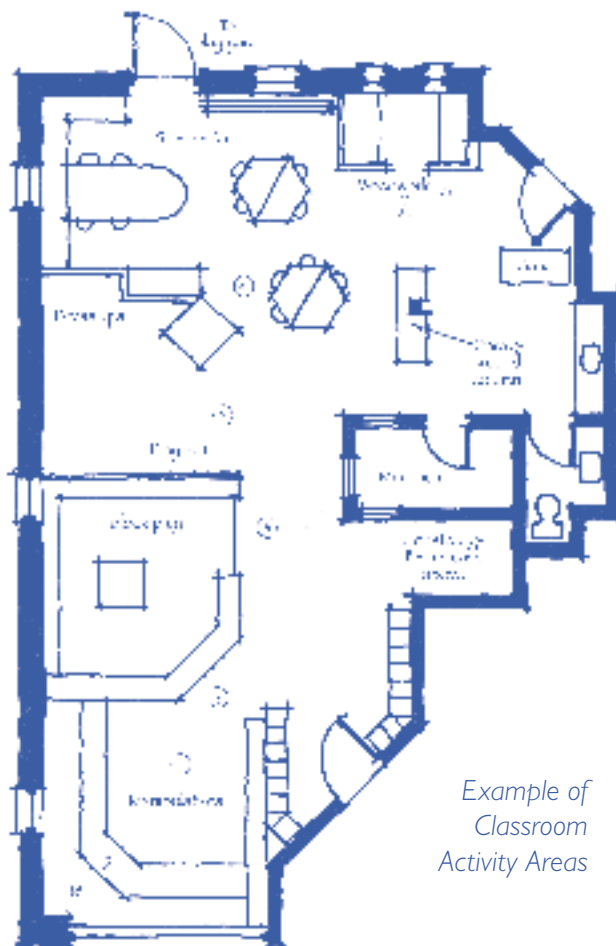
Developing Activity Areas or Learning Centers

High quality early childhood education requires a stimulating environment that offers choices to children, invites them to engage in a number of activities, and encourages them to explore a wide range of materials. The terms “activity area” and “learning center” are used interchangeably in this guide. As you develop activity areas, try to develop a classroom environment in which every part of the room has a purpose, with all of the necessary resources on hand, displayed and organized to facilitate children’s work. The preschools of Reggio-Emilia, Italy refer to a well-designed environment as “the third teacher” in the classroom.

This section describes methods for organizing activity areas for preschool-aged children, although reference is made to infants and toddlers in several places. Furnishings for younger children are described in “Planning for Infant and Toddler Care,” which begins on page 17.

Activities are identified as belonging in either the active, quiet or messy zone. The discussion of each area describes fixed features (plumbing, access to natural light, etc.) that support the activity as well as the furnishings for that area.

ACTIVE ZONE	QUIET ZONE	MESSY ZONE
Block Play	Book Corner	Art
Dramatic Play	Computer	Discovery Science
Indoor Active Play	Table Toys	Sand and Water
Music Movement		Cooking
		Woodworking



Many of the learning centers in an early childhood classroom have more than one possible name, depending on the program philosophy. We reference several names in the introduction to each area. Classroom planning and purchasing worksheets, organized by age group and activity area, can be found in Appendix I.

PLAN FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Given the ages of children attending early childhood programs, teachers are often involved in referring children for diagnosis of disabilities. In that case, it is likely that the program has already made some modifications to the environment and program to help the child function within the classroom. Once a diagnosis is made and more information is available, staff can further adapt the space with the help of therapists working with the child.

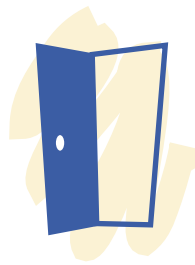
When a child with a diagnosed disability enters the program, the most effective strategy for working with the child is to consult with his parents about his needs, and to spend time with the parent in the classroom to identify modifications that may be necessary in each area. Consult with specialists working with the child as well, since they will have specific guidance on teaching methods, adaptive equipment, and modifications to the space.

Several examples of how to adapt the learning centers to serve the needs of children with disabilities are noted in the descriptions of each area. The actual modifications can only be made once you know the child, have information about his abilities, and have consulted with his parents and therapists. The examples that follow are based on interviews with teachers in therapeutic and inclusion classrooms, and a fine book called the *Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom* by Patti Gould and Joyce Sullivan, which is listed under Resources. They offer a range of strategies for working with children with mental handicaps and developmental delays; orthopedic impairments; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

and behavioral issues; Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) or Autism; motor planning problems; and visual impairments.

Gould and Sullivan have organized their book by describing modifications to typical learning centers based on a child's disability. Some require adaptive equipment, but many are thoughtful small changes to the environment that make the space more suitable for all young children.

THE CLASSROOM ENTRY



The entry is a crucial point in the layout of any classroom: it's a transition area that helps children enter into their day at school. For some children, it plays an important role by allowing them to observe the activity in the classroom before separating from their parents and joining the group of children. It is often the most important point of daily interaction with parents as well. In fact, the entry is the only part of the classroom that serves parents as much as children and staff.

A distinct entry area – even if it is 12 or 15 square feet just inside the classroom door – is the place that welcomes children into their classroom. It sets the tone for the environment and offers parents a vantage point for watching classroom activities and a place to help their child say goodbye. Personalize the entry with things such as photos of children and their families, staff photos and short staff “bios,” and other inviting displays. If you serve multilingual families, include a welcome message in each family's native language. An effective entry might also contain a special element that will attract children – an aquarium, a small fountain, or a table that displays something new every week – seashells, pretty stones, colored leaves, or a special activity planned for the day.

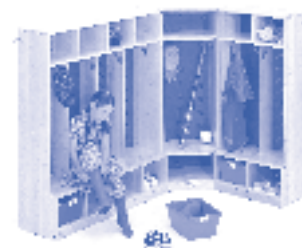
CUBBIES

Cubbies take up a lot of space but serve an important storage function for children's outerwear and other belongings, so plan their placement carefully. There are a number of options for locating cubbies:

- *In a vestibule or mudroom immediately adjacent to the classroom. This is one of the best cubby locations if this type of space exists.*
- *As part of the entry area within the classroom. This works well if there is sufficient space inside the doorway or if you can create an enclosed area using the cubbies as low walls. Again, the messy nature of cubbies and their contents may detract from the aesthetics of the entry area.*
- *At the doorway leading to the playground if the classroom has direct access to the outdoors. This puts the cubbies at the point of use for children going out to play and also helps ensure that parents come into the classroom on a regular basis.*
- *Use the divide and conquer method – arrange small sections of cubbies in one or two areas of the classroom, in a manner that maintains convenient access.*
- *In the hallway outside the classroom. It is important to note that in some states and jurisdictions this option may be prohibited by licensing regulations, fire or building codes. However, where allowed, it can provide a way to free up valuable square footage within a classroom. It is important to make certain that hallways are sufficiently wide to meet emergency egress requirements with the cubbies in place. Cubbies can be rather messy, so decide whether that is the “look” you want for the hall. Also, some children and parents may worry*

about the security of their belongings stored outside the classroom, so consider that as well. Finally, placing cubbies outside the classroom will require that teachers observe while children go to and from their cubbies.

One cubby per child is preferable to having two children share a cubby. It cuts down on clutter and cubby overflow, and also helps limit the transmission of



head lice if the program has an outbreak. The best cubbies have three sections: a boot locker at the bottom with a shelf a child can sit on to remove shoes, a main section for coats and backpacks, and a top section for a lunch or other personal items. Note that most licensing agencies require that cubbies be securely fastened to the wall or floor so that they are not a tipping hazard. Placement of cubbies should take this into account.

FURNISHINGS FOR THE ENTRY AND CUBBY AREAS:

Seating for adults and children
Parent mailboxes
Bulletin board for notices and display
Counter or other surface for the daily sign in sheet
Child-height table or pedestal
Cubbies
Storage for car seats and/or strollers
Optional: Good-bye window or mirror for easing separation for children

FOR INCLUSION

The child may need more time observing before entering an activity. Be sure there are a range of seating options in the entry and elsewhere in the classroom that include: chairs with arms, soft seating, and options for sitting on the floor that offer support for weak trunk and back muscles. In a display at the entry, include images of children and adults with disabilities.

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITY AREAS

In the following descriptions of the typical learning centers in an early childhood classroom, we focus on furnishings and large equipment that are often selected and purchased during planning and construction. In addition to the furnishings described, there are toys, classroom materials, and supplies that will be needed to implement the curriculum in each area. A per child cost for stocking the classroom with those materials is included in the Cost of Equipment section in Appendix I.

I. ACTIVITY AREAS WITHIN THE ACTIVE ZONE



BLOCK CENTER

The block area requires a protected space, enclosed on three sides with walls or low shelves. Be sure to purchase unit blocks to increase the educational value of the activity.

Unit blocks are small modular plain wooden blocks that come in a variety of geometric shapes. The dimensions of the blocks allow children to experiment with spatial relations by using the lengths, widths and heights of the blocks in creating complex block structures. The floor surface should be carpet or a low pile area rug. Avoid using highly patterned rugs, often called “educational” carpets, since they are distracting

and can inhibit rather than enhance children's block play. Sturdy 24-inch square or round acrylic mirrors can be placed on the floor or table as special bases for block play. In addition to purchasing blocks for the area, think about accessories that will help to enhance block play. These might include things such as wooden vehicles, wooden or plastic people, animals and trees, stop signs and other props.

FURNISHINGS FOR THE BLOCK CENTER:

Two multi-unit storage shelves,
30-inch height

Initial unit block set should have
approximately 225 pieces in 20 shapes

Optional: A set of hollow
wooden blocks and a block trolley

FOR INCLUSION

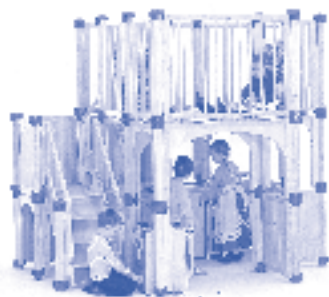
Provide a basket of blocks and a defined block building space (a plastic tray, a carpet square taped in place, or even an empty plastic wading pool that the child can sit in). Foam blocks or plastic blocks may be preferable to wood for some children. Provide places where children can play with blocks in a variety of body positions to develop strength and stability.



DRAMATIC PLAY

The dramatic play area can be located adjacent to blocks because both areas are active and somewhat noisy. Children frequently move back and forth between the areas. The richness of play that evolves in the dramatic play area depends on the location and care with which the area is laid out. If there is a loft in the classroom, some teachers like to locate dramatic play there because the sense of enclosure adds to the appeal of the space. If the classroom does not have a loft built in to the space you might consider purchasing one of the many pre-built loft units available. These provide many great play and storage possibilities. Several equipment vendors sell interesting wooden arches that help to create a cave or enclosure.

The arches can be enhanced with fabric or hanging baskets with props.



Another effective placement for dramatic play is on a low (four to six inches high) carpeted platform in a corner of the room. Stepping up into the area seems to encourage children to use the area. In any case, the area should be enclosed on three sides using existing perimeter walls, dividers or shelves. The dramatic play area is substantially enriched with the inclusion of materials and tools that represent many cultures: Guatemalan fabric for a tablecloth or curtains, bamboo steamers or a small wok, African prints for dress up clothes. Ask families to bring in props for the area that will help make it more culturally diverse.

It may be tempting to purchase one or two-piece plastic kitchen sets as a cost-saving strategy for the dramatic play area. Wooden kitchen sets are more durable and most useful when purchased as three or four individual pieces, even if the budget requires purchasing those pieces over two years.



While the most obvious dramatic play is “playing house,” it’s equally important to have the flexibility to convert the area into other role play opportunities, often developed around familiar places in the community – a grocery store with the addition of a cash register and shopping carts, a post office with envelopes, a mailbox and stickers, or a doctor’s office with stethoscopes, bandages and other medical props. The wooden equipment can be easily incorporated into all those activities with minor modifications.

Make sure that the equipment is age appropriate:

TODDLERS:	Stove and counter at 20 inches, table at 16 inches, chairs at 8 inches
PRESCHOOL:	Stove and counter at 24 inches, table at 20 inches, chairs at 12 inches

FURNISHINGS FOR DRAMATIC PLAY AREAS:

Wooden stove, refrigerator, sink

Wooden cupboard

Small table with two stools or chairs

Sturdy doll bed, preferably one that will hold a child

Doll high chair

Doll stroller or buggy

Child-size rocking chair

Double wide, full-length acrylic mirror, wall mounted or in a stand

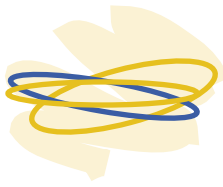
STORAGE FOR DRAMATIC PLAY AREAS:

Two small shelves with bins or baskets

Wall mounted pegs or a chest of drawers

FOR INCLUSION

Include dolls, images and books about children with disabilities; look for adaptive equipment (crutches, braces, glasses, etc.) to include as props. Place a small secure rug in the area and encourage peers to play with the child on the rug. Provide appropriate supportive seating for a child with disabilities who wants to observe from a short distance. Add weights to kitchen equipment or doll furniture so they don’t tip if a child leans on them.



INDOOR ACTIVE PLAY

Young children learn by moving and using their bodies. Active play (gross motor or large muscle play)

is an important part of the classroom. If classrooms are too small to accommodate this type of activity, it is important to provide a separate indoor gross motor area. The area dedicated to active play can be developed as simply or as elaborately as space and budget permit. Think first about activities that you want to encourage, and then select equipment that supports those activities:



ACTIVITY	EQUIPMENT
Balancing	Balance balls or balance ball stools
	Balance beam in wood, foam or plastic
	Balance boards
	Slanting hexagonal foam blocks
	Hula hoops laid on the floor
Climbing	Free-standing climbing structure
	Climbing as part of a loft
	Wall mounted ladder in front of an acrylic mirror
Crawling	Foam, plastic or fabric tunnels
	Ramps
Riding	Wooden transportation toys
	Plastic or wooden ride-on toys
Rocking	Wood rocking boat
	Round plastic and foam rocker
	Rocking horse
Rolling	Foam logs, rolls or tunnels
Sliding	Slide mounted on climbing structure or loft
	Small free-standing platform slide
Throwing & Catching	Soft balls of various sizes
	Bean bags, other soft toys
	Basketball hoops

The floor surface for the active play area should be carpet or an area rug over a good pad. If you are using a climbing structure or a slide, you should have the appropriate safety surface below the structures. According to the National Program for Playground Safety there are two options:

1. Use several four-inch deep gym-quality landing mats secured so they will not move when children land on them.
2. Use surfacing tiles or mats permanently secured to the floor and of a depth proportionate to the height of the equipment.

FOR INCLUSION

Add scooter boards, therapy balls, a ball pit, prone standers, small wagons, or specialized adaptive equipment depending on the child's disability. Get recommendations from the child's parent or therapist regarding appropriate equipment. Two catalogs with adaptive equipment are included on the list of catalogs in the appendix.



MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

These activities can take place in the most open area in the classroom, which may be the area designated for circle time or the active play area.

Music and movement can also make use of the pathways through the space if it is a large group activity involving most of the children at one time. This can help conserve space for other dedicated activities. For listening to music or books on tape individually or in a small group, the cassette or CD player and storage can be near the book corner, described below.

FURNISHINGS FOR MUSIC AND MOVEMENT:

A tape cassette or CD player

Storage shelf for tapes, CDs, musical instruments, scarves and other props

Optional: large wall mounted acrylic mirror

FOR INCLUSION

Some children will need to have music and movement in a smaller space and with a small number of children. Children with motor planning problems may respond well to use of a weighted vest for music and movement.

2. ACTIVITY AREAS WITHIN THE QUIET ZONE



BOOK CORNER

The book corner (or library/literacy center) should be one of the warmest and most welcoming spaces in the classroom. It should be separate from the noisier activities, but works well near the table toy and computer areas. Try to place it near a window so there is abundant natural light. Even if it has bright natural light, the addition of a well-secured table light or stable floor lamp will enhance the area, and create a softer indirect light, especially if the primary classroom lighting is fluorescent. The book corner often includes writing and listening activities as well as books.

FURNISHINGS FOR BOOK CORNER:

Carpet or area rug

Lamp or wall mounted spotlight

Comfortable soft seating: beanbag chairs, cushions and bolsters, a mattress covered with bright fabric

A child-sized table and two chairs

Simple and sturdy tape cassette or CD player with headphones

Storage for children's tapes or CDs

Book display racks with bookshelves behind

Flannel board

Storage for big books – some book display racks work for big books on one side and regular books on the other

Shelf unit for storing books and bins/baskets of writing supplies

Display: posters or book covers of popular children's literature, images of all kinds of families and children with books

FOR INCLUSION

Modifications to the environment should be worked out based on the needs of the child, but common adjustments include: seating that provides appropriate back support; creating a book box with the child's favorite books, which is made available when she's in the book corner; making time to read one-on-one with the child with an opportunity to stop and ask questions; using picture-word cards and sequencing cards to tell stories.



COMPUTER AREA

The computer area is an activity for two or three children at a time. It can serve twice that number if you have two computers. It is best located in the quiet zone, well separated from art, sand and water, or other activities that could damage the equipment. The area should be next to a wall with convenient electrical outlets. The computer can be placed against the wall, with the cords wrapped

and secured out of children's reach. Locate the monitor so that it's clearly visible to the children, without glare. Computer equipment can fit in a space that has less depth than most other activity areas.

FURNISHINGS FOR COMPUTER AREA:

Adjustable height children's computer desk or table

Enclosed CPU holder of the size to fit your computer

Two children's chairs per computer

Stable printer cart or table

Computer monitor, keyboard, and mouse

Printer

Child-friendly CD storage unit (that children can manage on their own)

Stability and safety are very important in this area. Computer equipment is heavy and children can be injured if a table or monitor falls over.

FOR INCLUSION

For preschool children, computer play is largely a social activity, so pairing a child with disabilities with a peer can increase interaction. A child's therapist should be able to suggest whether computer activities are appropriate for the child's education plan, and propose equipment modifications that will enable the child to use the computer effectively.

beads or lacing toys, gears and snap-together toys

- Collections of like items for sorting and matching: small stones or shells, shape and color sorters, geo-shapes, and counting bears

- Simple matching and classification games: picture lotto, dominoes, similar games



Display and storage of these materials at child-height is a key element in setting up the table toy area. Use picture and word labels on both the storage containers for the toys and on the shelf, so that children will learn where items belong. Rotate the number of toys displayed so that the shelves are clutter-free and children can choose from an appealing but limited group of toys. Provide multiple sets of the more popular toys.

FURNISHINGS FOR TABLE TOYS AREA:

Two multi-unit low storage shelves

Attractive unbreakable containers and clear bins for multi-piece toys

Puzzle racks and other purpose-built storage

One square or rectangular table

Two to four chairs, depending on the size of the area

FOR INCLUSION

Some children may need tabletop dividers or trays to define their work area. Work with therapists to determine modifications – perhaps a pegboard should be taped to the wall or a vertical support instead of placing it on a flat surface. Puzzles might need knob handles to make them easier to grasp. Allow children to work with some fine motor toys on the floor on trays or carpet squares. Allow children to watch peers when trying a new toy, but put them side by side so that the child with a disability isn't looking at the activity upside down.

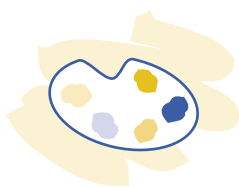
TABLE TOYS

Table toys are often called fine motor or manipulative toys. The activities range from:

- Self-correcting structured toys: puzzles or nesting toys that go together one way
- Open-ended toys that support eye-hand coordination and fine motor control: cutting shapes, stringing



3. ACTIVITY AREAS WITHIN THE MESSY ZONE



ART

The art area should be located next to a sink for mixing paints and ease of cleaning up after the activities. It requires good natural light and sufficient space so that children can work comfortably. There should be a range of art media available to children every day and an opportunity to work at easels, at a table and – if space allows – on the floor. Wall mounted easels are another option, and can be located in areas with less depth.

FURNISHINGS FOR ART AREA:

- One rectangular table
- Two chairs
- Closed storage for adult use
- One multi-unit storage shelf for children's use
- Easels – decide on easel type based on your space
- Drying rack
- Hooks or pegs for smocks
- Display space for two-dimensional and three-dimensional art

FOR INCLUSION

Have a range of writing and painting implements (thin, stubby, big and small) so that children can use tools appropriate to their dexterity level. Experiment with tabletop easels, large pieces of paper on the floor, and paper inside a shirt-size box to find a comfortable work surface for every child.



DISCOVERY SCIENCE AREA

The science area in an early childhood program is often organized around sensory exploration, and introducing children to the “scientific method.” Children observe and interpret the world around them. They ask questions or identify a problem, make predictions, observe and discuss. Setting up the science area involves creating a place where those processes can take place. Good natural lighting is important. Storage and display, access to their tools, and a comfortable workspace complete the area. If an aquarium will be used, the area needs access to electricity.

FURNISHINGS FOR DISCOVERY SCIENCE AREA:

- Storage and multi-unit display shelves
- Bins or baskets for supplies and materials
- Closed storage for use by teachers
- Table and four chairs
- Bulletin board for display

FOR INCLUSION

Most discovery science activities can be adapted for the needs of children with disabilities. Teachers will need to break down the tasks in an activity to determine where a child may need extra time or support, or another approach.



SAND AND WATER

Sand and water play are favorites for many children. The area should have a waterproof and easily cleaned floor and enough space so that the sand and water tables can be approached from

several sides, since this type of play can be very sociable. Pathways should not pass through the area since wet floors can be slippery. Since water should be drained and the tub sanitized daily, it's important to be close to a sink. Sand and water tables come in a range of dimensions, so if space is tight, you can buy the smaller tables. Make sure the height of the tables is appropriate for the age and size of the children – most manufacturers offer toddler tables with a height of 20 inches and preschool tables at 22 to 24 inches.



FURNISHINGS FOR SAND AND WATER AREA:

Sand table with cover

Water table with cover

A multi-unit shelf with waterproof bins to hold sand and water toys

An alternative to shelves is to hang the toys in a mesh bag over the sink until dry, or to purchase sand and water tables with a built-in storage shelf

Hooks or pegs for smocks

FOR INCLUSION

Be sure the tables are very stable in an inclusion classroom – some tables have wheels or casters on one end and those should be locked in position.

Provide toys at the child's skill level and introduce more advanced toys as he masters the easier ones.

4. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Cooking and woodworking provide children with an opportunity to do real work. They are activities that require close supervision, so they may not be offered on a daily basis. In many programs, woodworking and cooking are activities that take place in other learning centers that are adapted temporarily for these activities.



COOKING

Cooking requires significant supervision as well as specialized materials and equipment. Programs

with access to a kitchen often do the prep work (measuring and mixing ingredients) in the classroom using the children's tables. Once the batter is mixed and shaped, one teacher and several children carry the cookie sheets, muffin tins or bread pan to the kitchen for baking. Programs without access to a kitchen can purchase a large toaster oven, electric skillet or Crock-Pot and select cooking projects that can be completed using those small appliances. Be alert for food allergies in all children.

FURNISHINGS FOR COOKING AREA:

Appliances mentioned above if necessary

Portable bins to hold utensils, mixing bowls, and pans

A utility cart or storage shelf to hold the bins

FOR INCLUSION

Modifying the project for a child with disabilities takes planning and some adaptive utensils. Select the tasks for each child based on interest, skills, and abilities.



WOODWORKING

Woodworking can be an exciting component of the preschool classroom. Many children take pleasure in just handling the tools and learning to use them. As children's skills develop, it is very satisfying to make products that can be used in other learning centers. For example, children can make boats for the water table or platforms for birdseed to place outside the classroom window. This area requires very close supervision, so placement of the workbench and tools, and rules about wearing safety glasses and appropriate use of tools, are important. This is generally an area which is only "open" at certain times of the day when teachers are able to provide adequate supervision for the activities.



FURNISHINGS FOR WOODWORKING AREA:

Work bench with vise and storage area underneath

Real child-scale tools in a toolbox with a cover

Safety glasses

Scrap wood and other supplies

FOR INCLUSION

Check with the child's parents and specialists about whether this is an appropriate activity, and if so, about appropriate modifications.

5. STORAGE

There is never enough storage in an early childhood program. Plan for storage both inside and outside the classroom in central storage areas. Too often storage is an afterthought – the space has been filled and the budget exhausted before plans are made for storing materials and personal

belongings. There are several categories of storage needed in most programs. The areas described below suggest the amount of floor area required for each type of storage. The actual storage units will range in height, depending on the choice of equipment for each function.

CHILD PERSONAL STORAGE

Allow a minimum of one square foot of floor area per child in each classroom for their personal storage needs, including outerwear, diaper bags or backpacks, extra clothing and special items from home. Most often this storage is provided in cubbies or using a combination of coat hooks and cubbies.

STAFF PERSONAL STORAGE

It is important to provide a secure location for each staff member's personal belongings, including outerwear, pocketbooks, files, and personal items. Allow six to eight square feet per staff member in closets, tall cabinets and file drawers. Staff should be able to lock their personal storage area.

POINT-OF-USE STORAGE FOR CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Each individual classroom needs two different types of storage for the children's learning materials. The first type is the low open shelving units on which materials are displayed and made accessible to children throughout the day. While this is often referred to as storage, it could more accurately be described as display. Teachers rotate materials on and off of these low display shelves as themes and seasons change from week to week or month to month, allowing different experiences for the children in the room. Caution should be used to not overly crowd these shelves with materials or children may have a difficult time seeing what they want or putting things away. Thus, it is important to have a second type of storage available in classrooms for learning materials. This is considered closed storage which is only accessed by the classroom teachers. This can be provided through a combination of closets, high shelving and closed cabinetry. This storage can then be used to store surplus and off-season materials as

well as those materials that are used for special classroom projects. Wall-hung shelves or cabinets with doors can be purchased at a modest cost at Home Depot-type stores and professionally installed over activity areas so that they do not take up valuable floor space.

STORAGE FOR COTS AND BEDDING

One of the most space-consuming storage needs of preschool or toddler classrooms is for children's cots for rest time. Ten stacked cots require about eight square feet of floor space. One creative idea which is becoming more common in early childhood classrooms is using the area under a built-in loft for storage, as pictured below. This otherwise unused area makes a great space for cot storage, especially if cots are stacked on a low cart which can be wheeled in and out from under the loft.

CENTRAL STORAGE OF BULKY EQUIPMENT AND BULK SUPPLIES

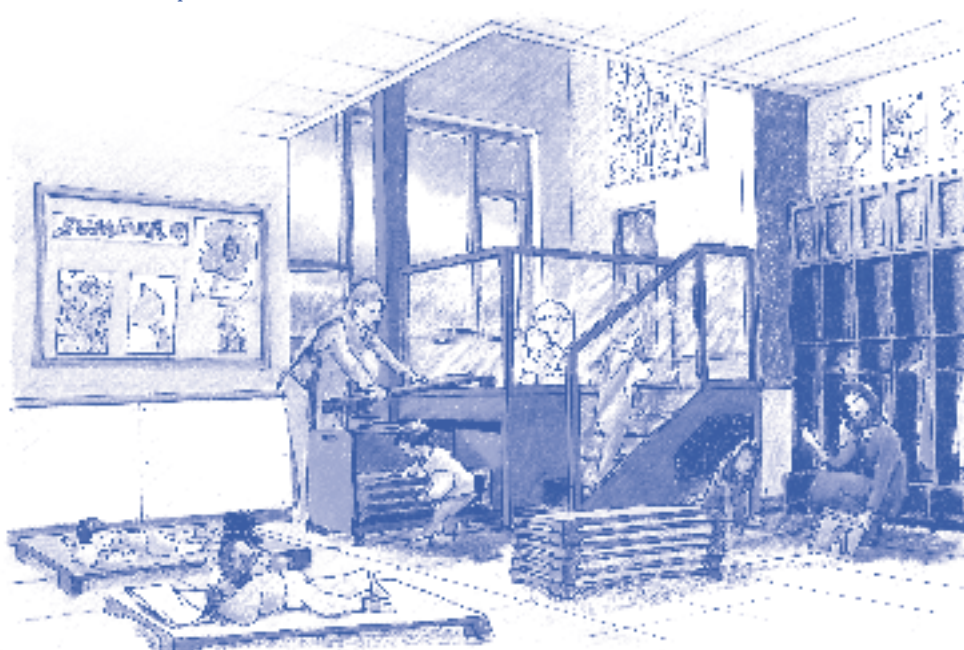
It is critical to allow for a substantial amount of out-of-classroom storage in the center. For this type of storage, more is better, and there is no such thing as too much. Ordering things such as art supplies in bulk saves considerable cost, but it is important to have a place to store these supplies. In infant and toddler programs, bulk storage of diapers requires careful planning since parents tend to bring in packs of 48 to 60 diapers at a time.

These can be labeled and stored in a central area. Teachers can then take each child's daily or weekly supply of diapers into the classroom. Centers also often have seasonal supplies and bulky equipment that needs to be stored outside of classrooms. A large, well organized walk-in closet will provide space to store these surplus materials and large equipment that is not currently in use.

When planning a new center, consider incorporating a basement or attic space to allow for even more flexibility in storage.

SPECIAL-PURPOSE STORAGE

Keep in mind your center's special storage needs. Plan for storage of family-owned car seats and folding strollers near the entry, storage for outdoor toys and vehicles near the door to the playground, seasonal equipment, and storage for center-owned transport such as wagons for six and double strollers. For strollers and car seats belonging to children, allow one square foot per item and assume that 10-15% of your enrollment will need that type of storage on a regular basis. For storage of outdoor equipment, a closet or outdoor storage structure should offer at least 40 square feet of floor space and shelves and hooks installed to fit the equipment and make efficient use of the space. Multi-child strollers and wagons for six require 12 - 24 square feet per vehicle.



Example of loft with cot storage

Planning for Infant and Toddler Care

Many children enter child care by the age of six months, with some as young as 12 weeks. Very young children grow and develop so quickly that planning the environment must take that developmental momentum into account. In their first year infants change rapidly, going from spending most of the time sleeping to rolling over, reaching, crawling, sitting upright, pulling to stand, and eventually walking. And they don't rest at that point – in the second year they learn to run, climb, talk, ask questions, and manipulate materials, always expanding their understanding of their surroundings, and testing their own abilities.

Infant and toddler environments must serve young children as they change and grow, and help teachers offer the individualized care that is so critical to children's optimal development. This section will discuss the various elements in an infant or toddler space.



I. THE ENTRY TO THE INFANT OR TODDLER ROOM

Parents using infant care need support. They are often sleep-deprived, rushed and stressed. They worry about how their baby does in child care – is she safe, is she happy, do the caregivers really know her personality and needs, and often unspoken – will she forget who her parents are while she's in care?

Create an entry that helps ease those concerns. Make it comfortable and convenient with a clear and understandable layout:

- *Cubbies and hooks for outerwear, backpacks or diaper bags*
- *A counter on which to rest a baby while taking off outerwear*
- *Comfortable seating*
- *A bulletin board, with photos of children and their families*
- *Daily sign-in sheets*
- *Parent mailboxes*
- *Car seat or stroller storage*

Many infant rooms are “shoeless environments” requiring that adults remove their shoes before entering the children's space. This rule helps to maintain a more sanitary environment for children who are spending lots of time crawling on the floor during the day. Be sure that adults can sit down to remove their shoes, and that there is a shoe tray or other identifiable location for their shoes.

2. CAREGIVING FUNCTIONS

Infants require individualized care, modified frequently as they grow and develop. They should eat and sleep on their own schedules, be held often, and have diapering and other needs taken care of promptly. While this depends mostly on the teachers in the program, there are environmental considerations as well.

SLEEPING

Infant napping should take place in a sheltered area within the classroom, or, where allowed by state licensing, in a separate nap room adjacent to the main infant activity space. The sleeping area should be darker, quieter and feel physically separated from the classroom space. There are a number of considerations in selecting cribs:



- The size of the crib is important since most centers must find space for between three and ten cribs in an infant room. Look for small but sturdy cribs that are approximately 24 x 40 inches. They can be wood or metal, with crib slats spaced no wider than 2 3/8 inches.
- Look for adjustable mattress heights so that the mattress can be lowered as the child grows and begins to pull up in the crib.
- Look for a crib with one adjustable side to save staff backs as they bend over to pick up children. The mechanism that raises and lowers the side should be operable with one hand.
- Look for cribs with a solid mattress support and a firm three-to four-inch

waterproof mattress that fits the crib without gaps at the ends or sides. Avoid the less expensive cribs that use plastic-encased cardboard to support a flimsy mattress. Those are designed for very occasional use and will not hold up in a child care center, so it's a false economy to purchase them.

- If cribs will be placed end-to-end, look for cribs with Plexiglas ends to avoid transmission of colds and disease.
- For convenience, store changes of clothing and bedding below the cribs. Some manufacturers offer crib storage drawers that attach below the crib, but covered plastic bins on the floor work well also. If under-crib storage is not available, provide a chest of drawers, individual labeled bins, or large plastic tote bags on a shelf nearby.
- Provide an evacuation crib with rolling casters or wheels – licensing regulations will specify how many are needed for each group of infants.

Enhance the sleeping area with mobiles above cribs, acrylic mirrors, and other safe and attractive forms of visual and auditory stimulation.

Toddlers move out of cribs and onto cots. There are toddler-sized plastic stacking cots that are about 43 x 21 inches and five inches high. Provide storage for bedding, either where the cots are stored or near children's cubbies.

FEEDING

Bottle-fed babies younger than four months should be held for feeding. If children continue to enjoy that contact with a teacher, it should be continued as long as possible. When children begin solid food – the timing of which varies by culture and parental preference – children can be moved



to “low highchairs” (low chairs with individual trays), or to a small table with chairs with arms and seat belts/straps to keep children in place. Many programs avoid using traditional highchairs because they serve only one purpose and are hard to store. The low highchairs can be used for classroom seating with the trays removed and many manufacturers offer low highchairs that can be stacked for storage.

Be sure that the teacher feeding the children has a comfortable seat of the appropriate height. The floor in the infant feeding area should be tile or linoleum, and adjacent walls should have a washable surface.

To support individual feeding schedules, it’s important to have a food prep area in the infant room with a sink, refrigerator, and method for warming foods. Most centers use Crock-Pots for warming baby food and bottles. Storage for dry foods should be convenient to the food prep area.

Support breast-feeding mothers by creating a comfortable and private area near the infant classroom. This requires a glider-rocker or other comfortable seating, a small table for a glass of water, and a low level of lighting so that the mother and child can relax during nursing.

Toddlers are able to feed themselves, so they can sit at 16-inch tables with eight-inch chairs or stools. Be sure that children’s feet can touch the ground while seated.

DIAPERING

If a diaper-changing area is not built into your space, create one that contains an adult-height changing table, preferably one with steps that older infants and toddlers can climb with the help of a teacher. This changing table should be placed as close as possible to the diaper-changing sink. Other equipment includes:

- Individual shelves and bins for storing diapering supplies.
- Storage for materials needed for sanitizing the diapering area and

handling soiled clothing: bleach solution, paper towels, plastic gloves, plastic bags for soiled clothing, and a roll of medical exam paper or other disposable covering for the diapering area. Soiled clothing should be placed in plastic bags and sent home for laundering.

- A foot-operated, covered diaper pail that can be lined with plastic bags. Don’t choose diaper pails that require an adult to touch the cover or stuff the soiled diaper into a narrow opening – those are not suitable for child care use because of the risk of spreading germs or bacteria.
- Separate task lighting for the diapering area is important for good visibility and for changing children during naptime when the room is darkened. Be sure the light does not shine directly in the child’s eyes.

3. PLAY AREAS

Relationships and people are the core elements in an environment that supports infant and toddler development. Infants have an inborn drive toward learning and mastery and a remarkable amount of development takes place every month. The space should be laid out to keep children close to their teachers and to support teachers in their critically important role. The

space should allow infants to freely explore the environment in a safe way. Use of “confinement” equipment such as playpens, walkers, bouncy chairs and swings are



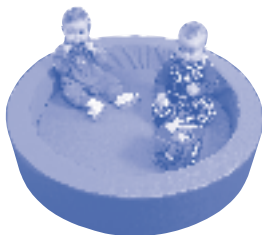
highly discouraged in quality infant environments. Rather, the equipment should support children's natural need to explore and interact with the adults and world around them.

In choosing furnishings, pay scrupulous attention to health and safety. All furnishings should be easy to clean and sanitize. Corners should be rounded and cabinets and drawers should have child-safe closures. Lay out a space where teachers do not have to constantly say no or pull children away from hazards. This can be done with furnishings, low walls, or various types of contained play areas.



The floor surface is important because so much time is spent crawling, sitting, and playing on the floor. Carpeted risers, low platforms and ramps make the floor more useful and more stimulating. If these types of features were not built in to the original space or if you do not want something permanently fixed in the room, several manufacturers make furnishings such as the foam blocks shown above that can be easily moved throughout the room or center and provide variation and challenge in the environment.

Provide a number of soft, safe places to rest non-mobile infants where they can watch other children playing. A wide range of manufactured furnishings are available for this purpose. The snuggle nest shown here is a good example of durable equipment that can be easily cleaned and provides a soft, safe space for young infants.



Separate the space with low dividers or a small loft, creating areas for quiet, active and messy play. One company offers foam activity walls with a number of inserts (switches, lenses, light box, mirror, spinning cylinders) that both divide the space and offer different types of stimulating play. An infant loft offers a change of level for the babies on top, but also a tunnel and hiding place underneath. For older infants, provide a pull-up bar or sturdy box at 14 to 16 inches above floor level for children to practice standing and cruising.

Display materials at the point of use, and display only a limited number of toys at a time.

Use acrylic mirrors and colorful displays at infant eye level (the bottom 24 to 36 inches of a wall or door). According to some research, infants notice and respond to the colors red, blue, and green first. They also recognize high contrast patterns before other combinations of color. Some people believe that because infants respond to the human face, they also show a preference for colors in skin tone ranges from pink to various shades of brown.

Provide several types of comfortable seating for an adult seated with one or more babies. An easy chair or small couch is a great place to play, read books, or even nap once in awhile.

Toddler classrooms more closely mirror the layout of preschool classrooms with separate interest areas, but with more room to move around. Also, the areas can be simpler and more basic, adding new materials and furnishings as the children develop. In considering colors for the toddler area, maintain the neutral background palette, but introduce green, blue-green, yellow and purple.



BOOK AREA

Toddlers love miniatures of “real” furniture, so small soft chairs or sofas make the book area very appealing. Display board books on a book display rack, and in small baskets or bins that can be carried around. Stuffed animals are also popular in toddler book areas, especially if they are characters from favorite books.



DRAMATIC PLAY

Toddlers need an enclosed dramatic play area, so set the equipment up to form a room, with two ways in and out. Window-level openings that allow toddlers to see in and out of the area will enhance the play. The props can be simple, but be sure there are duplicates of popular items. Try to have kitchen sets with a door and oven that open and close, and knobs and faucets that turn. The realistic detail is important for this age group.



ACTIVE PLAY

Toddlers want to practice their skills and learn new ones. Make the environment both challenging and safe with stairs to climb, tunnels, low climbers and slides. Toddlers tend to travel in a group, so be sure that steps, platforms and ramps can hold several children at a time.



ART

Toddler art is very much about the process rather than the product.

Let them play with finger paint or shaving cream on acrylic mirrors, transparent easels, or plastic trays. Let them paint a chalkboard with water and short chubby brushes.



SAND AND WATER

These are essential activities for toddlers – be sure the tables are 20 inches high and provide duplicates of the popular props.



TABLE TOYS

Toddlers are more likely to stand when playing with table toys or to play with them on the floor, so chairs may not be needed in the area. Their table toys have fewer parts and larger pieces.

Worksheets to help with planning and purchasing furnishings are included in Appendix I.



Guidelines for Purchasing Furnishings

There are important considerations in purchasing furnishings, whether it's all of the equipment for a new program or replacements for existing classrooms.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Taking care of children in groups is inherently more complex than the care of one or two children, since there is more risk of injury and spread of illness.

Evaluate every piece of furniture for safety and stability:

- Does it have rounded corners and child-safe hardware?
- Is it stable and will it resist tipping?
- Will it splinter or shatter?
- Does it have protrusions, pinch hazards or hard edges?

Look for furnishings with smooth, nonporous surfaces or washable fabrics. If surfaces cannot be easily cleaned and sanitized, the piece should have a disposable cover.

AESTHETICS

Aesthetics are a large part of interior design, including classroom design. Look for colors, materials, and textures that contribute to balance and harmony. The furnishings and finishes should provide a backdrop for the materials, so avoid using bright primary colors for furniture. Many toys and materials are in the bold primary color palette, and too much color leads to chaos and a visually over-stimulating environment for young children. The most appealing classrooms tend to have a mix of old and new pieces, the inclusion of some unusual or beautiful items, thoughtful and attractive display, and carefully arranged furnishings. In considering furnishings, ask the following questions:

- Does the piece of furniture appeal to your sense of design and beauty?
- Do you like the colors and materials?
- Have you included some furnishings with curved or rounded lines and furnishings made of natural materials?

DURABILITY AND QUALITY

Look for furniture that will age gracefully, since early childhood budgets rarely have sufficient reserves for replacing worn items. When you are faced with equipping an entirely new center it is often tempting to try to cut corners and look only for the best deal, but it is critical that you also think about the quality of construction and materials, and the availability of replacement parts. You want to be sure that the furniture will last five years or more with daily use by young children. For more expensive pieces (cubbies, shelves, changing tables, tables and chairs) you should expect ten to fifteen years.

SCALE AND SUITABILITY

Does the furniture fit the space and is it the correct size for children? Does it support their developing skills and independence? Is it appropriate for its intended use?

ECONOMICS

Evaluate the initial cost vs. the “lifetime” cost of the piece. Too often, the initial cost is the only consideration. Consider what it will cost to maintain or repair a cheaper piece of furniture, and how often will you need to replace it. It is usually most cost-effective to invest in high quality pieces of furniture that get constant hard use – changing tables, cubbies, tables and chairs – and economize on pieces that are used less often.

ERGONOMICS

Comfort and functionality is important, both in the scale and design of children’s furniture and in planning the space as a work environment for adults.

- **For children:** The height of tables and chairs matters. Tables should be approximately waist high for the children using them, and every child’s feet should reach the floor when seated in a chair. Children’s chairs should have shallow seats and slanted backs to help them position themselves in the chair.

- **For adults:** The classroom should be comfortable for adult use. Furnishings and equipment should allow teachers to hold and comfort children and help with their activities while minimizing the need for bending, lifting, and carrying heavy children and objects. Teachers should be provided with adult chairs in several places around the classroom.

Back strain is the leading cause of worker-compensation claims for child care teachers. There are several approaches to reducing risk:

1. Use adult-height changing tables with steps that enable children to climb up to the changing surface rather than being lifted.
2. Use strollers and wagons for six during “walks” outdoors so that teachers don’t have to carry tired children.
3. Use adult furniture to eliminate awkward sitting or working positions for teachers.



Resources

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Appendix I

COST OF EQUIPMENT

**WORKSHEETS FOR
PLANNING ROOM FURNISHINGS**

COST OF EQUIPMENT

The initial purchases for an early childhood classroom can be estimated at between \$700 and \$1000 *per child* for preschool classrooms and between \$1000 and \$1500 *per child* for infant and toddler classrooms. These estimates include all furnishings for the children, including adult seating and storage. These figures do not include office furnishings, staff lounge or conference areas. In addition to the furnishings budget, new programs should plan to spend \$125 to \$150 *per child* for toys, books and curriculum materials, with a similar allowance for replacement and new purchases each year.

The costs below are based on purchasing good quality products from the vendors included on the list following the purchasing worksheets. It assumes the purchase of wooden rather than plastic furniture, and an emphasis on quality construction, materials, and safety. The enhancements to the classroom can be purchased in the second and third year of the program, or as the budget allows.

BASIC COST FOR FURNISHING A ROOM FOR 8 INFANTS	\$8,500
ENHANCED:	\$11,500
ENHANCEMENTS:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Easy chair or love seat ■ Risers or small platforms to divide the space and provide additional seating ■ Imported infant feeding chairs and table 	

BASIC COST FOR FURNISHING A ROOM FOR 10 TODDLERS	\$10,500
ENHANCED:	\$15,750
ENHANCEMENTS:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lofts which feature built-in slides, stairs and tunnels ■ Wooden ride-on transportation vehicles ■ Small riding toys ■ All-in-one storage units for dramatic play ■ Sand and water center with canopy 	

BASIC COST FOR FURNISHING A ROOM FOR 20 PRESCHOOLERS	\$14,000
ENHANCED:	\$19,500
ENHANCEMENTS:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Elaborate lofts space for children and adults, built-in puppet theaters, etc. ■ Multi-purpose easel ■ Discovery table for science area ■ Portable music locker to hold CDs, tapes, players and instruments ■ All-in-one storage units for dramatic play ■ Arches or independent structures (e.g., castle) to enclose dramatic play ■ Sand and water center with canopy 	

WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING INFANT ROOM FURNISHINGS

TO SERVE 8 INFANTS AND 2-3 TEACHERS

SUMMARY OF FURNISHINGS

ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
child-size table	1+		
area rugs	2		
soft furnishings	3		
adult-size chair	2		
glider chair	2		

STORAGE

ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
low display shelf	4		
closed storage shelf	4		
locking storage cabinet for staff's personal belongings	1		

IN ADDITION TO THESE ITEMS, YOU WILL NEED:

AREA	ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
CLASSROOM ENTRY				
	parent mailboxes	8+		
	sign-in area	1		
	bulletin board	1		
	seating area			
CUBBIES	wall mounted cubby w/ hooks	8		
CAREGIVING				
DIAPERING	changing table & storage	1		
SLEEPING	crib w/ under-crib storage drawer	6		
	evacuation crib	2		
FEEDING	low high chair with or w/o tray	4+		
PLAY AREAS				
	infant loft	1		
	crawl through tunnel	1		
	room divider/activity centers	4		
	carpeted risers	1		
	vinyl or fabric covered play pit	1		
	air chair or infant seat	2		
	browser box (for books/toys)	1		

GRAND TOTAL:

NOTE: These worksheets are for furnishings only and do not include all of the supplies, toys and materials that will be needed for a well-functioning classroom.

WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING TODDLER ROOM FURNISHINGS

TO SERVE 10 TODDLERS AND 2-3 TEACHERS

SUMMARY OF FURNISHINGS			
ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
child-size table (16-18")	4		
child-size chair (8-10")	10+		
area rugs	2		
adult-size chair	2		
glider chair	1		
risers for floor seating	2		

STORAGE			
ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
low display shelf	6+		
closed storage shelf	2		
locking storage cabinet for staff's personal belongings	1		

IN ADDITION TO THESE ITEMS, YOU WILL NEED:

AREA	ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
CLASSROOM ENTRY				
	parent mailboxes	10+		
	sign-in area	1		
	bulletin board	1		
	seating area			
CUBBIES	locker w/ top shelf, hook, and boot locker beneath	10+		
CAREGIVING				
DIAPERING	walk-up changing table	1		
NAPS	toddler cot	10+		
	cot dolly	1		
	storage for sheets and blankets			
MEALS	wall mounted shelf for storage of dishes/paper goods	1		

PAGE TOTAL:

CONTINUED

NOTE: These worksheets are for furnishings only and do not include all of the supplies, toys and materials that will be needed for a well-functioning classroom.

WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING TODDLER ROOM FURNISHINGS

TO SERVE 10 TODDLERS AND 2-3 TEACHERS

AREA	ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
INTEREST AREAS				
INDOOR ACTIVE PLAY	toddler climbing structure			
<i>(select 3-5 items from this list)</i>	safety surface			
	foam tumbler			
	slide			
	foam log			
	crawling tunnel			
	transportation toys			
	rocking boat/staircase			
ART	easel	1		
	drying rack	1		
BLOCK PLAY	low storage unit for large and small blocks and related props	2		
	small area rug	1		
BOOK CORNER-LIBRARY	cushions, bolsters, or soft furnishings	2		
	book display shelf	1		
DRAMATIC PLAY	stove	1		
	sink	1		
	refrigerator	1		
	cupboard	1		
	doll stroller	1		
	sturdy doll bed	1		
	child-size round table and chairs	1		
	mirror for 2 children	1		
SAND AND WATER	toddler sand table	1		
	toddler water table	1		

GRAND TOTAL:

NOTE: *These worksheets are for furnishings only and do not include all of the supplies, toys and materials that will be needed for a well-functioning classroom.*

WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING PRESCHOOL ROOM FURNISHINGS

TO SERVE 20 PRESCHOOLERS AND 2-3 TEACHERS

SUMMARY OF FURNISHINGS			
ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
child-size table	5+		
child-size chair	20+		
hooks or pegs (4 per area)			
area rugs	3+		
adult-size chair	2		
risers for floor seating	2		

STORAGE			
ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
low display shelf	6+		
closed storage shelf	4+		
locking storage cabinet for staff's personal belongings	1		

IN ADDITION TO THESE ITEMS, YOU WILL NEED:

AREA	ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
CLASSROOM ENTRY				
	parent mailboxes	20+		
	sign-in area	1		
	bulletin board	1		
	seating area			
CUBBIES	locker w/ top shelf, hook, and boot locker beneath	20+		
CAREGIVING				
NAPS	cots	20+		
	cot dolly	2		
	storage for sheets and blankets			
MEALS	wall mounted shelf for storage of dishes/paper goods	1		

PAGE TOTAL:

CONTINUED

NOTE: These worksheets are for furnishings only and do not include all of the supplies, toys and materials that will be needed for a well-functioning classroom.

WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING PRESCHOOL ROOM FURNISHINGS

TO SERVE 20 PRESCHOOLERS AND 2-3 TEACHERS

AREA	ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
INTEREST AREAS				
INDOOR ACTIVE PLAY	climbing structure			
<i>(select 4-6 items from this list)</i>	safety surface			
	foam tumbler			
	slide			
	foam log			
	collapsible fabric tunnel			
	transportation toys			
	rocking boat/staircase			
	balance beam			
ART	multi-purpose easel	2		
	drying rack	1		
	small table and chairs	1		
BLOCK PLAY	low storage unit for block set and related props	2		
BOOK CORNER-LIBRARY	cushions, bolsters or soft furnishings	2		
	book display shelf	1		
	storage for CDs and tapes	1		
COMPUTER	computer desk and chairs for 2 children	1		
	small printer cart	1		
DISCOVERY SCIENCE	bulletin board	1		
	small table	1		
DRAMATIC PLAY	stove	1		
	sink	1		
	refrigerator	1		
	cupboard	1		
	doll stroller	1		
	sturdy doll bed	1		
	rocking chair	1		
	doll highchair	1		
	child-size round table and chairs	1		
	mirror for 2 children	1		
SAND AND WATER	sand table	1		
	water table	1		
WOODWORKING	carpentry table w/ storage shelf	1		
GRAND TOTAL:				

NOTE: These worksheets are for furnishings only and do not include all of the supplies, toys and materials that will be needed for a well-functioning classroom.

Appendix II

**MATERIALS USED IN
CLASSROOM FURNISHINGS**

MATERIALS USED IN CLASSROOM FURNISHINGS

WOOD: Wood is a warm, natural material. It displays colorful materials and toys well, without adding to the visual chaos of the classroom. Wood furniture often requires a higher initial investment, but lasts significantly longer than furniture made of other materials.

TYPE OF MATERIAL	DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL USES	DURABILITY	COMMENTS
1. HARDWOOD	Beech, Birch, Maple, Oak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cubbies • Tables • Chairs • Shelf units • Dramatic play furniture • Lofts • Indoor gross motor equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very durable • Can be refinished 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardwood construction is generally considered to be the highest quality, and has the highest cost • Purchasing higher quality hardwood up front may be more cost-effective than frequently replacing lower-priced furniture
2. SOFTWOOD	Pine, Spruce, Fir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelf units • Dramatic play furniture • Cubbies • Sand and water tables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairly durable • Can be painted or refinished to extend the life of the furniture • More affordable but less durable than hardwood versions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by some smaller independent manufacturers • Check on construction methods; sometimes combined with more flimsy fiberboard in shelf units or drawers
3. VENEER	Very thin slices of wood attached to particle board or solid wood; may be combined with solid wood in some furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table tops • Cubbies • Storage units • Dramatic play furniture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality veneer can be more durable than solid wood since it resists cracking and warping because of its construction • In less expensive versions, exposure to moisture or the regular wear and tear of a child care classroom can lead to separation of the layers in the veneer and deterioration of the furniture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes used to create the look of solid wood, so be sure to verify what you are purchasing
4. PLYWOOD	Made from many layers of wood veneer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rounded or molded furniture shapes • Lofts and activity platforms • Play furniture with interesting shapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very durable • Can be refinished 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called “laminated wood” by some manufacturers • Furniture-grade plywood is often used in building children’s furniture, and has an attractive smooth finish

PLASTIC: Plastic is affordable. It's lightweight, comes in a range of colors and can be washed and sanitized, so its use in the manufacture of children's furnishings continues to grow. There are so many types of plastic that it's difficult to generalize about their uses, but the most common are discussed below. The chief drawbacks of plastic furnishings are aesthetic and philosophical.

TYPE OF MATERIAL	DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL USES	DURABILITY	COMMENTS
1. MOLDED PLASTIC	Molded plastic furnishings are often child-safe and durable, with rounded edges and smooth surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairs • Dramatic play furnishings • Large waffle blocks • Room dividers • Riding toys • Indoor gross motor equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily washed and sanitized • Often acquires a worn or grimy appearance over time • Most molded plastic cannot be repaired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to limit the color palette and cartoon-like appearance of molded plastic • Avoid flimsy light-weight plastic chairs that tip or slide out from under active children
2. PLASTIC LAMINATE	Plastic laminate is made of melamine impregnated veneer or paper that creates a smooth, non-porous surface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table tops • Cubbies • Counters and changing tables • Shelf units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durable • Easily cleaned and sanitized • Refinishing and repairs can be difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several vendors offer color-coordinated lines of furniture • If you plan to attach cubbies or shelf units to the wall or floor, check with the vendor on the feasibility of doing so without damaging the laminate • Better versions have rounded corners and plastic protective edgings to guard against chips or scratches
3. ACRYLIC	Acrylic is transparent or translucent plastic, also known as Plexiglas or Lucite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbreakable mirrors • Transparent easels • Windows in play structures • See-through crib ends • Sand and water tables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shatter-resistant • Can scratch • Often discolors when exposed to sunlight for long periods • Ammonia-based cleaners can destroy the finish and appearance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A safe and attractive alternative to glass.
4. FOAM PLASTIC	Polyurethane foam is available as plastic or vinyl-covered foam mats and cushions for child care use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mats • Play structures • Soft blocks • Soft seating • Indoor gross motor equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilient and easy to shape • Higher-end products are very easy to clean and hold up well • Low-cost versions rarely have the durability needed for child care use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be difficult to verify the quality of the foam and covering materials when purchasing from a catalog, so check the manufacturer's specifications • Look for vendors who offer replacement covers

METAL: Metal is a harsher material than plastic or wood, and has limited but important uses in child care settings. When choosing metal furnishings, pay careful attention to the connections and finishes – welded joints, machine screws or nuts and bolts. Poor quality construction can undermine the strength of the material. Watch for protruding parts or loose connections that could be hazardous. Colors for metal furniture parts are most often black, brown, chrome or bold primary colors. Metal’s chief advantage is price and durability.

TYPE OF MATERIAL	DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL USES	DURABILITY	COMMENTS
1. STEEL	In children’s furniture, steel is finished with paint or chrome to create a smooth, rust-resistant finish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legs and base on classroom tables • Frames and legs of some light-weight plastic chairs • Cribs • Utility shelves • Storage systems • Tricycles and other riding toys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less expensive pieces may have finishes that chip or peel, leaving it subject to rust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid steel folding tables in child care because of potential pinch hazards • Carefully examine the finish, connections where metal is attached to metal, as well as the glides on chair and table legs, to ensure safety and durability
2. ALUMINUM	A softer and less expensive version of steel, not widely used in child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cots made of aluminum or steel tubes with mesh covers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aluminum cot frames often bend and the rubber tips get lost • Can be subject to gradual corrosion as it ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic stacking cots may be a better option

Appendix III

LIST OF CATALOGS

LIST OF CATALOGS

CATALOG	ADDRESS	CONTACT INFORMATION	FEATURE	PRICE POINT	LOOK FOR
CHILDCRAFT EDUCATION CORP.	2920 Old Tree Dr. Lancaster, PA 17603	1-800-631-5652 www.childcraftededucation.com	Wood furniture + materials	\$	Lofts, area rugs
CHILDREN'S FACTORY	245 West Essex Ave. Saint Louis, MO 63122	1-877-726-1696 www.childrensfactory.com	Vinyl-covered foam	\$	Acrylic mirrors, mats, foam riding toys
COMMUNITY PLAYTHINGS	359 Gibson Hill Rd. Chester, NY 10918	1-800-777-4244 www.communityplaythings.com	Wooden furniture	\$\$	Changing tables, lofts, room dividers
ENVIRONMENTS	PO Box 1348 Beaufort, SC 29901	1-800-342-4453 www.eichild.com	Furniture + materials	\$\$	Rugs, banners, soft elements
FOR KIDZ ONLY	PO Box 111117 Tacoma, WA 98411	1-800-979-8898 www.forkidzonly.com	Furniture + materials	\$\$	Indoor safety surface, furniture
JONTI-CRAFT INC	PO Box 30171 Highway 68 Wabasso, MN 56273	1-800-543-4149 www.jonti-craft.com	Furniture	\$	Computer tables, 3 lines of furniture
JULIANA GROUP	Seven Drayton Street Suite 208 Savannah, GA 31401	1-800-959-6159 www.julianagroup.com	Imported wooden furniture	\$\$\$	Wooden cots, cubbies with doors, unusual highchairs
KAPLAN EARLY LEARNING CO	PO Box 609 1310 Lewisville-Clemmons Rd. Lewisville, NC 27023	1-800-334-2014 www.kaplanco.com	Furniture + materials	\$\$	Lofts, reading nooks, soft furniture
LAKESHORE LEARNING MATERIALS	2695 East Dominguez St. Carson, CA 90749	1-800-778-4456 www.lakeshorelearning.com	Furniture + materials	\$\$	Tuff Stuff laminate furniture
SAFESPACE CONCEPTS	1424 North Post Oak Houston, TX 77055	1-800-622-4289 www.safespaceconcepts.com	Vinyl-covered foam in muted colors	\$\$\$	Unusual activity centers, landing mats
WOOD DESIGNS	PO Box 1308 Monroe, NC 28111	1-800-247-8564 www.edumart.com/wooddesigns	Wood furniture	\$\$	Tip-Me-Not wooden furniture

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