

Materials: Arrangement

Relevant Satellite Accreditation Standards

II. The Physical Environment

B. Materials and equipment are developmentally suited and appealing to all children in the group.

6. Materials are located close to the place children are likely to use them, and children are able to find and replace materials on their own.



Waddle In Family Child Care



Tricia's Harmony House



Sarah's Littles Adventures in Playschool

The Basics

High quality early childhood environments have carefully designed learning areas and materials arranged so that children may choose, find, and replace materials based on their individual interests and self-directed goals. Educators plan and adjust the physical environment to promote autonomous choice in imaginative play, self-discovery, and individual experimentation.

Why organize the program's materials? The physical environment of an early childhood program has long-lasting effects on children's development. When a family child care environment is well organized, intentionally designed, and calm, children show decreased stress levels and increased stress tolerance overtime (de Vet et al., 2023; Sajaniemi et al., 2011). Children's play becomes richer and more meaningful when educators arrange materials with similar learning outcomes together. Well organized learning environments offer children dynamic play areas for hands-on exploration, helping to increase creativity and critical thinking skills (Cabrera & Cotosi, 2010; Jindal-Snape et al., 2013).

How can I organize my environment? There are many ways to organize a family child care program. Educators must consider the developmental appropriateness, space requirement, and sociocultural relevancy of materials offered in the environment. Through curiosity and openness, educators adjust the space to reflect the individual children enrolled in the program. Below are examples of traditional learning areas to consider when organizing materials.*

Learning area Materials to include...

Blocks

Blocks with a variety of shapes, colors, and sizes
Transportation materials (Examples: cars, trains, and traffic signs)
Figurines (Examples: people, farm animals, and reptiles)
Ramps, tubes, and tunnels

<i>Art</i>	Drawing and painting materials (Examples: brushes, crayons, markers, and sponges) Surface materials (Examples: paper, canvas, cardboard, and wood) Art tools (Examples: glue, tape, and scissors) Collage materials (Examples: yarn, feathers, straws, fabric, and magazines) Sculpture materials (Examples: clay, cardboard tubes, boxes, and small wood pieces)
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Educators might take a more expansive, flexible approach when designing learning areas while also maintaining an organized and predictable room arrangement. Below are examples of blended learning areas that may extend and deepen children's play.

Learning area	Materials to include...
<i>Grocery Store</i>	Store props and clothing (Examples: apron, shopping baskets, and cash register) Writing materials (Examples: crayons, paper, and clipboards) Materials for patterning, sorting, and measuring Labels and signs (Examples: storefront sign, open/close sign, and food labels) Daily living props (Examples: pretend food, cleaning tools, and spice bottles)
<i>Sensory Play</i>	Bins, trays, mats, and/or sensory table Tactile exploration materials (Examples: sand, water, Oobleck, and playdough) Movement tools (Examples: funnels, shovels, scoops, tongs, and spoons) Scientific tools (Examples: magnifying glasses, magnets, and scales) Natural objects (Examples: shells, rocks, leaves, and plants)
<i>Puppet Show</i>	Hand puppets (Examples: people and mythical creatures) Finger puppets (Examples: farm animals and reptiles) Puppet stage (Examples: tabletop, standing, and cardboard box) Play masks (Examples: felt, homemade, and masquerade) Variety of familiar fiction and rhyming books

*For a complete list of recommended materials, see Appendix I.

I want to learn more!

- [Designing the Family Child Care Environment](#)
- [Family Child Care Environment Checklist](#)
- [Family Child Care: The Indoor Environment](#)
- [Good Toys for Young Children by Age and Stage](#)
- [Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards: Interest Areas](#)

Books available through Satellite's lending library:

(for Satellite participating programs only)

- *Family Child Care Homes: Creative Spaces for Children to Learn* (Armstrong, 2011)
- *Designs for Living and learning: Transforming Early Childhood Environments* (Curtis & Carter, 2003)